

**THE RELIGIOUS ATLANTIC:
BRITISH WESLEYANISM AND THE FORMATION OF AN
EVANGELICAL CULTURE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY
ONTARIO AND QUEBEC**

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Canada

ABSTRACT

Concentrating on the period between 1814 and 1874, this dissertation explores the complex relationship between Canadian and British Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada in order to trace shifts within evangelical culture, especially in relation to such themes as church governance, missionary financing, forms of worship, political loyalty and national identity. It builds on what J.G.A. Pocock has termed the ‘new’ British history, which seeks to integrate the history of Britain’s settler colonies with that of the three kingdoms of England, Ireland and Scotland from the sixteenth century onward. Adopting this approach, this dissertation argues that previous studies of Methodism in the Canadas have overlooked a key dimension of that denomination’s development. The master narrative which emerges from the work of Goldwin French, Neil Semple and others aims to demonstrate how Canadian Methodism, very much like the colonies that eventually formed the Dominion of Canada, became a unique cultural entity, distinct from British Wesleyanism on one hand and from American Methodism on the other. This dissertation, in contrast, argues that the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada became increasingly integrated into a British world between 1814 and 1874. They came to define themselves as Britons and Wesleyans transplanted in British North America. However, this was no straightforward process of cultural transference. It was complicated by a transatlantic conflict between the leaders of the Wesleyan church in Britain and various Methodist groups in Lower and Upper Canada over what exactly it meant to be British and Wesleyan. This was the dominant debate within north Atlantic

Methodism and it determined how the ministry and laity on both sides of the ocean structured the issue of identity. This dissertation focuses on four areas of particularly heated contestation – church governance, mission financing, forms of worship and political loyalty – in order to understand how the process of cultural formation among the Methodists in the Canadas and in Britain played itself out.

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“I have noticed again and again...that lay interest in ecclesiastical matters is often a prelude to insanity.”

- Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall* (1928)

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trail of those British Wesleyan missionaries who served in Lower and Upper Canada between 1814 and 1874. The archivists of Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University; the Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University and Drew University were quick to answer various e-mail requests for material from their holdings. I would like to thank Emory University, in particular, for permission to use material from the William M'Kendree papers.

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incompatibles, it balances probabilities; and at last it attains the reality of fiction, which is the highest reality of all.” For her part, Shannon Stettner was always ready to offer her own unique brand of inspiration during the dissertation-writing process.

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continuously urged me to demonstrate why exactly ideas of Britishness and Wesleyanism were important to the Methodists on either side of the Atlantic. This thesis is, I trust, all the stronger for her input. From the moment during my M.A. year when he suggested that I might want to take a look at the transatlantic career of the British Wesleyan minister William Morley Punshon, William Westfall has been everything I could have asked for in a supervisor. During the course of my Ph.D. studies, he was always ready to share his vast knowledge of religious, cultural and Canadian history; to talk about the ins and outs of British and Canadian Methodism; to read, critique and correct drafts; to listen to various conference papers; to write letters of recommendation; and to perform all of the duties that accompany the supervisory role. Words can hardly express the debt that I owe to him.

The same can be said about my parents, James and Verna Webb, without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. They have been hearing about the Methodists for almost a decade now and, at times, must have felt like Jabez Bunting, James Everett and the Ryerson brothers had become full-fledged members of the family. This dissertation is dedicated to them in thanks for their love and support and in the hope that they will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed researching and writing it.

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NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The period between 1814 and 1874 was a complex one in the history not only of the colonies that would eventually become modern-day Quebec and Ontario, but also of the various Methodist groups that were active within the nineteenth-century boundaries of those provinces. Following in the footsteps of William Westfall's *The Founding Moment*, "this study seeks clarity even at the price of strict accuracy." Instead of following the official nomenclature of the time – writing about Lower Canada and Upper Canada for the period before 1841, Canada East and Canada West for the years between 1841 and 1867, and Quebec and Ontario after 1867 – this dissertation refers to Lower Canada and Upper Canada for the period before 1867, and Quebec and Ontario for the seven years after Confederation. As Westfall points out, this practice has the added bonus of reflecting many a nineteenth-century colonist's practice of continuing "to use older terms long after they had been replaced officially."¹

What exactly to call the various Methodist groups active in central Canada between 1814 and 1874 presents an altogether knottier problem. The Methodists tended to change the name and institutional organization of their churches with what, for the historian, seems like dizzying regularity. In 1824, for instance, the ministers stationed in Lower and Upper Canada by the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States formed a separate conference of that connexion; four years later, those same preachers formed the independent Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada; in 1833 the Methodist

¹ William Westfall, *The Founding Moment: Church, Society, and the Construction of Trinity College* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), xi.

Episcopal Church in Canada went into a union with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain and transformed itself into the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada; the former Methodist Episcopal kept that name, despite the fact that the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain dissolved the union in 1840 and then agreed to a reunion in 1847.

This story is further complicated by the presence of another Methodist community in central Canada after 1814, made up of missionaries – sent to the colonies by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain and reporting, initially, to a London-based Committee of Finance and Advice and, after 1818, to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society – and their lay supporters. In 1833 the missionaries stationed in Upper Canada were folded into the new Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada; the missionaries abandoned that denomination when the union collapsed in 1840 and then joined it again in 1847. The missionaries stationed in Lower Canada united with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in 1854. This chronology is summarized in Appendix A (‘Key Dates in the History of Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada, 1814-74’) and Appendix B (‘Methodist Unions and Schisms in Lower and Upper Canada, 1814-74’).

In an effort to avoid confusion, this dissertation refers to the ministers who originally formed the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada in 1828, who went into the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in 1833 and who remained in that denomination between the collapse of the union in 1840 and the reunion of 1847 as the ‘American Methodists’ / ‘Methodist Episcopalists’ for the period before 1827-8 and as the ‘Canadian Methodists’ for subsequent years. Both the Methodist Episcopal Church in

Canada and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada appear here as the ‘Canada Conference’ and the ‘Canada connexion.’ This study refers to the preachers and laity who made up Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain as the ‘British Wesleyans,’ the ‘British Conference’ and the ‘British connexion.’ The missionaries dispatched by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain to Lower and Upper Canada between 1814 and 1874 are described as either ‘the British missionaries’ or the ‘British Wesleyan missionaries,’ as the context requires.

INTRODUCTION

Evangelicals in a Cold Climate

As its founder was more than happy to admit, there was something unique, even strange, about Wesleyan Methodism from the moment of its birth. On the evening of May 24, 1738, John Wesley, a young Anglican minister and failed missionary to the Native Americans and settlers of colonial Georgia, went “very unwillingly” to an independent chapel on Aldersgate Street in London. At “about a quarter before nine,” while listening to one of the members of that small congregation read from Martin Luther’s “Preface to the Epistle to the Romans,” he felt his “heart strangely warmed.” “I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation,” he later recorded in his journal, “and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.” It was the defining moment of Wesley’s life and it set him on the path that led to the founding of the first Methodist societies in Bristol and London in 1740.¹ Wesley’s Aldersgate experience also established the central message of what would become the Wesleyan Methodist church (or connexion): the idea that all people could be saved from eternal damnation, as long as they were willing to open their hearts to God’s saving grace. This message of universal redemption and Wesley’s eagerness to have it preached to rich and poor alike provided the basis for Methodism’s rapid

¹ The most accessible account of John Wesley and his conversion experience appears in Henry D. Rack, “John Wesley,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58:183-5. The quotations are from Richard P. Heitzenrater and W.R. Ward, eds., *The Works of John Wesley: Journals and Diaries* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988-2003), 1:249-50. Emphasis in original.

expansion during the hundred and sixty-two years after 1738.² Methodism may never have come close to being the church of the majority in Britain, but it quickly became the predominant evangelical Protestant presence in the nineteenth-century United States. It was also a major force in the British North American colonies of Lower and Upper Canada, created in 1791 in the aftermath of the American Revolution and the Loyalist exodus.³

Methodism in the Canadas was, in fact, an amalgam of different and sometimes competing denominational traditions. It arrived in those colonies in stages, beginning in 1785 when the Heck and Embury families fled revolutionary New York and began life anew in Augusta Township in the future province of Upper Canada. And where the Methodist laity went, Methodist ministers were rarely far behind. In 1791 the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States decided to send William Losee to the Bay of Quinte in order to establish an official presence in the new colony. More and more American Methodist preachers followed Losee's lead over the following decades, until the ministers stationed in Upper Canada formed an independent connexion in 1828 – the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, usually referred to as simply the Canadian Methodists. In 1814 another Methodist group appeared in the Canadas. In response to urgent appeals from some of the wealthier laity of Montreal, the Wesleyan Methodist

² See Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 14-23 for a concise account of Wesley's beliefs and practices.

³ A valuable account of the expansion of Methodism appears in David Hempton, "Methodist Growth in Transatlantic Perspective, c. 1790-1850," in Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger, eds., *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 52-4, 69-71. See also David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 11-31.

Church in Britain began its own mission to Lower Canada and, shortly afterward, to Upper Canada.

Over the next sixty years, the leaders, ministers and lay supporters of these two Methodist connexions attempted to find some way to live with one another. Sometimes that involved partitioning the gospel work in the Canadas, as was the case in 1820; at other times – in 1833, 1847 and 1854 – it involved denomination union; in 1840 it involved the very messy business of breaking a union apart.⁴ Whatever method the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist elites hit upon to settle their differences, the number of laymen and women in Lower and Upper Canada who identified themselves as Methodists continued to rise through the nineteenth century. By 1851 the Methodists in Upper Canada outnumbered their Presbyterian brethren 213,365 to 204,148. A decade later, Methodism had become the largest Protestant denomination in both of the Canadas, surpassing the Church of England by 6,171 members. That number grew to an impressive 102,920 by 1871.⁵ If statistics alone prove anything, by the mid-nineteenth century Methodism had become a potent religious presence in Lower and Upper Canada.

Not surprisingly, then, Methodism in the Canadas has received its share of scholarly attention. Certainly, no historian has felt the need to ask why, as they have of American Methodism, so many academics have “found this phenomenal mass movement so uninteresting, so unworthy of attention?”⁶ A number of studies have cast a revealing

⁴ For an overview of these developments see Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 70-4, 134-42, 171-91, 248-55; Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 6-7, 37-52, 76-86, 92-9.

⁵ These statistics are drawn from *ibid.*, 182.

⁶ Nathan O. Hatch, “The Puzzle of American Methodism,” in Hatch and Wigger, eds., *Methodism and the Shaping*, 31.

light on the various facets of the Methodist experience in Lower and Upper Canada. Writing in the early 1960s, for instance, Goldwin French broke new ground, arguing that debates over religious issues were of vital importance to the political development of Upper Canada between 1791 and 1855; and Methodism, in particular, shaped and was shaped by the often tumultuous political conflicts of that period.⁷ Both William Westfall and Nancy Christie have analyzed the changes in Methodist modes of worship, exploring the world of revivalism and how the different groups that made up Canadian Methodism – the clergy and laity, men and women – experienced that phenomenon over time.⁸ Marguerite Van Die has concentrated on the intellectual and social development of Methodism in central Canada, demonstrating the adaptability of the denomination at the level of the university, the family and the individual in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.⁹

In his study of Protestantism in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada, J.I. Little has shown how the themes addressed by French, Westfall, Christie and Van Die played out in the context of a borderland region.¹⁰ Focusing on nineteenth-century Ontario as a whole, John Webster Grant has placed the Methodist story in the context

⁷ French, *Parsons and Politics*, 39-47, 67-78, 101-28, 134-64, 171-91, 217-42, 248-71.

⁸ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 19-81; Nancy Christie, "In These Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion': Popular Religion and the Challenge to the Established Order, 1760-1815," in George A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* (Burlington: Welch Publishing Company Inc., 1990), 24-33.

⁹ Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), passim. On Methodism and university education in the nineteenth century see also Neil Semple, *Faithful Intellect: Samuel S. Nelles and Victoria University* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), passim.

¹⁰ J.I. Little, *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity, 1792-1852* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 149-223.

not only of the growth of other denominations across the province, but also of various intellectual trends – ultramontanist, Tractarianism and biblical criticism, to name just three – that took shape on either side of the Atlantic.¹¹ In this, Grant has been one of a number of scholars, such as David Hempton, who have attempted to position the history of Methodism in central Canada within a larger, transatlantic setting.¹² Much of this scholarship has been drawn together in Neil Semple’s study of Methodism in Canada: a magisterial account that begins with the lay preacher Laurence Coughlan’s creation of the first Methodist congregations in Newfoundland during the mid-1760s and ends with the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925.¹³

Within this body of work, more than one historian has recognized that British Wesleyanism played a role in shaping Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada. Goldwin French and Neil Semple, for instance, have examined the experiences of the British Wesleyan missionaries and, to a lesser extent, of their leading lay supporters across the Canadas, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ J.I. Little has made an impressive effort to explain what happened when those missionaries set out to establish themselves, their church structures and forms of worship in the Eastern Townships, often in opposition to stubbornly-independent American settlers and itinerant ministers.¹⁵ As far as the surviving records allow, Marguerite Van Die has

¹¹ John Webster Grant, *A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), passim.

¹² Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, 18-22, 128, 183.

¹³ Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, passim.

¹⁴ See footnote four above.

¹⁵ See footnote ten above. See also J.I. Little, “The Methodistical way: Revivalism and popular resistance to the Wesleyan Church discipline in the Stanstead Circuit, Lower Canada, 1821-52,” *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* 31, no. 2 (2002), 171-94.

analyzed the activities of a cross-section of British Wesleyan immigrants in nineteenth-century Canada: men and women who carried their faith and an often nostalgic regard for British Wesleyan practices with them across the Atlantic.¹⁶ John Webster Grant has touched upon the transoceanic context of Methodism in the Canadas, outlining the often uneasy relationship between the British Wesleyan missionaries and their Canadian Methodist brethren, particularly in terms of their disputes over politics and worship.¹⁷ And drawing on his extensive knowledge of Methodism across the Atlantic world, David Hempton has pointed out some of the links that developed between British Wesleyanism and Canadian Methodism in the 1800s as a result of British immigration, trade and imperial expansion.¹⁸

Yet, despite the fact that historians have acknowledged the British Wesleyan presence in Lower and Upper Canada, no one has made a sustained effort to understand how Methodism in those colonies fit into a larger, transatlantic context. According to Goldwin French and Neil Semple, those British Wesleyans who concerned themselves with Lower and Upper Canada were simply men of “highly conservative opinions” whose actions, however, rarely seem to have been influenced by developments on the eastern shores of the Atlantic.¹⁹ In his work on the Methodist “culture of

¹⁶ Marguerite Van Die, “A March of Victory and Triumph in Praise of ‘The Beauty of Holiness’: Laity and the Evangelical Impulse in Canadian Methodism, 1800-1884,” in George A. Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 77-9.

¹⁷ Grant, *Profusion of Spires*, 75-7.

¹⁸ Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, 18, 30, 152.

¹⁹ In this respect, it is perhaps telling that, when Semple does touch on the influence of the British Wesleyan *Fly Sheets* agitation on Methodism in Canada, he misdates it. See Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 97, 140. French, *Parsons and Politics*, 250 briefly alludes to the internal affairs of British Wesleyanism as a factor in its relations with Canadian Methodism. The quotation is from *ibid.*, 59 and refers to the British Wesleyan missionary Robert Alder.

experience” in Upper Canada, William Westfall failed to acknowledge the British Wesleyan presence in the colony, aside from a brief discussion of the theological influence of John Wesley; while, for Nancy Christie, the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas were uncomplicated agents of metropolitan conservative values.²⁰ Marguerite Van Die and J.I. Little, who, on the whole, have given more analytical weight to the British Wesleyan presence in Lower and Upper Canada, have attempted to discuss the missionaries and their lay supporters in terms of the home connexion’s larger gospel field; but, they have done so without the benefit of a thorough discussion of the British Wesleyan context.²¹ The closest thing we have to a truly transatlantic study of Methodism in British North America is Allen Robertson’s work on the British Wesleyan community in early nineteenth-century Halifax, Nova Scotia. Focusing on business practices, colonial politics, lay and clerical education and denominational union, *John Wesley’s Nova Scotia Businessmen* demonstrated that the well-to-do Methodist laity of Halifax regularly remolded the directives of the missionary authorities in Britain to suit the realities of colonial life. Yet, even Robertson confined his focus to events in Halifax, providing only a sketch – though a perceptive one – of the structures and internal operations of Wesleyanism in Britain.²²

²⁰ Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 39, 75-6; Christie, ““In These Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion,”” 23, 42.

²¹ Marguerite Van Die, ““The Double Vision’: Evangelical Piety as Derivative and Indigenous in Victorian English Canada,”” in Mark A. Noll, et al., eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 257-60; Little, *Borderland Religion*, 164-73.

²² Allan B. Robertson, *John Wesley’s Nova Scotia Businessmen: Halifax Methodist Merchants, 1815-1855* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), passim, but especially 62-75.

By largely overlooking the transatlantic context of Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada, historians have defined a master narrative that excludes a primary dimension of its development. Much of their work has ultimately been concerned with demonstrating the increasing cultural uniqueness of Canadian Methodism: they have framed the story of its gradual rise to denominational dominance in terms of its growing distinctiveness from American Methodism on the one hand and from British Wesleyanism on the other. David Hempton, for instance, has presented a general picture of a connexion poised between “the politics of class conflict” that shaped British evangelicalism and the “sectarian fragmentation and religious pluralism” of American Protestantism.²³ In his study of Methodism in the Eastern Townships, J.I. Little put forward a similar argument: that the end result of American and British influence was “a distinctively English-Canadian identity” among the settler population – one that only grudgingly accepted some of the “conservatism” of British Wesleyanism, while managing to hold on to the vestiges of American denominational radicalism.²⁴ In several ways, of course, this cultural trajectory parallels the old story of the political development of British North America itself: an almost inevitable progress from colony to nation between the early 1790s and 1867. Goldwin French made this connection explicitly, arguing that “a more vigorous nationalist impulse emerged within the Methodist community” in the Canadas by the 1850s. “As an expanding Canadian denomination,” he continued, the Canadian Methodists “became an example and inspiration to the secular nationalist forces that were stirring within the province of Canada.”²⁵ In this analytical framework, the

²³ Hempton, “Methodist Growth in Transatlantic Perspective,” 70-1.

²⁴ Little, *Borderland Religion*, ix-xiv, 5-12, 218-23, 285.

²⁵ French, *Parsons and Politics*, 271.

British Wesleyans necessarily become an ‘other’ against whom the Canadian Methodists defined their own emerging sense of self.

We know relatively little, then, about how exactly Methodism in the Canadas interacted with British Wesleyanism. In a departure from previous scholarship, this dissertation seeks to understand the character of nineteenth-century Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada in terms of the relationship between two Methodist communities in those colonies – the Canadian Methodist ministers and the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity – and the Wesleyan Methodists in Britain. The main argument is that the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada became increasingly integrated into a British world between 1814 and 1874. They came to see themselves as Britons and Wesleyans transplanted in the New World. However, this was not a straightforward process of cultural transference: it was complicated by a transatlantic conflict between the leaders of the British Wesleyan connexion and the Canadian Methodists and between the former and their missionaries and lay supporters in the Canadas over what it actually meant to be British and Wesleyan. This was the dominant debate within north Atlantic Methodism and it determined how the ministry and laity on both sides of the ocean structured the issue of identity. Other facets of the Methodist sense of self – whether questions of class or gender – were worked out within the parameters of this transoceanic dispute. This debate over the meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism was also grounded in a series of conflicts over four key areas of Methodist life: church governance, mission financing, forms of worship and political loyalty. This thesis will, therefore, focus on these four areas of contestation in order to understand the

general course of cultural formation among the Methodists in the Canadas and in Britain itself.

In discussing ‘evangelical’ culture, this dissertation utilizes and moves beyond the perspective first suggested by D.W. Bebbington in his study of evangelicalism in modern Britain. For Bebbington, evangelicalism was primarily a theological or spiritual construct, comprised of four main elements:

conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.²⁶

John Wesley touched on all of these themes at various points in his long career and Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic remained broadly loyal to his teachings throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More specifically, whether in Britain or in Lower and Upper Canada, Methodists accepted Wesley’s stress on the importance of experiential religion and his often stinging critique of Calvinism, though they were sometimes divided about what constituted acceptable forms of worship. To that extent, transatlantic Methodism fits nicely within Linda Colley’s idea of a Protestant culture that united the people of Britain – and, by extension, of the British empire – between 1707 and 1837.²⁷ At the same time, however, there were serious questions that arose within the context of this evangelical consensus. As noted above, between 1814 and 1874, the correspondence of the Methodists in Britain and the Canadas was dominated by disputes

²⁶ D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin and Hyman Ltd., 1989), 2-17. Emphasis in original.

²⁷ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 11-54.

over institutional, financial and political issues. These battles disrupted the various Methodist communities in both Britain and the Canadas and the relationship between them. This thesis defines evangelical culture as the outcome of those transatlantic conflicts.

Adopting this approach to evangelical culture and the interaction between British Wesleyanism and Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada, we will necessarily find ourselves concentrating on three major and often interrelated themes: colonial Methodism as part of a transatlantic world, constantly influenced by developments among the Wesleyans in the home country; the frequent impact of colonial Methodism on the connexion in Britain; and the complex nature of identity itself. Historians have applied each of these themes, at one point or another, to other Protestant groups in the Canadas or in the Atlantic world as a whole. Richard Vaudry and William Westfall, for instance, have demonstrated how the Anglicans of Lower and Upper Canada were influenced by their connections to Britain. The Church of England in the Canadas had to find a way to deal with the rise of Anglo-Catholicism among their fellow Anglicans in the home country in the 1840s and, perhaps even more importantly, with the changing financial policies of the metropolitan church establishment from the mid-1850s onward. There were certain forces at work within transatlantic Anglicanism that tended to draw the members of the colonial church into a wider British world and other forces that created serious tensions between core and periphery.²⁸

²⁸ Richard W. Vaudry, *Anglicans and the Atlantic World: High Churchmen, Evangelicals and the Quebec Connection* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), passim, but especially 13-38; Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 104-5, 112, 114-15, 120-1, 146-51; idem, *The Founding Moment: Church, Society, and the Construction of Trinity College* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 34-6.

Transoceanic interaction, however, was never simply a one-way street, as Richard Carwardine has pointed out in his work on the role of American revivalists in Britain in the years before the American Civil War. While British ministers travelled to and settled in the United States, influencing the content of American revivalism, American revivalists returned the favour, conducting highly successful and, in the Methodist case, incredibly disruptive revival campaigns across the United Kingdom.²⁹ And as a result of this cultural give-and-take the nature of British identity was often open to serious and sustained debate, as Alan Lester has shown in his work on the relationship between British missionaries and settlers in South Africa and the antipodes. British church organizations constantly attempted to label the settlers' efforts to displace various Native populations as thoroughly anti-British activities. For their part, the settlers countered such charges by identifying themselves as Britons abroad, whose actions deserved the support of the metropolitan government. In the end, settler nationalism took the shape of a British sense of self.³⁰

Concentrating on these three themes brings us directly into the realm of a new approach to British history first suggested by J.G.A. Pocock. In 1973 Pocock gave a lecture at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, in honour of the late historian and biographer of Captain James Cook, J.C. Beaglehole. Pocock seized the opportunity to right what he saw as a great wrong being inflicted on Britain's former colonies of settlement. In the early 1970s, Britain began to move towards linking its fortunes to the

²⁹ Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 28-40, 44-5, 102-33.

³⁰ Alan Lester, "British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire," *History Workshop Journal* 54 (2002), 25-48.

European Community. To Pocock it appeared that the British of the United Kingdom were bent on dissolving their last connections with their settler communities – based solely on the argument that the empire had become too expensive and that the home country no longer had the military or diplomatic wherewithal to sustain it. From a political point of view, Britain’s willingness to cast off its former colonies in its rush to embrace ‘Europe’ was a nonevent. However, from a cultural standpoint, Pocock saw Britain’s entry into the European Community as a mighty blow against “the continued existence of a global Britishness” which had shaped a collective sense of self, not only in New Zealand, but in all of Britain’s settler colonies.³¹ By aiming to become European, the British began a process of unravelling their own sense of ‘Britishness;’ at the same time, they also cast serious doubt on whether New Zealanders, Australians and Canadians could continue to think of themselves as Britons or as a part of a thing known as ‘British history.’³² It was, Pocock later wrote, like “a frontal lobotomy, a cutting of the root, a relegation to irrelevance.” “The root had not been so much in Britain,” he added, “but in a relationship with Britain, understood to be a game for two players who respected each other and themselves.”³³ Now, it seemed, the British no longer respected either their colonial cousins or themselves. Pocock, therefore, suggested what has become known as the ‘new’ British history in an effort to reclaim the British dimension of colonial history which Britain itself seemed all too ready to reject in the name of European integration.

³¹ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2-23. The quotation is from page 20.

³² Idem, “Contingency, identity, sovereignty,” in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer, eds., *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London: Routledge, 1995), 297.

³³ Idem, “History and Sovereignty: Historiographical Response to Europeanization in Two British Cultures,” *Journal of British Studies* 31 (October 1992), 361.

For Pocock, British history was best conceptualized not as “the simple narrative of a monolithic empire’s interactions with its external proletariats,” but as the story of the interrelations of “a number of advanced and sophisticated provinces,” beginning with the three kingdoms and cultures of England, Scotland and Ireland. However, this ‘new’ British history also needed to include the relations between the United Kingdom and its settler communities across the Atlantic and the Pacific from the sixteenth century onward. Within this analytical framework, Canada, like New Zealand or Australia, could be seen as a part “of an expanding zone of cultural creation and conflict” emanating from the British Isles. Canadians, again like Australians and New Zealanders, were also Britons, though their relationship with the home country was often fraught with complexities. While the massive outpouring of English, Irish and Scottish emigrants to nineteenth-century Canada fixed that settler community into a north Atlantic and imperial context, that did not mean that cultural formation among Britons in Canada was a “simple one-way imperial success story...”. It was full of ambivalences, leading to the creation of “a diversity of interacting and varyingly autonomous cultures” within the larger framework of Britishness.³⁴ In 1999 Pocock declared that Britain’s former settler colonies needed to “construct and write their own histories and their own British history;” and he pointed to Canada as a particularly fruitful starting point.³⁵

³⁴ Idem, “British History: A Plea for a New Subject,” *Journal of Modern History* 47 (December 1975), 601-21, 626; idem, “The Limits and Divisions of British History: In Search of an Unknown Subject,” *American Historical Review* 87 (April 1982), 31-6. See also John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and empire: the manipulation of British public opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), passim and idem, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), passim, which touch upon some of the same themes.

³⁵ J.G.A. Pocock, “The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary,” *American Historical Review* 109, no. 2 (April 1999), 499-500.

In Canada, however, Phillip Buckner has been one of the very few scholars to take up Pocock's challenge and make at least a preliminary attempt to map out what such a narrative might look like. As early as 1989, he argued that mid-nineteenth century British North America was part of the "Expanding Society" of imperial Britain. That period, he pointed out, saw an influx of "British immigrants, British capital, British technology, British religious institutions, British literary works, in short a rapid Anglicization of every aspect of British North America."³⁶ In a later article, Buckner pushed back the starting point of this process of "Anglicization" to 1815 and the beginning of the great wave of British emigration that followed the ending of the Napoleonic wars. These immigrants, he attempted to demonstrate, transformed the cultural landscape of British North America, vastly outnumbering, as they did, the pre-1815 settlers, who were primarily of American descent.³⁷ These post-1815 migrants maintained a vital sense of connectedness to the Old Country through letters and, less frequently, through transatlantic visits.³⁸ More importantly, Buckner stated, they also managed to make British metropolitan culture the norm in the Maritimes, Upper Canada and in English-speaking Lower Canada. These immigrants, he stressed, did not see themselves as in any way inferior to the British on the other side of Atlantic – as colonial subjects, in other words. Instead, they perceived themselves as partners in the grand

³⁶ Phillip A. Buckner, "The Borderlands Concept: A Critical Appraisal," in Stephen J. Hornsby, et al., eds., *The Northeastern Borderlands: Four Centuries of Interaction* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989), 156.

³⁷ Idem, "Making British North America British, 1815-1860," in C.C. Eldridge, ed., *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 17, 22.

³⁸ Idem, "Was there a 'British' Empire? The *Oxford History of the British Empire* from a Canadian Perspective," *Acadiensis* 32, no. 1 (Autumn 2002), 126.

enterprise that was the extension of British power and culture around the world.³⁹

Buckner also made sure to point out that what was going on in British North America in the nineteenth century was, as Pocock suggested, no “simple, one-way imperial success story...”. Some colonists had an important financial and political impact on the home country – Lord Strathcona, Lord Beaverbrook, Andrew Bonar Law and Edward Blake being four cases in point.⁴⁰ More importantly, however, the British culture that emerged in the Maritimes and the Canadas was different in important ways from that in Britain. The British settlers of British North America, Buckner argued, were often “British, but British in their own way.” In adapting to their new surroundings, they drew on a sometimes eclectic mix of American and British cultural and political models; but, in their own minds, they always remained Britons abroad.⁴¹ And, as Carl Berger pointed out three years before Pocock’s first call for a new approach to British history, between 1867 and 1914 some Canadian intellectuals were prepared to take this British sense of self even further. According to Berger, British imperialism was indeed a form of Canadian nationalism. Canadian intellectuals took great pride in the achievements of the British empire and glorified Canada’s role in that grand enterprise. However, some went so far as to argue that, at some not too distant point, Canada would take up a leading role in the empire, usurping the central position of tired, old Britain. In other words, the members of this small Canadian elite sometimes thought of themselves as ‘greater Britons’ than the men and women of the home country; as was the case with Buckner’s

³⁹ Idem, “Making British North America British,” 25, 27-8. See also idem, “Whatever Happened to the British Empire?” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, New Series, 4 (1994), 18.

⁴⁰ Idem, “Was there a ‘British’ Empire?,” 126.

⁴¹ Idem, “Making British North America British,” 27-8, 36.

immigrants, their British imperial identity constituted a self-conscious rejection of colonial status.⁴²

Altogether, this is an analytical framework that works well with nineteenth-century Methodism in Britain and the Canadas. It allows us to move beyond the teleological approach of previous historians, who projected back onto their narratives the assumption that Methodism in the Canadas would become a unique entity, and to examine the way in which the Methodists of Britain and of Lower and Upper Canada interacted with one another and influenced one another's cultural development. This approach can also do justice to the distinctive organizational structure of Wesleyan Methodism during this period. Although this religious movement placed great emphasis on the importance of individual salvation, it carried its salvationist message, as Neil Semple has pointed out, through a highly-centralized denominational structure in which the vast majority of decision-making power rested with the ordained ministers, assembled in an annual Conference, and with their leading lay supporters, who tended to share the clergy's point of view. In theory, other groups within the church – including a large number of unordained lay or local preachers – happily subjected themselves to the constant oversight and control of the ministry.⁴³ In reality, this thoroughly antidemocratic system often produced serious tensions within the Methodist ranks which, as W.R. Ward has demonstrated, were “forced up...into open and central conflict more readily” than was

⁴² Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), passim. The phrase ‘greater Britons’ is derived from James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1996), 303-12, 446-50.

⁴³ Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 8. For a more detailed discussion of Methodist church structures see Chapter One below.

the case among other churches, or, one might add, among other social and political institutions.⁴⁴ Therefore, by concentrating on the upper clerical and lay echelons of the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist churches, we will be able to subject the transatlantic give-and-take that lies at the heart of the 'new' British history to far more rigorous analysis than Phillip Buckner's wide-ranging surveys could hope to achieve and among a much larger cultural group than Carl Berger concentrated on in *The Sense of Power*. At the same time, this focus will allow us to situate the transoceanic relationship between Britain and one of its settler communities in terms of the wider social and political contexts of two relatively contained but representative groups on either side of the Atlantic.

The approach adopted in this thesis might also add much to a discussion of those Native Americans who threw in their lot with the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada during the nineteenth century. As Donald Smith has demonstrated, converts like Peter Jones demonstrated an ability to position themselves within the wider Atlantic context of Methodism in the Canadas. As much as any British Wesleyan missionary or Canadian Methodist minister, Natives like Peter Jones often thought of themselves as being more British and Wesleyan than their fathers and brethren on the other side of the ocean. At the same time, these Native converts knew how to work the transatlantic relationship that took shape between the Methodists in Britain and in Lower and Upper Canada to their advantage. They sometimes dressed in 'traditional' Native dress in order to raise money for the Native missions in the colonies among the relatively

⁴⁴ W.R. Ward, "The Religion of the People and the Problem of Control, 1790-1830," in idem, *Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth Press, 1993), 266.

well-off Wesleyan laymen and women in the home country; at other times, they adopted thoroughly British customs and clothing as a mark of their conversion to Methodist ways. Peter Jones, for instance, married an English woman, Eliza Field, in 1833, after travelling across Britain on a fund-raising tour, addressing meetings in full Native regalia.⁴⁵ This dissertation, however, does not deal with the position of Native people within north Atlantic Methodism. As this brief summary of Jones's transoceanic career suggests, it is a complex subject – one that requires a separate study to do it full justice.

That being said, the sources which this dissertation builds upon promise to make the 'new' British history a particularly fruitful analytical framework. Like many other studies of Methodism in the Canadas, this one draws on the rich resources of the United Church Archives in Toronto, which include reproductions of some British Wesleyan material. The records, in particular, of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS) provide a detailed picture of the day-to-day concerns and activities of the British Wesleyan missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada and of their interactions with the Canadian Methodists and the home connexion. Other historians have examined this collection of letters and minutes, though, with the exception of Neil Semple, not over the entire span of British Wesleyanism's involvement with the Canadas. In addition, this thesis relies on British Wesleyan material not found in the United Church Archives: material that has not been utilized in previous work on Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada. Located at the John Rylands Library in Manchester and the School of Oriental

⁴⁵ On Peter Jones see Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), passim. For a more general account of the position of Native Americans within Canadian Methodism before 1860 see Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 148-78.

and African Studies in London, a wide range of personal papers, newspapers and official connexional records demonstrate just how central a role the relationship with the Canadas played in the affairs of British Wesleyanism. The personal papers, especially, provide an important insight into the ways in which the British Wesleyan missionaries stationed in Lower and Upper Canada, their brethren in Britain and members of the Canadian Methodist connexion maintained a perception of themselves as inhabitants of a British and Wesleyan world, even in times of crisis and turmoil. Other sources, which have also not been examined by previous historians of Methodism in the Canadas – such as the William M’Kendree papers at Emory University, John Emory’s journal at Southern Methodist University, and the William Billington Boyce papers at the National Archives of Canada – throw further light on the activities of those ministers who endeavoured to govern the connexions in both colony and home country.

This source base has been instrumental in shaping the specific topics covered in each of the following five chapters. Most of these records were created by members of the British Wesleyan and the Canadian Methodist ministries. At the same time, however, the leading laity in the Canadas – men like William Lunn of Montreal or Peter Langlois of Quebec City – were a constant presence in the correspondence of the WMMS and in the personal papers of the leaders of the British Wesleyan connexion. This dissertation, therefore, attempts to reinsert such lay grandees into the narrative of Methodist development in Lower and Upper Canada to a degree that has not been done before.⁴⁶ It also concentrates on those issues that dominated the daily experience of the

⁴⁶ See for example, French, *Parsons and Politics*, 146 and Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 40, 76, which deal with the such lay figures only in passing.

British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters and the Canadian Methodists. Theology, though important, was never a matter of pressing concern for these men; whether in Britain or the Canadas, Methodists accepted Wesley's writings as the basis of their faith. Instead, as suggested above, the Methodists of the Canadas and Britain regularly found themselves battling over the meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism through questions of political loyalty, church governance, mission financing and worship. Those are the issues that we will deal with in turn.

The first chapter lays the groundwork for what follows, arguing that Methodism in central Canada became increasingly integrated into a larger British world between 1814 and 1874. This is demonstrated through a detailed study of the development and structure of the WMMS and its interactions with the Methodist communities in Lower and Upper Canada. In describing the work of the WMMS, this chapter also contests the views of Goldwin French and Neil Semple, both of whom tend to view Methodism in the Canadas as a strictly native development, derived primarily from American Methodist roots.⁴⁷ In drawing out the increasing number and complexity of transatlantic connections between the Methodist communities in Britain and in Lower and Upper Canada, this chapter points out that Methodism in those colonies actually thrived and developed as an overseas extension of the British Wesleyan connexion. Scottish, Irish Protestant and English emigrants poured across the Atlantic from 1815 onward; British Wesleyan missionaries and Canadian Methodist ministers followed them into the towns and backwoods of Upper and Lower Canada. As a result, both the ministers and the missionaries, as well as the settlers themselves, began to see those

⁴⁷ These historiographical points are dealt with in more detail in each chapter.

colonies as an integral part of the British Wesleyan gospel field – not unlike Ireland or the dark corners of Lancashire. Within this evolving transatlantic relationship, however, there were serious tensions produced by the bureaucratic difficulties of the WMMS and by the simple and inescapable fact that an ocean separated the home connexion from the ministers and laity in the Canadas. The interaction between those forces drawing Methodism in central Lower and Upper Canada into a larger British framework and those forces creating tensions between the connexional centre and periphery created an environment in the colonies in which a complex sense of Britishness and Wesleyanism could arise and flourish.

The second chapter analyzes the impact of the forces of unity and tension discussed in the first chapter on one Methodist group in Upper and Lower Canada: the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters. Examining this group between the arrival of the first missionaries in the Canadas in 1814 and the union between the British and Canada connexions in 1833, this chapter argues that changes in church governance in Britain, the United States and in central Canada led to the formation of a uniquely British and Wesleyan culture among them. Between 1820 and 1833 the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in Lower and Upper Canada felt increasingly alienated from the connexional authorities in the home country who, in their attempts to reach some sort of détente with both American and later Canadian Methodists, seemed to flirt with the forces of republicanism and disorder. The British Wesleyan community in Lower and Upper Canada began to attack their fathers and brethren in Britain for not being British and Wesleyan enough. In consequence, the British Wesleyans in central

Canada also began to view themselves as purer Britons and Wesleyans than the people they had left behind in the Old Country. The British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters may very well have been conservative in comparison to the American Methodists in the Canadas, but, by 1834, their conservatism was of a radically subversive variety. From a historiographical point of view, this chapter challenges the views advanced by J.I. Little, Nancy Christie, Goldwin French and Neil Semple who portray the relationship between the British Wesleyan centre and periphery in either uncomplicated terms or, if it was sometimes complex, as culturally insignificant.

The third chapter turns to the relationship between the Wesleyan leadership in Britain and the members of the Canada connexion during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It demonstrates that, during those years, the Canadian Methodists took on many of the cultural characteristics first seen among the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in the Canadas between 1820 and 1834. This transformation took place, in the first instance, as a result of a series of battles fought between the Canadian and British Conferences over issues of church governance during the twenty years after 1827. In the end, these conflicts developed into a contest to see who would define the meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism in the north Atlantic. The Canadian Methodists staked a claim to a British and Wesleyan identity in order to defend themselves from the attacks of the British connexion and its missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada. The members of the Canada Conference also attempted to take their battle to the home country itself, affecting the British Wesleyans' own sense of self, in turn. Between 1847 and 1854, however, the British and Canadian Methodists lived in

relative peace with one another. This development was related to a series of cultural and structural changes within both British Wesleyanism and Canadian Methodism. The Canadian Methodists became increasingly willing to follow the British Wesleyan lead; the leaders of the British Wesleyan connexion began not only to support, but applaud the British and Wesleyan aspirations of the Canadian Methodists. Overall, this chapter aims to put what John Kent has termed British Wesleyanism's "age of disunity" in transatlantic perspective, demonstrating how the connexional periphery was caught up in and had an impact on the schismatic crises that rocked British Methodism in the 1830s and 1840s.⁴⁸

The fourth chapter examines the impact of British Wesleyan mission financing on the Methodist communities in Lower and Upper Canada between 1814 and 1874. It argues that the cultural transformations analyzed in chapters two and three were given added impetus by the confluence of the material interests of the British Wesleyan connexion, the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in the Canadas and the Canadian Methodists. Before 1849 the fiscal policies of the WMMS effectively perpetuated the often complex British and Wesleyan culture taking shape among the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist communities in Lower and Upper Canada. After 1849, however, a combination of financial crisis among the Wesleyans in Britain, the prospect of bankruptcy among the lay supporters of the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas and the rapid expansion of the Canadian Methodist connexion helped to produce a movement in favour of Methodist unity in the colonies. The continued growth of Canadian Methodism in the 1850s and 1860s and the financial burden that accompanied it

⁴⁸ John Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (London: Epworth Press, 1966).

conspired to keep that church firmly situated within a larger British and Wesleyan world, despite the best attempts of the WMMS to cut its fiscal ties with the Canadas. Financial self-interest, the elaboration of a national church and cultural formation were of a piece. This chapter constitutes the first sustained attempt to analyze the place of mission financing in shaping the relationship among the British and Canadian connexions and the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in the Canadas. It builds, however, on work done by William Westfall and Catherine Hall on the interface between culture and money among the Anglicans in Canada and the Baptists in Jamaica, respectively.

The final chapter examines the interaction between British Wesleyanism and Methodism in the Canadas in terms of religious practice from 1814 to 1874. It argues that a general agreement about what constituted effective and socially respectable forms of revivalism developed among the British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters and the ministers and laity of the Canada Conference by the 1830s. Unlike the British Wesleyans at the connexional centre, the missionaries and laity of Lower and Upper Canada supported the work of professional revivalists such as James Caughey (of the United States); indeed, it was British Wesleyan missionaries who first invited Caughey to preach in the Canadas and who subsequently introduced him to the connexion on the other side of the Atlantic. The Wesleyan leadership in Britain, in contrast, rejected Caughey and his methods and, as far as possible, blocked him from using their churches. The Canadian Methodists, for their part, supported Caughey's revivalist efforts; they also, however, adopted a number of British Wesleyan church structures, including the subordination of lay or local preachers to their ordained brethren, in order to aid in the

process of transforming colonial Methodism from a sect to a church. This agreement around the issues of revivalism and pastoral authority in the Canadas facilitated the union of 1854 between the British Wesleyan community in Lower Canada and the Canada Conference; it was also an important example of the creation of a British and Wesleyan culture in the colony that was broader and more inclusive than the one at home.

Overall, then, this dissertation aims to demonstrate that the integration of central Canadian Methodism into a larger British world between 1814 and 1874 was a highly complex process. The various attempts by the leaders of the British Wesleyan connexion, the British missionaries, their lay supporters and the Canadian Methodists to define what it meant to be British and Wesleyan were sometimes accepted, but more often they were hotly debated. At times, three quite distinct British and Wesleyan identities were in play across the north Atlantic. This situation was further complicated by the fact that there were often divisions about the 'proper' meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism within each of the Methodist communities in the Canadas and Britain. The sense of Britishness and Wesleyanism adopted, for instance, by the British Wesleyan leadership was argued and contested, sometimes violently, among the rank and file of that church; if a particularly conservative version of British and Wesleyan identity predominated among the British Wesleyans by the 1850s, that was no foregone conclusion. Neither was the shape of the evangelical culture that emerged among the Methodists in the Canadas by the middle of the nineteenth century; it too was very much a product of both transatlantic and internal negotiation.

In the end that culture was, nevertheless, British and Wesleyan. By the

1850s, the Methodists of central Canada – whether the British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters or the Canadian Methodists – readily identified themselves as transplanted Britons: loyal subjects of the king or queen with all the rights that membership in the empire might convey, including the right to call on the connexional centre for financial aid in times of need and to be treated as equals during other periods. Like the Wesleyans in Britain, they were evangelical in doctrine and keen to see worship as a primarily church-centred activity – it was not something that should take place in the streets or fields of Lower and Upper Canada. In addition, they wanted to see revivalism brought, to a great extent, under the control of the regular ministry, though the various Methodist groups in those colonies were not willing to go as far as the British Wesleyan leadership in this area. In terms of church governance, the Methodists of Lower and Upper Canada accepted the leadership of the British Wesleyan connexion and repudiated any previous attachment to the Methodists in the United States of America. They organized their connexion according to the rules and regulations of British Wesleyanism; it became an increasingly hierarchical church, with groups like the local preachers firmly subordinated to the ordained ministry. However, as we have already noted, by 1874 Canadian Methodism was also able to achieve what Wesleyanism in Britain was never able to accomplish – it became the dominant Protestant force in a country. In the following chapters we will see how the transatlantic interactions among the Canadian Methodists, the British Wesleyans, and their missionaries and lay supporters in nineteenth-century Ontario and Quebec contributed to and were influenced by the coming of that Methodistical apotheosis.

CHAPTER ONE

“United by ties of race and kindred”:

The Expansion of a British World, 1814-74

On March 20, 1855 readers of the British Wesleyan *Watchman* would have found, among the array of archly-conservative opinion that was that newspaper's stock in trade, a report from “Theophilus,” “our correspondent” in Lower and Upper Canada. Adopting the name of the “most excellent” recipient of St. Luke's gospel, Theophilus wrote proudly about the present and future connections between the Methodists in the Canadas and in Great Britain. He described the efforts of his fellow Canadian Methodists to raise £10,000 that year for the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS) in London, England. The leading Canadian laity had mastered the lessons taught by their metropolitan counterparts – “the Farmers, Healds, Smiths, Woods, and Chappels” of British Wesleyanism, whose “zeal hath provoked many here, for the fame of their doings long ago reached us.” Theophilus also wrote, a tad prematurely as it turned out, about the construction of a mighty Atlantic to Pacific railway. “When that takes place,” he stated,

the Superintendent of our Missions may expect a call at the Conference Office in Toronto, from Wesleyan Missionaries on their way from the Centenary Hall in London [the WMMS's headquarters] to China or Australasia, or somewhere else on the other side of the globe, where they can find, in Wesley's parish, souls without salvation. I am sure such visitations will be welcome.

Having already learned from the British Wesleyan example, Canadian Methodism was set to become the great conduit of communication between the church in Britain and its missions in the east. The links between the British and Canadian Methodist communities seemed to be on the high road to perfection.

Yet, while celebrating the current and future connections between Canadian Methodism and British Wesleyanism, Theophilus also raised a question about the overall relationship between the two churches. He pointed out, rather tartly, that “many of the people of Britain, and professing intelligence too, sadly blunder when they speak of us.” “Does Canada know more of England,” he wondered, “than England does of Canada?”¹ It was a particularly acute question: one that exercised and, in some instances, plagued the minds of transplanted Britons throughout the nineteenth century. How exactly did white settler communities fit into the empire of which they were a part?²

Answering that question has not, however, been a pressing concern among Canadian Methodism’s modern historians. We know something about the links between nineteenth-century British and American Methodism from the work of Richard Carwardine.³ Marguerite Van Die has helpfully outlined several of the connections, at both the ministerial and lay level, between the Methodists in Britain and the Canadas, but

¹ *Watchman*, March 20, 1855, 94. For the Theophilus of the Bible see Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1.

² Some ‘colonials’ continued to ask the same question in the twentieth century. See J.G.A. Pocock, “History and Sovereignty: A Historiographical Response to Europeanization in Two British Cultures,” *Journal of British Studies* 31 (October 1992), 358-61; idem, “Contingency, identity, sovereignty,” in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer, eds., *Uniting and Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London: Routledge, 1995), 297-8.

³ Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 28-39.

without delving too deeply into the mechanics of the relationship.⁴ Instead, we are left with a story that centres primarily on the growing uniqueness of the Canadian Methodist church. According to Goldwin French, for example, the Canadian Methodists, having amassed a large lay following through a steady process of conversions, moved with sure steps towards “independence” from both American Methodism and British Wesleyanism between 1791 and 1855. The political and doctrinal conservatism of the British Wesleyans, whether in the home country or among the missionaries who began to arrive in the Canadas in 1814, ultimately made them into the ‘other’ against whom the Canadian Methodists defined their own sense of self.⁵

This chapter takes a different tack. It argues that, between 1814 and 1874, the various Methodist groups in the Canadas became increasingly integrated into a larger British world. This was true not only of the British Wesleyan community in Lower and Upper Canada, but also of those ministers originally connected to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and, after 1828, to the self-governing Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada. A powerful missionary impulse within British Wesleyanism, mass migration from the home country to Lower and Upper Canada, and

⁴ Marguerite Van Die, “‘The Double Vision’: Evangelical Piety as Derivative and Indigenous in Victorian English Canada,” in Mark A. Noll, et al., eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 256-60; idem, “‘A March of Victory and Triumph in Praise of ‘The Beauty of Holiness’: Laity and the Evangelical Impulse in Canadian Methodism, 1800-1884,” in George A. Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 77-9.

⁵ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 54, 59-62, 68-9, 77. Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), 52, 71-86, 92-9 adopts the same narrative framework.

the networks that were gradually elaborated between metropole and periphery after 1814, helped forge a sense of belonging to a 'greater' Britain among the Methodists in the colonies. However, due to the bureaucratic difficulties that bedeviled the British Wesleyans' efforts to organize and regulate their mission field and the uncertainties of nineteenth-century transatlantic communication, that self perception was never entirely free from tensions.

Wesleyan Methodism was one of the most authoritarian of evangelical churches in nineteenth-century Britain. The denomination came by it honestly: John Wesley had been notoriously autocratic when it came to church government.⁶ He jealously guarded the prerogative of determining which laymen and women could or could not become Methodists; he alone had the power to appoint, ordain, dismiss and station ministers; and he controlled all the money raised among the laity to support the ministry and to fund chapel building.⁷ Wesley utterly rejected the idea that the authority to govern, whether a church or a nation, originated with the people. It was the gift of God.⁸ "We are no republicans, and never intend to be," he wrote in 1790, "It would be better for those that are so minded to go quietly away."⁹ Six years earlier, Wesley had put these

⁶ Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), 247.

⁷ Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1968), 19, 25.

⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 247. See also Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 23-4, 33, 47-8 on Wesley's political beliefs.

⁹ John Wesley to John Mason, January 13, 1790 in John Telford, ed., *Letters of John Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 8:196.

beliefs into concrete form: he enrolled a *Deed of Declaration* in the Court of Chancery, granting all his powers, upon his death, to the Wesleyan Conference – an annual gathering of ministers that he had been holding since 1744.¹⁰

After Wesley died in 1791, the Conference duly became the supreme executive and legislative power in British Wesleyanism, meeting for three weeks in July and August every year. In the *Deed of Declaration* Wesley confined its membership to one hundred hand-picked ministers, but, at their first meeting in 1791, this ‘Legal Hundred’ decided that all the ordained ministers in the church should be allowed to attend and take part in the Conference’s annual meetings. Until 1814, however, only the Legal Hundred could vote for the President and Secretary: ministers who served for one year, moderating and recording the proceedings of the Conference while it was in session and handling denominational business when it was not. The laity had no direct voice in this central governing body of their own church. The Conference struck different committees each year to station the preachers, to determine if any of them needed to be expelled and to decide who might make a valuable addition to the ministerial ranks. If the rules (discipline) of the church needed revising, only the Conference could make the changes; if the church was racked by a doctrinal dispute, only the Conference could settle it.¹¹ This

¹⁰ Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 282-5; Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 502-5. For the text of the *Deed of Declaration* see W.J. Townsend, et al., eds., *A New History of Methodism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 2:551-6.

¹¹ This account of the structure and authority of the British Conference draws on John C. Bowmer, *Pastor and People: A Study of Church and ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley (1791) to the death of Jabez Bunting (1858)* (London: Epworth Press, 1975), 111-12, 133, 163-7, 188 and Edmund Grindrod, *Compendium of the Laws and Regulations of Wesleyan Methodism*, 8th ed. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1865), 1-11, 29-42.

plenitude of power also encompassed the Wesleyan Methodist work in Scotland and Ireland. Under Wesley, the Irish Conference was required to send all its decisions to the British Conference for final approval. In order to simplify this process somewhat, every year from 1792 on, the British ministers delegated their collective authority to one of their own members who then presided over the Irish Methodists.¹² When the critics of the British Conference argued that it had all the makings of a vast engine of ministerial despotism, they were not far off the truth.¹³

Nevertheless, the church structure that Wesley created between 1738 and 1791 also allowed the Methodist connexion to insert itself into almost any opening that appeared among Britain's unredeemed multitudes. Wherever groups of men and women were attracted by the Methodist promise of eternal salvation, Wesley or one of his preachers organized them into societies. The laity who made up these societies met once a week in smaller groups, known as classes or class meetings, in order to monitor one another's spiritual progress. Methodist ministers visited every society and its classes regularly, travelling from one group to another on a set circuit, preaching and making new converts as they went.¹⁴ In 1791 the Conference grouped the circuits into larger administrative units – the Districts – each overseen by a Chairman selected from among

¹² Dudley Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland: A Short History* (Blackrock: Columba Press, 2001), 127-8; R.D. Eric Gallagher, "Methodism in Ireland," in Rupert Davies, et al., eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-88), 3:234-5; Grindrod, *Compendium*, 61-2. Scotland did not have its own Conference.

¹³ Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 72-3; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 361-2, 466-8.

¹⁴ Frank Baker, "The People Called Methodists – 3. Polity," in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 1:222-4, 230-3; David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 14; Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 238-9.

the connexion's senior ministers.¹⁵

Since few itinerant preachers could cover every part of a circuit in a week, Wesley and his successors also appointed a number of laymen to help the ministry carry the load. Unordained and unpaid lay or local preachers conducted services for each society when the regular minister was unavailable; trustees made sure that any chapels the connexion built or bought were only used by Methodist preachers; stewards drew up the financial accounts for every chapel, society and circuit; and class leaders supervised the weekly class meetings.¹⁶ Every three months the itinerant preachers held a meeting with all of the lay officials on each circuit in order to deal with the spiritual and temporal concerns of their specific part of the connexion. These Quarterly Meetings were, however, entirely subordinate to the Conference and, after 1791, to the annual all-ministerial District Meetings as well.¹⁷ Still, expansion was relatively easy under this regime: when new societies were formed in any given area, a minister divided them into classes, the Conference created a new circuit, assigned another minister to make the rounds and permitted him to call as many laymen into the field as the work might require. There were seven circuits in Britain in 1746; there were 114 forty-five years later.¹⁸

Wesley never had any intention, however, of confining his redeeming mission to the British Isles. Less than a year after he felt his heart "strangely warmed," he began to conceive his efforts to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land in broader terms. "I look upon *all the world as my parish*," he stated in March 1739, "This

¹⁵ Jeffrey W. Harris and Peter W. Sutcliffe, "Districts," in John Vickers, ed., *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (London: Epworth Press, 2000), 96-7.

¹⁶ Baker, "Polity," 1:222-3, 226-9, 236-8; Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 18-21.

¹⁷ Baker, "Polity," 1:238-42; Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 29.

¹⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 245.

is the work I know God has called me to.”¹⁹ Nine years later, Wesley was more convinced than ever of his divinely-ordained purpose. Writing from Dublin, he noted that

whenever I see one or a thousand men running into hell, be it in England, Ireland or France, yea, in Europe, Asia, Africa or America, I will stop them if I can; as a minister of Christ, I will beseech them in His name to turn back and be reconciled to God.²⁰

Wesley made little distinction between the gospel work at home and abroad. His preachers would go anywhere, among any people who might benefit from the Methodist brand of evangelical Protestantism, whether the strictly ‘heathen’ or fellow Britons who were settling the colonies of the empire.²¹

And, indeed, Wesleyanism quickly spread throughout the north Atlantic region. From the 1760s on, Wesley directed the activities of Methodist ministers in the Thirteen Colonies, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and the West Indies.²² In 1792, the Conference, reacting to millennial expectations produced by the French Revolution, sent a group of preachers to Paris to establish a new mission. This episode ended badly – revolutionaries threatened to lynch the missionaries from the nearest lamppost – but the ongoing mission to what had become the United States scored spectacular successes.²³ By 1786 the Methodists in America had amassed enough of a

¹⁹ John Wesley to John Clayton [?], March 30, 1739 in Frank Baker, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: The Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980-1), 1:616. Emphasis in original.

²⁰ John Wesley to John Smith, March 22, 1748 quoted in V.H.H. Green, *John Wesley* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 91.

²¹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 476.

²² Frank Baker, “The Trans-Atlantic Triangle: Relations between British, Canadian, and American Methodism during Wesley’s lifetime,” *Bulletin of the United Church Archives*, 28 (1979), 17-19.

²³ On the Paris mission see John Walsh, “Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 1:300-1; Watts, *Dissenters*, 6.

following to create an independent Methodist Episcopal Church with its own governing Conference. In 1791, 252 itinerant preachers were overseeing 129 circuits.²⁴ That same year, the American Methodists also began to establish circuits among the settlers in the newly-created colonies of Lower and Upper Canada.

A Methodist Episcopal mission to the Canadas made perfect sense as long as the English-speaking population of those colonies continued to be 80 percent American by birth or descent.²⁵ The American Methodist preachers certainly perceived Lower and Upper Canada as a logical extension of their gospel field in New England and upstate New York.²⁶ However, the forces of demographic change unleashed by the ending of the Napoleonic Wars altered the situation entirely. Between 1815 and 1874, more than a million people from the United Kingdom crossed the Atlantic and settled in Britain's North American colonies. From 1815 to 1837 alone, British North America received more settlers from England, Ireland and Scotland than the United States and the rest of the empire combined. These numbers dropped in the 1840s, but remained sizable through the 1850s and 1860s.²⁷ In the early period of mass migration, between 1815 and 1835, the

²⁴ Russell E. Richey, *The Methodist Conference in America: A History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 33-9; Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists, in the United States of America* (Baltimore: Magill and Clime, 1810), 363.

²⁵ For the population of Lower and Upper Canada before 1815 see Peter Marshall, "Americans in Upper Canada, 1791-1812: 'Late Loyalists' or Early Immigrants," in Barbara Messamore, ed., *Canadian Migration Patterns from Britain and North America* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 38-9 and Nancy Christie, "In These Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion?: Popular Religion and the Challenge to the Established Order, 1760-1815," in George Rawlyk, ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* (Burlington: Welch Publishing Company Inc., 1990), 10-11.

²⁶ Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 41, 43.

²⁷ Phillip Buckner discusses this demographic transformation in a series of articles including "Whatever happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, New Series, 4 (1994), 16 and idem, "Making British North America British, 1815-1860," in C.C. Eldridge, ed., *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from the Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 17.

majority of immigrants were either Scottish or Irish Protestants. Methodists probably constituted a small percentage of the Lowlanders who left Scotland for the Canadas; a much more significant number of Irish Protestant settlers were Methodists. By the time of the 1871 census, Methodists made up 34 percent of the Irish Protestant families in Ontario. Most of these were Wesleyans, with only a negligible number belonging to various British Wesleyan splinter groups, such as the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians.²⁸ The flood tide of English emigration began in the 1830s. In 1831 settlers arriving in British North America from England exceeded the numbers who had sailed during the entire previous decade. This influx persisted until the closing of the Upper Canadian frontier in the 1850s and 1860s. After that, yearly immigration from England was measured in thousands rather than tens of thousands. As was the case among the Irish Protestants, many of these English emigrants were Wesleyan Methodists.²⁹ The fact that the early stages of English migration to the Canadas were dominated by movement out of Yorkshire and other northern counties made this almost inevitable: that region was the heartland of Wesleyan Methodism in nineteenth-century Britain.³⁰

Wesleyan ministers might very well complain, then, about emigration reducing the connexional membership in some parts of England and Ireland; but, at the

²⁸ J.M. Bumsted, "Scots," in Paul R. Magocsi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 1124-7; Bruce S. Elliott, "Irish Protestants," in *ibid.*, 766, 775. Wesleyan Methodism was never a strong force in Lowland or Highland Scotland. See A.J. Hayes and D.A. Gowland, eds., *Scottish Methodism in the Early Victorian Period: The Scottish Correspondence of the Rev. Jabez Bunting* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 5.

²⁹ *Idem*, "English" in *ibid.*, 469, 470-2, 481.

³⁰ *Idem*, "Regional Patterns of English Immigration in Upper Canada," in Messamore, ed., *Canadian Migration Patterns*, 58-9, 63, 65, 68, 74; K.D.M. Snell and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalem: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 124-6.

same time, the Methodist population of Lower and Upper Canada was becoming more British and Wesleyan by the year.³¹ As their letters and journals attest, both the British Wesleyan missionaries stationed in the Canadas and their Methodist Episcopal counterparts were keenly aware of this demographic shift. Everywhere these ministers went they found settlers with close ties to the Wesleyan connexion in Britain. While travelling through the Eastern Townships in 1822, the missionary John DePutron “lodged with a kind and affectionate family who emigrated from Holderness [in Yorkshire] about 2 years ago.” “I refer to Mr. Tho[ma]s Hewson,” DePutron added, “who is well known in that part of England to many of our preachers.”³² Two years later, in the vicinity of Peterborough in Upper Canada, the Methodist Episcopal Anson Green came across “a godly old Yorkshire woman,” “an intelligent Irish local preacher by the name of Blackstock” and “a sterling family, who were Wesleyans in England” all in the space of a week.³³

Near Hamilton, in 1841, the missionary Benjamin Slight stopped at an inn and found “a young woman” who “told me she was a Methodist, & had formerly met in a class led by the Rev. Mr. Toase in London[, England].” “Her father, mother, & brother, were also Methodists,” Slight continued, “& her father had been a class leader in

³¹ For the complaints see John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter JRULM), Methodist Archives and Research Centre (hereafter MARC), Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 18.14.8, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, August 10, 1831; United Church Archives (hereafter UCA), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Correspondence (hereafter WMMS-C), Box 14, File 88, #7, William Squire to Joseph Taylor, September 23, 1830.

³² *Ibid.*, Box 6, File 48, #38, John DePutron to Richard Watson, September 16, 1822 (journal entry for February 27, 1822).

³³ Anson Green, *The Life and Times of Anson Green, D.D.* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1877), 51-2.

London...".³⁴ In 1842, at Batiscan, Lower Canada, one of Slight's colleagues met "a few families of old country people...who value the ordinances of religion and Methodism." "They received me," he wrote, "with an affection and cordiality truly Irish and truly christian. 'You are welcome,' they said and so I found it."³⁵ At La Chute in 1858, yet another missionary, Henry Flesher Bland, found the Lasham family, formerly of Cornwall. "In the course of conversation," he noted, "Mrs. L[asham] said that she knew Mr. Faule, my late superintendent when he was a Local Preacher, and that in all probability Mr. F[aule] would remember her father, Luke Williams."³⁶ Such chance meetings spoke to the sheer magnitude of overseas migration.

The British missionaries and the Methodists Episcopalians in the Canadas responded to this influx in the same way: rather than building up their numbers through conversions alone, they turned a considerable portion of their energies to incorporating as many of the immigrants as possible into their respective connexions.³⁷ The missionaries, for instance, attempted to reach out to any of their recently-arrived lay brethren who came through the towns and cities of Lower and Upper Canada, sometimes giving them money raised among pioneers who had already established themselves.³⁸ More often, however, they simply formed such settlers into societies and classes on the established

³⁴ UCA, Benjamin Slight papers, Box 1, File 2, Journal, March 28, 1841.

³⁵ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Ministers of St. James, Montreal, Robert Lusher to John Mathewson, July 19, 1842.

³⁶ UCA, Henry Flesher Bland papers, Box 1, File 2, Journal, July 3, 1858.

³⁷ Cf. French, *Parsons and Politics*, 68-70, 77-8, 107 and Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 45-52, 147 who tend to downplay or overlook the role of immigration in the growth of Methodism in the Canadas.

³⁸ UCA, James Wilson papers, Autobiography, 11. See also Archives of Ontario (AO), George Pashley papers, Diary, 8-9. Pashley notes that the missionary William Croscombe and "another member of our Society from Scotland" helped him get free passage for his family from Montreal to Prescott, Upper Canada.

Wesleyan pattern.³⁹ The missionaries also made efforts to keep in close contact with those of their “fellow countrymen” who were “obliged to [go] into the wilderness, where there is no Temple, no Priest, [n]or place of public worship to which they have access...”⁴⁰ In the late 1820s, in a characteristic move, they formed a new circuit among the “Methodists from Ireland” near Wesleyville on the eastern bank of the Ottawa river. The Methodist Episcopalals also followed the Wesleyan immigrants from Britain as they moved into areas like South Monaghan and Cavan townships in Upper Canada in the 1820s.⁴¹ They formed new societies around York during the same period, serving the English, Irish and Scottish arrivals who “generally expressed a desire to have the Gospel preached among them.”⁴² Travelling through New Ireland, Lower Canada, in 1837, the British Wesleyan missionary John Borland described the end product of this effort. Through the “instrumentality” of himself and his brethren, many settlers had been “redeemed from their...wanderings in apostasy, who were previously to their coming to this country united in church fellowship with our people in Europe....”⁴³

In the process, the Methodists in the Canadas began to conceptualize the colonies as an extension of the British Wesleyan gospel field, no less deserving of attention and support than Ireland or the dark corners of Lancashire. Within a year of

³⁹ See for example UCA, WMMS-C, Box 2, File 27, #5, Henry Pope to James Wood, February 11, 1817; UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, February 7, 1820; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #29, Thomas Catterick to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, September 10, 1825.

⁴⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 7, File 52, #25, James Booth to Joseph Taylor, August 4, 1823.

⁴¹ John Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries; or, the Canadian Itinerants' Memorial* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1867-77), 2:322, 3:351; Norman W. Taggart, *The Irish in World Methodism, 1760-1900* (London: Epworth Press, 1986), 71-2.

⁴² Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries*, 2:365-6.

⁴³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 21, File 137, #15, John Borland to Robert Alder, July 7, 1837.

arriving in Lower Canada, the British missionaries wrote to their superiors in London, England, arguing that “[t]he great and continued emigration” from the United Kingdom, “among whom there are many Methodists,” called for the dispatch of more preachers to the province.⁴⁴ The missionaries saw Upper Canada in the same light. At the very least, the town of York required a British Wesleyan minister: “vast numbers of emigrants from the United Kingdom of Great Britain are resorting there every year,” James Booth noted,

and many of them are the fruit of your labours at home, and many of them children of praying parents[;] how desirable should it be to have a British minister here, to direct them in a strange land, to the stranger’s friend.⁴⁵

Similarly, at Rawdon in Lower Canada, James Knowlan found “many settlers...from Ireland & Scotland, but chiefly from the former, and they are in great want of spiritual instruction...”. They were, he made sure to point out, “most anxious to have a Missionary among them.”⁴⁶ From the missionaries’ perspective, migration was creating both opportunities and obligations for the home connexion in the Canadas.

The British Wesleyan laity tended to situate Lower and Upper Canada within the same transatlantic context. In January 1820 the settlers around Newcastle in Upper Canada pointed out that seven townships in their district were “newly settled and

⁴⁴ Ibid., Box 2, File 23, #24, William Bennett, John Strong and Richard Williams to James Buckley, July 10, 1816. See also *ibid.*, Box 2, File 23, #31, John Strong to James Buckley, June 29, 1816; *ibid.*, Box 3, File 30, #2, Richard Pope to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, April 18, 1818.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Box 3, File 35, #32, James Booth to Joseph Taylor, November 23, 1819. See also *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #18, John Hick to Joseph Taylor, June 15, 1819 and *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #21, James Booth to Joseph Taylor [?], October 11, 1819.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Box 10, File 64, #2, James Knowlan to George Morley, February 5, 1826.

now settling upon by European emigrants, many of whom belonged to the Methodist society at home” and who were “anxious to have continuation of those enjoyments with which they were blessed in their highly favoured country.”⁴⁷ Eight months later, in Stamford, Lower Canada, another group of settlers asked a missionary who passed through whether the Wesleyan hierarchy at home would send them a minister. “If our Preachers in Ireland only knew our state,” they said, “we are sure they would send us one.”⁴⁸ In 1841 the laity in Kingston wrote that, while

your Memorialists beg leave to state that...we are favoured with the labours and pastoral care of the British Wesleyan Missionaries[,] there are hundreds of our fellow men residing in the surrounding Country who are destitute of the instructions of those Ministers whom they regard and love...

“[M]ost of those persons have emigrated from Great Britain,” they added, “and were brought to a knowledge of truth under the...ministry of the Wesleyan Ministers at home and on this account...they feel warmly attached to that Body...”. The Kingston settlers also pointed out that preparations were being made for the reception of “a great influx of emigrants from England, Ireland & Scotland” many of whom would be Wesleyans with “a claim” on the “attention and pastoral care” of the connexion in the Old Country.⁴⁹

By the early 1830s the leaders of the British connexion and of the recently-independent Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada were willing to help

⁴⁷ Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #16, Henry Ruttan et al. to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, January 12, 1820.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #29, Thomas Catterick to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, September 10, 1820.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Box 25, File 169, #35, Leaders and Stewards of Kingston to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, May 17, 1841. See also *ibid.*, Box 25, File 169, #11, Official members of the Toronto circuit to Robert Alder, March 1841.

shoulder this load. Both groups increasingly shared the perception of Lower and Upper Canada as an integral part of a greater Britain. When the two churches agreed to unite in 1833, one of the most influential of the British Wesleyans, Jabez Bunting, noted that “[p]atriotic duty...recommend[s] this union. Numerous emigrants from Britain and Ireland are going every year to Canada, many of them were once part of our own flocks. They have a claim upon our sympathy and attention.”⁵⁰ Another of the British connexion’s leading men, Robert Alder, reiterated Bunting’s point in more sweeping terms, arguing that, despite “all that has been stated by a certain class of political economists,” the Canadas were entitled to “the protection and encouragement of the parent state.” After all, “there are many families in the United Kingdom who have near and dear relatives settled in various parts of America, and are looking towards it as their future abode.”⁵¹ Where Britons went, British institutions, whether in church or state, must surely follow.

The Canadian Methodists could not agree more and, by way of proof, they also directed their “most anxious attention” to “the many emigrants from the mother country, and especially to the professors and families of Wesleyan Methodism.”⁵² It was an effort that their brethren among the British Wesleyan ministry found particularly gratifying and which they repeatedly encouraged, observing that it was “an interesting part” of Canadian Methodism’s “great work to follow these sheep into the wilderness,

⁵⁰ *Christian Guardian* (hereafter *CG*), October 16, 1833, 194.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, May 7, 1834, 103.

⁵² *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1824 to 1845, inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1846), 113.

and bring them into the fold of Christ.”⁵³ The Canadian Methodists responded in turn, pointing out to the lay members of their own connexion that “[a]mong the numerous emigrants from the Mother Country there are many who have been members and hearers in the Wesleyan Church at home.” “They are our brethren,” the ministers added, “and we should receive, and welcome, and help them as such.”⁵⁴ As the British Wesleyans proudly declared in 1862, the Methodists of the Canadas and Britain were “[u]nited by ties of race and kindred...”⁵⁵

That being the case, the problem became how best to organize and control this expanding gospel field. Sometimes the British Conference took the lead, as it did when the British and Canada connexions united in 1833 and then reunited in 1847.⁵⁶ For the most part, however, the Conference delegated its ultimate authority over the missions to the WMMS, created between 1813 and 1818 in reaction to the earlier mismanagement of Thomas Coke, one of Wesley’s most energetic and erratic lieutenants. As even his most strident critics admitted, Coke had some justification for regarding himself as one of the founders “of our important missions...”⁵⁷ In 1786 he published an *Address to the Pious and Benevolent* in which he laid out a plan to raise enough money to support missionary work in the most benighted regions of Britain – the Scottish Highlands and the

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 108-9, 137, 178. See also *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1846 to 1857, inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1863), 273.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁵ *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1862), 94.

⁵⁶ See 154-5 and 178-9 below for a more detailed account of these unions.

⁵⁷ *Report of the Principle Speeches delivered at the Foundation of the Methodist Missionary Society for the Leeds District, October 6th, 1813* (Leeds, 1813) quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:345.

Channel Islands, apparently – and in the West Indies, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Quebec. The British Conference, with Wesley's approval, fell in with the scheme and dispatched Coke and three other preachers to Newfoundland and Antigua.⁵⁸

From that point on, Coke seems to have perceived the missions as his personal fiefdom, to be managed in whatever way he saw fit. Unfortunately, he suffered from a massive excess of zeal over knowledge. He had only the vaguest notion of the elaborate organizational logistics that a missionary field required. He kept terrible accounts and was regularly forced to bail the missions out of debt with his own savings.⁵⁹ His periodic absences in the United States between 1784 and 1803, acting as Wesley's representative to the Methodist Episcopal Church, also threw the administration of the mission work into disarray. When the leading ministers in London finally decided to intervene in late 1803, creating a Committee of Finance and Advice (the CFA) to help conjure order out of the chaos, the situation did not greatly improve. Even after the Conference gave its seal of approval to the new arrangement, Coke fought a stubborn rearguard action against what he saw as the CFA's attempt to make him into "a mere shadow in the whole business" of the missions.⁶⁰ In the meantime, missionaries in places like St. Vincent complained about never receiving answers to the letters and reports that they sent home. "Let us ask what advice we would, however important, none was

⁵⁸ Norman W. Taggart, "Methodist Foreign Missions, The First Half-Century," *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* 45 (October 1986), 158.

⁵⁹ W.R. Ward, "The Legacy of John Wesley: The Pastoral Office in Britain and America," in *idem, Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth Press, 1993), 239. For Coke's lack of financial acumen see John Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1969), 273-4, 281-6.

⁶⁰ Thomas Coke to the Committee of Finance and Advice, September 10, 1804 quoted in *ibid.*, 273-81.

given,” one of them wrote, “We were just left to do as we could, and it seemed as if we were not worth the least notice...”⁶¹

In 1813 Thomas Coke left Britain to establish a new Wesleyan mission in India; the Young Turks of the connexion seized the opportunity to place the funding of the missions on a permanent and sustainable footing. The alternatives were clear enough to the minister James Wood: the British connexion either had “to withdraw our Missionaries, and give up the souls whom they have been instrumental in saving, or augment our income.”⁶² Stationed on the Leeds circuit, George Morley and Jabez Bunting took matters into their own hands. In October 1813 they called together a group of ministers and wealthy laymen from across the west of Yorkshire to help them found the first Wesleyan Methodist missionary society. This meeting established a system for the regular collection of donations that, with minor revisions, continued in use for the next sixty years. The preachers accepted subscriptions for the mission work from the laity on their circuits on a weekly, quarterly or annual basis. Each subscriber automatically became a member of the missionary society; anyone who gave more than a guinea per annum was invited to attend the two general meetings a year that were meant to keep the money-raising machinery in good working order. The rules of the Leeds missionary society also made it subordinate to the CFA, which received all of the funds collected.⁶³

⁶¹ J. Taylor to Thomas Coke[?], April 7, 1804 quoted in Taggart, “Methodist Foreign Missions,” 173.

⁶² *Report of the Principle Speeches*, 9 quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:343.

⁶³ N. Allen Birtwhistle, “Methodist Missions,” in *ibid.*, 3:24-5; G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London: Epworth Press, 1921-4), 1:36-49; David Hempton, “Jabez Bunting: The Formative Years, 1794-1820,” in *idem The Religion of the People: Methodism and popular religion, c. 1750-1900* (London: Routledge, 1996), 103-5.

This model spread within a year to circuits across England. It was officially adopted by the Conference in 1814.⁶⁴ “The wisdom and utility of the plan has been made strikingly apparent, by the splendor of the results,” Edmund Grindrod, one of the leading preachers in the connexion, wrote in 1841: the annual income of the missions was about £7,000 in 1813, but “now it amounts to the sum of £91,182 8s 8d.”⁶⁵

Despite the organizational strides taken in 1813, there nevertheless remained few set structures to govern the overall relationship between the home connexion and the wider mission field. The secretaryship of the CFA, for instance, was a part-time position in addition to regular circuit work: an arrangement that could easily lead to confusion. In September 1814, the then secretary, James Buckley, wrote to Jabez Bunting, explaining that the CFA had somehow managed to lose track of three “young men...appointed as foreign missionaries...”⁶⁶ Plainly, bureaucratic reform was overdue. In 1818 Bunting and another ministerial up-and-comer, Richard Watson, produced the *Laws and Regulations of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society* which established a permanent central committee – the WMMS – responsible for “the superintendence of the Collection and Disbursement of all Monies raised for the Foreign Missions...and also the *General Management* of the Missions” in the interval between the annual meetings of the Conference.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Findlay and Holdsworth, *History*, 1:54-5

⁶⁵ Grindrod, *Compendium*, 197.

⁶⁶ JRULM, MARC, James Buckley papers, MAM PLP 17.5.5, James Buckley to Jabez Bunting, September 3, 1814.

⁶⁷ *Minutes of several conversations between the preachers late in connexion with the Rev. Mr. Wesley* [hereafter *Minutes*] (London, 1818) quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:357. Emphasis in original.

The WMMS consisted of the President and Secretary of the Conference, twenty-four ministers and, in a departure from the usual Wesleyan pattern, twenty-four laymen. The latter, however, generally represented the wealthiest and most conservative societies in the connexion; they were men who knew how to handle money and who were unlikely to rock the ministerial boat.⁶⁸ The WMMS's membership was also divided along regional lines. Sixteen of the lay and ministerial members came from the provincial circuits and the rest were drawn from the greater London area. In theory, the entire group met once a month in the capital;⁶⁹ but, in reality, most of the day-to-day work of the missions was in the hands of three Secretaries, each a minister appointed by the Conference. Initially, only one of these preachers lived at the Mission House at 77 Hatton Garden, London, and “devote[d] himself on the Week-Days...to the service of the Missions exclusively...”.⁷⁰ In 1821 all three were released from regular circuit duties. The connexion added a fourth Secretary in 1834; they divided the mission field between them, each of them concentrating on a different geographic area.⁷¹

The WMMS aimed to keep the tightest possible control over the missions. Candidates for the mission work were nominated by their District Meetings, but the WMMS had sole authority to decide which of them would actually become a

⁶⁸ On the general relationship between the wealthy laity and the ministry see D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 5-6; W.R. Ward, ed., *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-1829* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1972), 6.

⁶⁹ In fact, the WMMS's monthly meetings were usually attended by no more than half of the committee's membership. See UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1 and Reel 2, *passim*.

⁷⁰ *Minutes* (London, 1818) quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:357. In 1841 the Mission House was moved from 77 Hatton Garden to the more spacious Centenary Hall at 17 Bishopsgate Street Within, London.

⁷¹ Findlay and Holdsworth, *History*, 1:73-5, 1:167.

missionary.⁷² Any prospective missionary had to be free from debt, enjoy good health, have a good grasp of English grammar and, of course, believe in the doctrines and discipline of Wesleyan Methodism.⁷³ The WMMS – with the final approval of the Conference – determined both where to station any of the candidates who were accepted and how long they should remain abroad. The term of service for a missionary in British North America was officially set at a minimum of twenty years. They were forbidden to leave their post until their time was up, unless they had prior permission from the WMMS.⁷⁴ Once the missionaries returned to Britain they were entitled to a home circuit by virtue of their membership in the Wesleyan connexion. While abroad, however, the WMMS expected them to set up classes, societies, circuits and Districts “exactly on the plan established in England,” to “promote the temporal interests of the Missions, by Weekly, Quarterly and Annual Subscriptions,” and to behave according “to the model exhibited by your brethren at home.”⁷⁵ This included not engaging in trade: “[w]e wish you to be at the remotest distance from all temptation to a secular or mercenary temper,” the WMMS declared. The missionaries’ material wants were provided for based on “a regular and proper scale of allowances” determined at 77 Hatton Garden.⁷⁶ In return, the WMMS required its agents to keep an individual journal, frequently sending home “such

⁷² Grindrod, *Compendium*, 217-18.

⁷³ School of Oriental and African Studies (hereafter SOAS), Methodist Missionary Society Archives (hereafter MMSA), WMMS, Special Series, Candidate Papers, Fiche #1909, March 18, 1834. This is a record of the WMMS’s examination of four missionary candidates who were sent to the Canadas in 1834.

⁷⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, August 21, 1827.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Reel 1, November 18, 1815; Grindrod, *Compendium*, 201, 211, 221.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 216; UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, March 31, 1819.

copious abstracts of it as may give a full and particular account” of their “labours, successes, and prospects.” The missionaries were also supposed to hold a District Meeting once a year, under the direction of a Chairman appointed by the WMMS, and to dispatch a set of minutes to the Missionary Secretaries “containing a detailed account of their proceedings...with an account of the state of the societies under their care, as well as the general state of religion in the countries in which they are stationed.”⁷⁷

The Missionary Secretaries attempted to keep equally strict control over other actors across the mission field, including any preachers who were called into the gospel work in the colonies. In 1825, the WMMS began to actively urge the missionaries stationed in the Canadas to “encourage a native Ministry...”.⁷⁸ At the same time, it also attempted to regulate who would become what were known as ‘assistant missionaries’ and what rights this type of preacher would have within the British connexion. As was the case with the regular missionaries, the WMMS had the last say about who could or could not become an assistant missionary. Unlike the missionaries dispatched from Britain, however, these assistant missionaries would not be allowed to claim a circuit in the home country; they would not be allowed to make any financial demands on the connexional funds controlled by the British Conference and the WMMS; they would be permitted to attend District Meetings, but “they cannot vote there;” and they would only be permitted to administer the sacraments “in places where a regular Missionary cannot be present...”.⁷⁹ In short, these assistant missionaries were meant to fill any gaps that might open up in the WMMS’s rapidly-expanding network of missions at the lowest

⁷⁷ Grindrod, *Compendium*, 216, 221.

⁷⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, Reel 3, May 21, 1825.

⁷⁹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1986, August 15, 1826.

possible cost to the home connexion.⁸⁰ Between 1814 and 1854 the missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada put forward approximately thirty-two candidates for the position of assistant missionary: men, they repeatedly stressed, who exhibited “deep piety, ardent zeal, consistent Christian character, vigorous intellect, and studious habits.”⁸¹ And if some of these hopefuls, like James Hume of Stanstead, Lower Canada, were dealing with what the WMMS might have considered troubling personal issues – his wife was a “worthless woman” who “refuses to live with him and resides at present somewhere in Upper Canada” – they more than made up for any such shortcomings through their devotion to “English Methodism and the British Government...”.⁸² Like the regular missionaries, the assistant missionaries were pious and loyal men who, in theory at least, could be trusted to follow the WMMS’s lead in the Canadas.

While, on paper, all of this looked like a vast improvement over the CFA, in actuality there were forces at work that constantly threatened to disrupt the British Wesleyan mission field after 1818. Not least of these were the bureaucratic difficulties that plagued the WMMS, despite the best laid plans of Jabez Bunting and Richard Watson. At the most basic level, three or four Missionary Secretaries – and only one of them permanently resident at the Mission House – still proved insufficient to oversee the connexion’s increasingly far-flung missions. The sheer crush of work often seemed to be on the verge of overwhelming them. In 1820 one of the Secretaries, Joseph Taylor, wrote

⁸⁰ J.I. Little, *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of An English-Canadian Identity, 1792-1852* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 159-61 comes to a similar conclusion.

⁸¹ The number of prospective assistant missionaries is derived from the manuscript minutes of both the Lower and Upper Canada Districts between 1825 and 1854. In the end, the WMMS accepted approximately twenty-one of these candidates. The quotation is from UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, Reel 3, May 25, 1848.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Reel 3, May 17, 1838.

to a missionary stationed in the Canadas explaining that “[y]our minutes have been duly received but owing to the press of business we have not been able to take up the several points contained in them & when we shall be able I cannot say.”⁸³

In the short term, the situation might have improved marginally, but any unexpected development tended to throw the Mission House off kilter. In 1834 the Missionary Secretary John Beecham explained the WMMS’s delay in sending important information to the missionaries in Upper Canada by noting that “we were pressed...by the death of two of the Secretaries, and had all our Missions throughout the world to attend to as well as the concerns of Canada.”⁸⁴ Four years later, Robert Alder described receiving forty-five letters from “Caffraria, & other parts of S. Africa; from St. Mary’s & Macarthy’s Island on the Western Coast; from Van Dieman’s land & New Zealand, from Jamaica, the Bahamas, North America, Sweden & France” all on one morning. He did not indicate that this was an unusually heavy day at 77 Hatton Garden.⁸⁵ The Missionary Secretaries’ frequent inability to master this constant influx of correspondence was “calculated to awaken some degree of anxiety,” one of their number, Elijah Hoole, admitted in 1847. “An increased attention to the several departments of our home system, and Foreign Correspondence is absolutely necessary,” he added.⁸⁶ The WMMS was not exactly a well-oiled bureaucratic machine.

⁸³ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Joseph Taylor to Richard Williams, July 6, 1820.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, John Beecham to John Berry, April 24, 1834. See also JRULM, MARC, Robert Alder papers, MAM PLP 1.36.3, Robert Alder to John Beecham, January 12, 1833.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, MAM PLP 1.36.6, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, July 17, 1838.

⁸⁶ JRULM, MARC, Elijah Hoole papers, MAM PLP 55.32.45, Elijah Hoole to Jabez Bunting, August 18, 1847.

In its efforts to impose some sort of order on the Wesleyan missions, the WMMS also had to contend with forces beyond its immediate control. The weakness of the North American postal system put definite limits on the Missionary Secretaries' ability to keep in close contact with the various Methodist groups in Lower and Upper Canada, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century. Letters could easily go astray once they reached the colonies. In June 1820, the British Wesleyan missionary Richard Williams wrote to Joseph Taylor, pointing out that

[y]our letter dated the 8th of January 1820 came to hand last Monday after having remained a long time in one of the country Post offices, which is not an infrequent thing and by means of which some of our letters from you are lost altogether.⁸⁷

The rudimentary nature of the transatlantic mails did not help this local situation. Until 1815 private sailing vessels and a packet operating between Falmouth, Halifax and New York were the only postal links between Britain and British North America. After the Treaty of Ghent, sailing companies began to provide regularly scheduled and frequent voyages between New York and Liverpool and, less often, between Boston and London. These ships were faster and their rates cheaper than the Falmouth packet. As a result, by the 1820s and 1830s most letters to and from Lower and Upper Canada were carried by American ships and passed through New York.⁸⁸

Not that this solved all problems: there were still any number of places

⁸⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #22, Richard Williams to Joseph Taylor, June 16, 1820. See also UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, Reel 3, February 12, 1821. One of the Missionary Secretaries' letters had "been to Canada and returned because the Postman could not find you."

⁸⁸ J.C. Arnell, *Transatlantic Mail to and from British North America from the Early Days of the U.P.U.* (Hamilton: J.C. Arnell, 1996), 1, 5.

along the way where communications could and did break down. In 1823 the WMMS complained about missionaries who entrusted the minutes of their District Meetings “to persons who do not forward them.”⁸⁹ Sixteen years later, however, one of the Missionary Secretaries made the exact same mistake while travelling to the Canadas. Robert Alder gave an important letter to a “Mr. Sands” of New York to be sent on to his colleagues in Britain. For whatever reason, Sands decided to put the letter on “the Sailing Packet of the 8th of July so that I am not surprised,” Alder explained to Jabez Bunting, “that you had not received it on the 1st of August” in time for the opening of the British Conference.⁹⁰ The WMMS was still learning how to work the North American and British postal systems to its advantage in the 1840s.

In the meantime, the production and distribution of connexional literature opened up a whole other area of difficulty for the Missionary Secretaries. The slowness and general unreliability of the post tended to undermine the whole purpose of the WMMS’s publications: to keep the various parts of the mission field in close contact and to foster a sense of common purpose. The *Wesleyan Missionary Notices* – distributed to all the missionaries and to laymen and women who collected one shilling a week for the mission fund – were sometimes “printed at so early a period in the month, that we have not been able to give any interesting information which we might receive after the 13th of the month.” This, the Missionary Secretary John Beecham lamented,

has often been very mortifying to ourselves, and our friends have often been disappointed to find no allusion

⁸⁹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1986, August 10, 1823.

⁹⁰ JRULM, MARC, Robert Alder papers, MAM PLP 1.36.8, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, September 9, 1839.

in the notice, when they have received it, of something highly interesting...an imperfect report of which they had heard during the month.⁹¹

Instead of creating unity, the *Notices* threatened to produce discontent among both laity and missionaries.

Even if the Missionary Secretaries could solve this particular problem with relative ease, the connexional magazines, newspapers and pamphlets that the WMMS regularly sent overseas could only do good if they arrived in a decent time. Often they did not. In 1821 John DePutron complained that “[n]o information” from home had reached the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas, “for my magazines etc. are not yet arrived though it is in season...”.⁹² Serving as the President of the Canada Conference in 1837, William Martin Harvard could not understand why he had to wait so long to receive the official journal of the British Conference, the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*. “The Sept[ember] number,” he wrote, “did not come to hand till June; though we are but six weeks from England...”.⁹³ This sort of thing shocked even the usually stoical Missionary Secretaries. In March 1844 Robert Alder wrote to one of the British Wesleyans in the Canadas, pointing out how surprised the WMMS was that the missionaries had yet to receive the latest batch of publications from home, even though “we sent a supply out for Eastern and Western Canada the last Spring.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.2.4, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, December 22, 1832.

⁹² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 5, File 44, #27, John DePutron to Joseph Taylor, July 5, 1821.

⁹³ JRULM, MARC, William Martin Harvard papers, MAM PLP 50.59.35, William Martin Harvard to Thomas Jackson, August 22, 1837. See also UCA, WMMS-C, Box 21, File 143, #4, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, October 11, 1837.

⁹⁴ UCA, Matthew Richey papers, Box 1, File 2, Robert Alder to Matthew Richey, March 25, 1844.

The various flaws in the WMMS bureaucracy, combined with the complex nature of transatlantic communication, quickly translated into tensions between connexional core and periphery. Even as they developed a vision of Lower and Upper Canada as provinces of a 'greater' Britain, the various Methodist groups in those colonies were also left with a sometimes profound sense of isolation from their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic. "No kind brother seems to think us worthy of his notice or a few lines of church news from home," one of the British Wesleyan missionaries told the Missionary Secretary Joseph Taylor in 1820,

What can be the reason my dear Brother? You have been a Missionary...you know what a Missionary must feel under such circumstances that has the work at heart. My mind is *pained*. Do write me tho[ugh] I am a stranger to you. Do, I beg, be familiar and write me as often as you can...⁹⁵

At once desperate and demanding, this tone predominated in many a missionary's letters and reports. They wrote about how "anxious" they were "to hear from [the] Committee" and how "painful & discouraging" it was not to know exactly how the WMMS wanted them to conduct their mission work.⁹⁶ At other times, the missionaries let their superiors in London know, in no uncertain terms, that they were "grieved at the *apparent* neglect" with which their communications seemed to be treated. Since, the future Missionary Secretary Robert Alder declared, his letters "referred to matters, not only of importance to myself personally, but to the cause of God," he had expected to hear from 77 Hatton

⁹⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #18, James Booth to Joseph Taylor, May 29, 1820. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Box 6, File 48, #22, James Knowlan to Joseph Taylor, August 24, 1822; *ibid.*, Box 9, File 59, #16, James Knowlan to Joseph Taylor, May 31, 1825.

Garden in short order.⁹⁷ Into the 1830s and 1840s, the missionaries continued to convey this image of a people abandoned, receiving no news from their homeland and facing the prospect of having to act alone, without the “counsel and direction” of their British fathers and brethren.⁹⁸

The same language appeared in the correspondence of both the British Wesleyan laity in the Canadas and the Canadian Methodists. Whether asking for connexional news and publications from home or requesting money for their circuits, the leading laymen in the Canadas were often either dismayed or angry when answers did not come from the WMMS.⁹⁹ Sometimes a lack of contact led to full-on paranoia. “As you have not written to me for [a] very long time,” the Montreal layman William Lunn stated to Robert Alder in 1836, “of course you must have taken offense at something I do not know...”.¹⁰⁰ A year later, Peter Langlois in Quebec City accused the WMMS of favouritism for sending what he considered to be the best ministers to Montreal while leaving the chapels of his town in the hands of second raters.¹⁰¹ For his part, Lunn was entirely convinced by the mid-1830s that it was “useless to make any representations, public or private, respecting our Circuit or District” to the Missionary Secretaries.¹⁰² Along with another Montreal merchant, John Mathewson, he eventually vowed not to

⁹⁷ Ibid., Box 11, File 70, #11, Robert Alder to George Morley, June 4, 1827. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁸ Ibid., Box 19, File 127, #10, William Lord to Robert Alder, February 18, 1835; *ibid.*, Box 18, File 194, #4, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, February 13, 1844.

⁹⁹ See for example *ibid.*, Box 23, File 153, #33, John Mathewson to Robert Alder, November 9, 1839; *ibid.*, Box 27, File 186, #35, William Lunn to Elijah Hoole, November 26, 1843.

¹⁰⁰ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #205, William Lunn to Robert Alder, March 1, 1836.

¹⁰¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 21, File 137, #12, Peter Langlois to Jabez Bunting, June 9, 1837.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Box 18, File 112, #16, William Lunn to Robert Alder, October 31, 1834.

write to the WMMS again until he had received a reply to his previous letters.¹⁰³ The Canadian Methodists were equally put out on the admittedly rarer occasions when their “communications to the Mission House” were “treated with entire neglect...”.¹⁰⁴ The British Conference could be just as lax as the WMMS at times: its pronouncements to the Canada Conference sometimes failed to arrive at their intended destination, even during times of transatlantic connexional crisis.¹⁰⁵

Not surprisingly, perhaps, this feeling of isolation from the British connexion complicated any notion of Lower and Upper Canada as a simple extension of the home country. In an attempt to garner more consistent attention from the WMMS, the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters, in particular, sometimes claimed that the colonies were greater than Great Britain. In 1824 William Lunn wrote to the Missionary Secretary Richard Watson expressing the fear that the British Conference had “an erroneous idea of Canada[;] either you have received very imperfect accounts of it, or none at all...”. In response, he described the colony “as a fine interesting Country” whose “prosperity advances with the rapid increase of its settlements.” Lunn also suggested that the Canadas were an improvement on the Old Country, in climatic terms at any rate – “the weather in Upper Canada is as fine as in England,” he stated, “and the soil quite as good, certainly the winters are finer and more healthy.”¹⁰⁶ The missionaries took a somewhat different tack, countering perceived neglect by declaring their own superiority over the WMMS. Serving in Upper Canada in 1834, William Lord told Robert Alder

¹⁰³ Ibid., Box 26, File 178, #16, John Mathewson to Robert Alder, June 28, 1842.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Box 30, File 216, #11, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 2, 1846.

¹⁰⁵ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Egerton Ryerson to Jabez Bunting, December 11, 1844.

¹⁰⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 8, File 56, #3, William Lunn to Richard Watson, February 3, 1824.

that, while he (Alder) may have “seen something of this Province,” he could not possibly “understand it, nor can any one without *residing* here & mixing with the people & attending the various meetings,” which, of course, Lord himself had been doing.¹⁰⁷

Benjamin Slight took up a similar line fourteen years later, noting that “[w]hat Canada is, and what its wants are, is a subject but little known, & but little thought of” among the Mission House bureaucrats. “[I]t can only properly be appreciated,” he added, “by those who travel through the land in the discharge of ministerial duties.”¹⁰⁸ As these comments suggest, despite the influx of British and Wesleyan immigrants, some of the missionaries and laity in the Canadas were prepared to define their sense of self against the home country and their connexional leadership.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest, however, that the WMMS was a bureaucratic disaster from beginning to end or that the Atlantic remained an almost insurmountable obstacle to effective communication throughout the nineteenth century. Beginning in the mid-1840s, the Missionary Secretaries started to implement new policies that indicated a growing trust in the efficiency of transatlantic communications. In 1844 Robert Alder stated that it was no longer necessary or even desirable, given the continued expansion of the British Wesleyan mission field, for missionaries stationed in Lower and Upper Canada to write to the WMMS once every three months. “Instead of writing four times a year to us,” Alder declared, each missionary would now send a report to the Chairman of his District “relating to everything connected with the spiritual and secular

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Box 18, File 119, #11, William Lord to Robert Alder, December 31, 1834. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Box 29, File 229, #28, Benjamin Slight to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, October 13, 1848.

state of the work under his care...”. It was the Chairman’s responsibility to “prepare and forward to the [Missionary] Secretaries a clear and comprehensive quarterly statement, founded upon these reports...”. Alder was sure that this plan would “place the work as a whole more fully and constantly before us, and through the medium of the [*Wesleyan Missionary Notices*] before our friends generally.”¹⁰⁹ Thanks to technological change, that usually proved to be the case. In 1848 the Cunard line introduced a Liverpool-Halifax-New York steam packet service. This resulted in a weekly mail run from March to September and a fortnightly service the rest of the year. The shipping magnate Hugh Allen went one better in 1856, establishing a biweekly postal run between Liverpool and Quebec City. In 1859 this service became weekly.¹¹⁰ The British world was becoming smaller by the year.

Periodic difficulties with transatlantic communications may have continued to produce tensions between metropole and periphery, but the overall trend, from the mid-1840s on, was one of increasing integration among the Methodists in the Canadas and Britain. A British Wesleyan missionary might grumble about not receiving a copy of the home connexion’s unofficial journal, the *Watchman*, at his new station in Kingston;¹¹¹ the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference might complain about not receiving “a solitary copy” of the *Minutes* of the British Conference;¹¹² after about 1845, however, the British missionaries, laity and their Canadian Methodist brethren voiced far fewer

¹⁰⁹ UCA, Matthew Richey papers, Box 1, File 2, Robert Alder to Matthew Richey, March 25, 1844.

¹¹⁰ Arnell, *Transatlantic Mail*, 2-3.

¹¹¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 29, File 201, #20, Edmund Botterell to Robert Alder, August 22, 1845.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Box 40, File 291, #22, Enoch Wood to George Osborn, December 29, 1856.

complaints about not receiving letters and publications from Britain. And there is other evidence of growing transoceanic closeness, beyond the strictly negative. The missionary Matthew Richey wrote to Robert Alder from Montreal in 1846, noting with some pride that the “Wesleyan community” on both sides of the Atlantic had “received through the columns of the *Watchman*, such ample information concerning the dimensions, architectural beauty, and auspicious dedication of our new sanctuary in St. James’ Street,” that he deemed it “superfluous to do more than simply advert to that memorable occasion” in his letter.¹¹³ In the 1850s the British missionaries in Lower Canada regularly received news about the deaths of the leading figures in the home connexion and, on at least one occasion, passed a suitably laudatory resolution at their District Meeting.¹¹⁴ The Canada Conference of 1865 resolved that its thanks should be presented to the WMMS “for the donation of a copy of the London *Watchman* to each of the Missionaries in this Conference...and, as well, for the liberal supply of Missionary publications sent for circulation among our people.”¹¹⁵ The Methodists in the Canadas were well and truly plugged into a larger British Wesleyan network by the 1860s.

The rules and regulations of the WMMS, whether the Missionary Secretaries implemented them rigidly or with a degree of creative management, also helped

¹¹³ Ibid., Box 29, File 210, #8, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, March 26, 1846. See also ibid., Box 40, File 296, #17, Enoch Wood to George Osborn, October 25, 1858: “I was delighted with your reference to the magnitude of the work in British America, as reported in the *Watchman*...”

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Box 38, File 281, #21, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, May 22, 1854; UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 4, File 110, William Scott to Egerton Ryerson, March 13, 1856.

¹¹⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 44, File 328, #19, John Hunt (Secretary of Conference) to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, July 5, 1865. For the background to this resolution see UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 2, April 12, 1862.

create and maintain of a sense of belonging to a wider British world among the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada. The rules around marriage are a case in point. After their first four years as missionaries, British Wesleyan preachers, whether stationed in the Canadas or elsewhere in the mission field, were permitted to marry. Many took immediate advantage of the opportunity, almost invariably looking to Britain for a suitable spouse. By doing so, they often forged lasting bonds with ministerial families in the home country – sometimes very powerful ones. In May 1820, for example, Richard Pope married “Miss Alice Redfern late from Manchester, England, a Person well known to most of our Preachers who have friends in that Circuit.” The new Mrs. Pope was Jabez Bunting’s cousin.¹¹⁶

Other missionaries did not aim quite as high. In 1826, Joseph Stinson announced his “engagement with a young Lady at home, whom I believe to be in all respects suitable for a minister and a missionary.” She was the eldest daughter of a Wesleyan minister, John Chettle. The WMMS permitted Stinson to cross the Atlantic to complete his happiness, as it did in most other cases.¹¹⁷ Some of the missionaries in the Canadas may have found wives among the societies there,¹¹⁸ but, in 1851, Gifford Dorey reverted to the usual pattern, seeking “permission to return home to get married.” He was

¹¹⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #28, Richard Pope to Joseph Taylor, September 9, 1820. For Alice Redfern see T.P. Bunting and G. Stringer Rowe, *The Life of Jabez Bunting, D.D.* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts / T. Woolmer, 1859-87), 1:10.

¹¹⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 10, File 64, #6, Joseph Stinson to George Morley, June 14, 1826; SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #147-8, Joseph Stinson to George Morley, January 1, 1828; UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, February 6, 1828. For John Chettle see W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), 89.

¹¹⁸ See for example UCA, WMMS-C, Box 3, File 35, #9, Henry Pope to Joseph Taylor, May 1, 1819; *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #24, Richard Williams to Joseph Taylor, June 20, 1819.

compelled to travel to Britain, he stated bluntly, since he found “Canada very defective in suitable persons for the sphere I move in, and have therefore to look homeward.”¹¹⁹

While displaying what was, perhaps, a unique degree of gallantry, Dorey’s remark also reflected a common belief among many of the British Wesleyan missionaries – that they needed wives fit for both colonial and metropolitan society. If all went well, they would not be riding circuit in the Canadas forever. The allure of greener gospel fields and the call of family obligations persuaded many of the missionaries to ask the WMMS to allow them to come home before their requisite twenty years overseas were up. After experiencing the connexional battles that accompanied the collapse of the first union between the Canada and British Conferences in 1840, for example, Joseph Stinson noted that his inclination was to “to spend a year in England...and then to go to France.” “The attention I have paid to the study of the French and Spanish languages,” he assured the Missionary Secretaries, “will afford me the means of being useful on the continent.”¹²⁰ William Martin Harvard wrote to the Missionary Secretaries in 1847 in the same vein, stating that “having been requested to choose either a Circuit in this country or in favoured England, I have prayerfully decided upon the latter.” This was partly because the Canadas contained “no special call of duty” for him. He also felt, however, that an absence of eleven years in the colonies had “given my family at home a claim to my attention.”¹²¹ Similarly, in 1826 and 1827, Stinson was worried about his parents’ fears

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Box 35, File 252, #19, Gifford Dorey to George Osborn, December 18, 1851; *ibid.*, Box 36, File 260, #9, Gifford Dorey to George Osborn, February 28, 1852.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Box 25, File 169, #29, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 22, 1841. For an earlier request along the same lines see *ibid.*, Box 5, File 44, #27, John DePutron to Joseph Taylor, July 5, 1821.

¹²¹ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the Canada Conference, William Martin Harvard to Jabez Bunting, June 10, 1847.

for his future: they believed that his health was poor; they knew he was their only son; and “they have an idea that if I am sent out again I shall be *forced* or *compelled* to stay abroad *all my life*.”¹²² The only solution was to return to Britain.

Other missionaries requested a transfer home for other reasons.

Sometimes they were aiming to preserve their own health or the health of a beloved family member; and sometimes they were simply homesick. In February 1842, John Hetherington wrote to Jabez Bunting about his eldest son who had been “attacked by disease in his left knee about fifteen months ago” and who had been walking on crutches ever since. “Having already had recourse to every means within my reach,” he explained, he wanted to get the “opinion & advice” of an experienced surgeon on the other side of the Atlantic. Hetherington asked the WMMS for permission to bring his son to Britain, noting that “it would be a great advantage to myself and family were it so arranged that I could have a circuit...even for a few years.”¹²³ Most other missionaries seem to have been convinced that whatever ailed them could be cured by the salubrious air of England and of the southern coast in particular.¹²⁴ It would certainly help rid them of any lingering sense of ennui. In 1822 Henry Pope admitted that he sometimes felt dejected thinking about the companionship he had experienced “at *home*” and, apparently, had not found

¹²² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 10, File 64, #15, Joseph Stinson to George Marsden, November 9, 1826; *ibid.*, Box 11, File 70, #18, Joseph Stinson to George Marsden, July 5, 1827. Emphasis in original.

¹²³ National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Egerton Ryerson papers, File 1, John P. Hetherington to Jabez Bunting, February 16, 1842.

¹²⁴ See for example UCA, WMMS-C, Box 5, File 44, #26, John Hick to Joseph Taylor, June 5, 1821; *ibid.*, Box 6, File 48, #28, John Hick to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, December 21, 1822; *ibid.*, Box 34, File 243, #8, Benjamin Slight to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 19, 1850; *ibid.*, Box 43, File 317, #6, Henry Lanton to William Arthur, April 28, 1863.

abroad.¹²⁵ Five years later, James Booth described his “longing desire to visit Britain again,” even though he still felt “that sense of duty and missionary zeal, which forced me from the bosom of my friends, and the land which gave me birth...”.¹²⁶

In many instances, the WMMS strictly enforced its twenty-year rule; at other times, however, the Missionary Secretaries proved more of a soft touch, allowing preachers to return home early and to take up circuits in Britain. In 1830 Enoch Wood, stationed in New Brunswick, arrived in London without the prior permission of the WMMS. He was charged with bearing “the whole expense of his voyage” to and from Britain and “admonished by the chair” for his disregard for connexional discipline.¹²⁷ Missionaries assigned to the Canadas also experienced the WMMS’s displeasure: in 1833 John Knowlan’s unexpected appearance in Britain “astonished” the WMMS, which referred the case “to the investigation and decision of the [British] Conference” and ordered its treasurers “not to accept any bill drawn by Mr. Knowlan, nor to advance him any monies whatsoever.”¹²⁸ In contrast, John DePutron, Joseph Stinson, William Martin Harvard and at least seven other ministers had no need to fear the wrath of the connexional authorities. In 1821, after six years of trying unsuccessfully to convert French Canadians, DePutron argued that he had more to offer in his native Channel Islands than he did in the Canadas; three years later, the WMMS finally agreed and

¹²⁵ Ibid., Box 6, File 48, #36, Henry Pope to Richard Watson, August 12, 1822. Emphasis in original.

¹²⁶ Ibid., Box 11, File 70, #6, James Booth to George Morley, March 19, 1827.

¹²⁷ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Special Series, Candidate Papers, Fiche #1908, Minutes of a Meeting of the Preachers of the London Districts, November 10, 1830.

¹²⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, July 17, 1833.

transferred him to a French-speaking circuit at home.¹²⁹ As for the rest, the Missionary Secretaries assigned them without much ado to circuits across Britain: Leeds, Maidstone and elsewhere.¹³⁰

Over time, the WMMS's sometimes flexible approach to stationing led, quite unintentionally, to the formation of a community of ministers within the British connexion, but outside the executive ranks of the WMMS, concerned and knowledgeable about developments among the Methodists in the Canadas. In 1823 the former missionary Thomas Catterick asked the Missionary Secretary Joseph Taylor if he had heard from the two ministers who had recently sailed for Canada; he also requested "any other late news which you may have received from that country."¹³¹ When consulted by the WMMS two years later, the recently-returned John Hick happily gave what advice he could about the fastest and cheapest ways to get to the Canadas and about which circuits in Lower Canada were most deserving of financial support.¹³² Twenty years on, John Hetherington kept in close contact with the missionaries still stationed in the Canadas, exchanging information about Wesleyan affairs at home and abroad and, like Hick before him, suggesting optimum travel arrangements.¹³³ By the mid-1840s, however, no one was

¹²⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 5, File 44, #27, John DePutron to Joseph Taylor, July 5, 1821; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, November 1861, 965.

¹³⁰ George H. Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1881), 61, 73, 76, 84, 85, 98, 99, 100, 114, 142; W.R. Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism: The Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1830-1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 356, n.1; 367, n.1.

¹³¹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #120, Thomas Catterick to Joseph Taylor, October 16, 1823.

¹³² *Ibid.*, Fiche #134, John Hick to George Morley, September 10, 1825.

¹³³ JRULM, MARC, John B. Selley papers, MAM PLP 96.9.4, John B. Selley to John Hetherington, May 14, 1846; SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #336, John Hetherington to Robert Alder, May 29, 1846; *ibid.*, Fiche #367, John Jenkins to Elijah Hoole, August 16, 1847.

playing the role of transatlantic lynchpin with quite as much persistent zeal as Joseph Stinson.¹³⁴ In a characteristic moment, in 1843, he asked for “a day in some quiet corner of the City to have a full conversation on our North American affairs” with the Missionary Secretaries.¹³⁵ When the missionary Matthew Richey travelled to Britain in 1851, he met with both the Missionary Secretary Robert Alder and Stinson, “for conversation in reference to British North America generally,” even though the latter had not been in the colonies for almost a decade.¹³⁶

This community of former missionaries provided an unofficial link between the Methodists in the Canadas and Britain, helping to keep the lines of transatlantic communication open even during times of connexional crisis. In 1842, for example, two years after the first union between the British and Canada Conference fell apart, one of the leading Canadian Methodist ministers, John Ryerson, described receiving “a long & affectionate letter from Mr. J[oseph] Stinson,” giving him information about the mood of the most recent British Conference and urging him “to come home to England” to settle the differences between the two churches.¹³⁷ Stinson kept up this correspondence through 1843 and beyond, at one point informing Robert Alder at the Mission House that “I wrote fully & I think faithfully to J[ohn] R[yerson] by the last Packet & expect to get

¹³⁴ Stinson played a somewhat different role in the 1830s. See 160-1 below.

¹³⁵ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #290, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 15, 1843.

¹³⁶ UCA, Matthew Richey papers, Box 1, File 1, Matthew Richey to Louisa Richey, June 22, 1851.

¹³⁷ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 2, File 53, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, September 29, 1842. For a discussion of Joseph Stinson’s motivation in the 1840s see 185-6 below.

something from him soon.”¹³⁸ In September 1843, he also sent a note to John’s brother, Egerton, about the possibility of doing something “to place our affairs in Canada on a more agreeable footing...”. He still entertained “the hope of spending many happy & useful years in Canada,” Stinson assured Egerton Ryerson, even though he was then stationed in Sheffield – “one of the best circuits in England...”.¹³⁹ When John Ryerson travelled to Britain in 1846 in a successful bid to broker a reunion, he let Egerton know that “Mr. Stinson is most cordial & affectionate & is doing his utmost to further the object of our mission & promote peace in Canada.”¹⁴⁰ The ex-missionary John Hetherington was less sure about the value of Stinson’s efforts, arguing that he had lost all proper perspective as a result of becoming “mixed up too much already with the question...”.¹⁴¹ Such doubts merely demonstrated, however, Stinson’s success in keeping a foot firmly planted in both the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist camps.

The WMMS’s control over stationing also tended to foster a close connection between the British Wesleyan laity in the Canadas and their fathers and brethren in Britain. Very much aware of who was responsible for assigning ministers to circuits, the wealthy laymen of Montreal and Quebec City established their own unofficial contacts with the home connexion between 1814 and 1874. They sent letter

¹³⁸ See for example *ibid.*, Box 3, File 61, Joseph Stinson to John Ryerson, December 2, 1843; *ibid.*, Box 3, File 62, Joseph Stinson to John Ryerson, January 29, 1844. The quotation is from SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #280, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 15, 1844.

¹³⁹ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 3, File 60, Joseph Stinson to Egerton Ryerson, September 18, 1843.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Box 3, File 74, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, August 1, 1846. See also *ibid.*, Box 3, File 74, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, August 6, 1846.

¹⁴¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 30, File 223, #6, John P. Hetherington to Robert Alder, March 22, 1847.

after letter across the ocean asking the Missionary Secretaries to dispatch the best of British Wesleyanism's preachers to Lower Canada. In 1827, for instance, writing on behalf his fellow laymen, William Lunn begged the WMMS to station Robert Alder in Montreal "in the ensuing Spring if his health will permit, and if the Providence of God should so direct it."¹⁴² A decade later, Peter Langlois wrote to the WMMS, urging it to send the popular British minister Robert Young to Quebec City: he was certain, Langlois declared, that such an assignment would have a beneficial impact on Methodism throughout the colony.¹⁴³ Over the next thirty-seven years, the laity in Lower Canada continued to turn to the British connexion to fill their pulpits. In 1848 Lunn suggested that either "Mr. Rigg or Mr. James" would be a good fit for Montreal; if the Missionary Secretaries could convince "Mr. Rattenbury or Mr. Hull" to come over too, that would be even better.¹⁴⁴ The Quebec City laymen were less specific in 1852, merely asking the WMMS for "one of the most talented and pious young men that may now be at your disposal."¹⁴⁵ William Lunn was thinking along the same lines by 1853, noting that "[p]erhaps some one of the able and excellent Ministers at home will have no objection to come to Montreal."¹⁴⁶

If a polite but insistent letter to the WMMS yielded no results, the British Wesleyan laymen in Lower Canada were prepared to turn to other, more direct means of

¹⁴² Ibid., Box 11, File 70, #20, William Lunn to George Morley, July 20, 1827.

¹⁴³ Ibid., Box 21, File 137, #12, Peter Langlois to Jabez Bunting, June 9, 1837.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Box 29, File 226, #3, William Lunn to an unknown correspondent, January 20, 1848. The Montreal laity wrote to the WMMS in 1854, once again inviting James to their city. See *ibid.*, Box 38, File 281, #12, William Lunn to Robert Alder[?], January 7, 1854.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Box 36, File 260, #7, Peter Langlois, William Blight and John Campbell to George Osborn, February 13, 1852.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Box 37, File 268, #12, William Lunn to Elijah Hoole, December 22, 1853. See also *ibid.*, Box 38, File 281, #17, Thomas Kay to Elijah Hoole, April 24, 1854.

communication. Between 1814 and 1874 they also elaborated a system of personal contact with metropolitan Wesleyanism. This, once again, was primarily the work of the wealthy laymen of Montreal and Quebec City who could afford to crisscross the ocean. Peter Langlois opened this avenue in 1816. While in Britain on business he visited the connexional officials then responsible for the British Conference's missions and, before boarding ship for home, urged them to send more preachers to the Canadas.¹⁴⁷ Three years later John Try travelled to London and informed the Missionary Secretaries "of the wishes of the Montreal people" concerning the stationing of various missionaries in Lower Canada.¹⁴⁸ Such visits were not frequent occurrences thereafter, but when they took place these laymen made the most of them. John Mathewson visited Britain in 1847 and he was more than willing to give the Wesleyan leadership "suggestions...in relation to the Montreal station...".¹⁴⁹ In 1854 John Ferrier, again of Montreal, attended one of the Missionary meetings in London. He made sure to tell the WMMS that "[a]mongst our evangelical churches in Canada, no organization has been so adapted to meet the wants of the tide of emigration that is flowing towards our shores, as has been the organization of our Wesleyan Body."¹⁵⁰ Among the British Wesleyan laity, the image of the Canadas as a part of a greater British gospel field encouraged the formation of multiple links with the

¹⁴⁷ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #33, Peter Langlois to Thomas Lermith, February 26, 1816; *ibid.*, Fiche #34, Peter Langlois to James Buckley, March 13, 1816.

¹⁴⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 5, File 44, #19, Richard Williams to Joseph Taylor, April 18, 1821; *ibid.*, Box 5, File 44, #42, Daniel Fisher to Joseph Taylor and Richard Watson, December 14, 1821.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 31, File 224, #7, Matthew Richey to Jabez Bunting, June 12, 1847; *ibid.*, Box 29, File 217, #5, William Lunn to an unknown correspondent, July 13, 1847.

¹⁵⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, John Beecham, Elijah Hoole, George Osborn and William Arthur to Enoch Wood, April 13, 1854; *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, April 1854, 758.

home connexion.

Of course, all the connections between Methodism in the Canadas and Britain did not operate at an unofficial level. When they united in 1833 and again in 1847, the British and Canada Conferences developed two official mechanisms that were well adapted to draw their connexions closer together and to facilitate transatlantic interaction: the Presidency and deputations. As was the case with Irish Methodism, under the 1833 and 1847 Articles of Union the British Conference reserved the right to appoint one of its own ministers to preside over the Canada connexion every year.¹⁵¹ A British Wesleyan preacher served as the President of the Canada Conference fourteen times between 1833 and 1874, also regularly visiting the WMMS's Lower Canada District until it united with the Canada connexion in 1854.¹⁵² Some of these ministers took up the position for a month and then returned to Britain, leaving the management of the gospel work in Upper and Lower Canada in the hands of a District Chairman or, after 1847, of a Co-Delegate (or vice president).¹⁵³ Others stayed in the Canadas for a year or more and became deeply involved in the operations of the Canada connexion and the Lower Canada District.

The latter arrangement corresponded most closely to the British Wesleyan leadership's vision of the Presidential role. In 1834 Jabez Bunting argued that "in order

¹⁵¹ *Minutes...from 1824 to 1845*, 64; *Minutes...from 1846 to 1857*, 35-6.

¹⁵² This number includes ministers who either came directly from Britain or who were already stationed in the Canadas by the WMMS: George Marsden (1833), Edmund Grindrod (1834), William Lord (1835-6), William Martin Harvard (1837-8), Joseph Stinson (1839-40, 1858-61), Robert Alder (1847), James Dixon (1848), Matthew Richey (1849-50), Enoch Wood (1851-7, 1862), William Thornton (1864), George Scott (1866), William Morley Punshon (1868-72). See Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism*, 30.

¹⁵³ Among this group were George Marsden, Edmund Grindrod, Robert Alder, James Dixon, William Thornton and George Scott. For the creation of the position of Co-Delegate see 178-9 below.

to secure any decidedly beneficial result,” the Canadas

should be the *residence* of the President annually appointed in Upper Canada, *during the year* of his Presidency – connected with his acting, also, as Chairman...of the Lower Canada District, and thus forming a connecting link between the two Provinces, & exercising a salutary & uniting influence over the Methodism of both.

“I see very little good indeed can result from a hasty annual visit,” he added, “certainly none worth the great expense of it.”¹⁵⁴ Bunting wanted the Presidency to be the catalyst of Methodist unity in the Canadas under the aegis of the home connexion.

Several of the British-appointed Presidents of the Canada Conference managed to fulfill that role. William Lord, for instance, did yeoman work reconciling most of the Canadian Methodist ministers and laity to the union of 1833, temporarily at least. After Lord toured Upper Canada in 1835, Joseph Stinson happily reported to the WMMS that “the Societies *generally* are in peace & the tone of good Methodist & British feeling is increasing” across the connexion.¹⁵⁵ By way of proof, the Canada Conference of 1835 officially thanked the British Wesleyans “for the appointment of our highly esteemed friend and brother, the Rev. William Lord, as our President...”. “His extensive travels and arduous labours in this Province,” the Canadian ministers continued, “have eminently and effectually contributed to strengthen and consolidate the union between the two connexions...”.¹⁵⁶ After the union was reconstituted in 1847, James Dixon played a similar role. Even though he only visited the Canadas briefly, his

¹⁵⁴ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.3, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, March 8, 1834. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 127, #2, Joseph Stinson and William Lord to Robert Alder, February 8, 1835. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁶ *Minutes...from 1824 to 1845*, 114.

presidency was so successful that the missionary Enoch Wood urged the British Conference not to “forget the original design for the Presidential chair” of the Canada connexion. “Every body was delighted with dear Dr. Dixon,” he added.¹⁵⁷ Between 1852 and 1854, Enoch Wood himself, serving as both President of the Canada Conference and Chairman of the Lower Canada District, convinced the latter to accept absorption by the former. “The business ended well relating to this union,” Wood informed the Missionary Secretary John Beecham in 1854, with “much good feeling” all around.¹⁵⁸

Some of the Presidents continued to work to maintain the link between the British and Canada Conferences once they returned from the colonies. William Lord took it upon himself to settle business for any of his fellow British Wesleyan preachers who could not travel to the home country to do so themselves.¹⁵⁹ More importantly, perhaps, he did his best to keep up to date on developments among the Methodist communities in Lower and Upper Canada; at one point, he complained that “it is a long time since I have had the pleasure of a letter from Montreal, & [I] begin to be anxious to know what you are doing.” He also kept his correspondents in the Canadas informed about the latest developments in the British connexion, discussing, for example, who was likely to be elected President of the Conference in 1842.¹⁶⁰ When John Ryerson travelled to Britain in

¹⁵⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 32, File 233, #31, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, July 12, 1848. See also *Minutes...from 1846 to 1857*, 81-2.

¹⁵⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 36, File 267, #13, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, May 14, 1852; *ibid.*, Box 37, File 268, #2, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, May 21, 1853; *ibid.*, Box 37, File 275, #14, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, May 30, 1853; *ibid.*, Box 38, File 281, #21, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, May 22, 1854.

¹⁵⁹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #244, William Lord to Robert Alder, June 25, 1841.

¹⁶⁰ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the Canada Conference, William Lord to John Mathewson, June 3, 1842.

1846 to negotiate the reunion, he noted that “[n]o man in England, with the exception of Mr. Stinson, has manifested so deep an interest in our welfare & acted so kindly...as Mr. Lord.”¹⁶¹ Eleven years later, Lord’s interest in his former brethren remained undiminished. “I do not forget Canada,” he wrote to the British Wesleyan missionary John Douse, “nor any old Friends, many of whom are as dear to me as any in any part of the world. I rejoice in your success, & see a glorious future for Canada & Canadian Methodism.”¹⁶² Later Presidents, such as William Morley Punshon, who held the post between 1868 and 1872, were equally conscientious. In 1873, Punshon let Egerton Ryerson know that “I have been kept pretty well abreast of your doings” through the colonial newspapers “which reach me, but I am anxious to hear now of the inner life of my friends” in Canada.¹⁶³ The Presidents strove to make the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada as integral a part of the British Wesleyan gospel field as circumstances might permit.

Those ministers who were appointed by their respective Conferences to conduct short deputations to either Britain or the Canadas also helped fix the Canada connexion within a larger British world.¹⁶⁴ When the Canadian Methodist minister Anson Green crossed the Atlantic in 1856 he put the case for deputations succinctly in his address to the British Conference. “The advantages arising from a personal communication with the different branches of the Wesleyan Church,” he stated,

¹⁶¹ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 3, File 74, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, August 1, 1846. See also *ibid.*, Box 3, File 74, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, August 6, 1846.

¹⁶² UCA, John Douse papers, Box 1, File 5, William Lord to John Douse, March 25, 1857.

¹⁶³ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the Canada Conference, William Morley Punshon to Egerton Ryerson, December 2, 1873.

¹⁶⁴ There were twenty-six deputations across the Atlantic between 1815 and 1874.

and especially with this Body, her acknowledged visible head, and the great source of Wesleyan authority and Wesleyan influence throughout the world, are so many and so great, as to produce a strong desire to perpetuate the practice. We are one with you in sentiment and feeling, and I am directed by my brethren to assure you of their high personal regards, and...to present to you their filial affections, their cordial Christian greetings.¹⁶⁵

This was not simply an example of a canny Canadian Methodist playing up to a British Wesleyan crowd. The establishment and maintenance of connexional unity was a constant aim of the various deputations that passed back and forth between centre and periphery. The WMMS sent Robert Alder to the Canadas in 1832 and again in 1834, for instance, to settle difficulties with its own missionaries. In 1832 Alder also laid the groundwork for the first union between the British and Canada Conferences.¹⁶⁶

The relationship between the Canada and British connexions was conducted in large part through increasingly frequent deputations between 1832 and 1840. Egerton Ryerson was “appointed the Delegate with full powers” in 1832 to travel to London to meet with the WMMS “to complete everything” connected with the union of the two Conferences.¹⁶⁷ When that union began to lurch towards dissolution in 1839 and early 1840, a flurry of contending deputations crossed both the Atlantic and the American-Canadian border. The WMMS sent Alder to the Canadas in 1839. The British Wesleyan missionaries looked forward to his arrival; he would, at last, convey “precisely

¹⁶⁵ *Watchman*, August 7, 1856, 259.

¹⁶⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, February 15, 1832; *ibid.*, Reel 1, November 14, 1832; *ibid.*, Reel 1, December 20, 1833.

¹⁶⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 16, File 100, #30, William Lunn to John Mason, September 3, 1832. See also *ibid.*, Box 16, File 100, #30, James Richardson to James Townley, John Beecham and John James, August 16, 1832.

and *officially* the views of our Conference on the question with which any President of this Conference must more or less mix himself up.”¹⁶⁸ In April 1840 Joseph Stinson rushed down to Baltimore in order to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Canadas with the British Wesleyan delegate to the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.¹⁶⁹ Two months later the Canada Conference appointed two representatives, Egerton and William Ryerson, to travel to Britain to lay the matters of contention before the Wesleyan authorities and “to use all proper means to prevent collision between the two Connexions.”¹⁷⁰ Matthew Richey and Joseph Stinson also braved the Atlantic in an attempt to defend the policies of the WMMS’s agents in Upper Canada.¹⁷¹

This level of interchange resumed between 1847 and 1874. A section of the 1847 Articles of Union stated that “the Canada Conference should have the same power as the Irish Conference now has, of sending Representatives” to the British Conference.¹⁷² The Canada connexion took full advantage of this provision, dispatching eleven deputations to Britain over the following twenty-seven years. The Canadian Methodists expected the British Wesleyans to reciprocate. In 1856 the British ministers John Hannah and Frederick Jobson did pass through the Canadas. Enoch Wood noted that “[t]his transient call from two such distinguished men, ministers of the Parent Body,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Box 23, File 159, #4, Matthew Richey to Joseph Stinson, May 8, 1839. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., Box 24, File 167, #1, Joseph Stinson to an unknown correspondent, April 29, 1840. The delegate was Robert Newton.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Box 24, File 168, #29, Elijah Hoole to Robert Alder, July 1840; JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.3.2, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, July 24, 1840; Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada (hereafter WMC-C), Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 19, 1840.

¹⁷¹ UCA, Matthew Richey papers, Box 1, File 1, Matthew Richey to Louisa Richey, July 20, 1840.

¹⁷² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 30, File 209, #11, Anson Green to Robert Alder, November 20, 1846.

was very much appreciated.”¹⁷³ Jobson himself recorded scenes of large numbers of “British emigrants” in Toronto pressing them for news about the home connexion. “In the small vestry of Richmond Street Chapel,” he wrote, “I must have counted not less than twenty Methodists who had emigrated from our own county of Lincoln” alone.¹⁷⁴ Two years later, a former President of the British Conference, Francis West, was rumoured to be coming to Lower and Upper Canada; Wood advised one of the Missionary Secretaries not to lay too much of a burden on him. He should be free to see the gospel work in the Canadas and to preach in some of the Canada connexion’s principle churches. That was the only way, Wood wrote, to make “our people...feel there is in reality a bond of Union between us and you...”.¹⁷⁵

Sometimes, however, the British connexion did not deliver, leading the Methodists in the Canadas to stress, once again, the overriding importance of their own field of labour within the home connexion’s world parish. When Francis West failed to put in an appearance in 1858, for example, Joseph Stinson was disappointed. “I have no doubt,” he noted,

but his ministerial labours and his counsels would have done us good. I think with you, that the growing importance of our great work on this vast continent is such, as demands and will amply justify & repay the trouble & expense of a pretty frequent visit from the Father Land of one or two of our beloved Fathers and Brethren.

¹⁷³ Ibid., Box 40, File 291, #13, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, George Osborn and William Arthur, June 28, 1856.

¹⁷⁴ Frederick Jobson, *America, and American Methodism* (New York: Virtue, Emmins and Company, 1857), 351-2.

¹⁷⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 40, File 296, #17, Enoch Wood to George Osborn, October 25, 1858.

“[O]ur Conference is young & ardent,” Stinson added, “we have a glorious field before us, and we shall be better prepared to meet the necessities of the times and accomplish our work by the maintenance of a close connection with the Parent Conference.”¹⁷⁶ Other ministers in the Lower and Upper Canada felt the same way. Enoch Wood urged the British Conference to send one of the Missionary Secretaries in West’s place. “Let us have a delegation to ourselves,” he wrote, “whose eyes and ears, whose heart and pen will do us justice, and the great country we are taking a leading part in evangelizing.”¹⁷⁷ In 1862 Wood sent another letter to the WMMS, explaining that “[w]e heartily desire to maintain our Union with you,” but the Methodists in those colonies had cause “to complain that so few of the Representatives of the Parent Body” had appeared before a Conference “which in sixteen years has increased from One hundred and seventy to more than Six hundred Ministers and Preachers now receiving appointments.”¹⁷⁸ There was a definite sense of grievance behind those words. Tension continued to go hand in hand with transatlantic unity among the Methodists in the Canadas.

The British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters and the Canadian Methodists became increasingly integrated into a larger British world between 1814 and 1874. They were drawn in by the interplay of three factors: immigration, connexional structures and the often unintentional results of the home connexion’s own regulations. In cultural terms, the massive influx of British and Wesleyan immigrants – Irish

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., Box 41, File 300, #1, Joseph Stinson to William Arthur, March 13, 1859.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., Box 41, File 300, #9, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, [1859].

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., Box 43, File 311, #25, Enoch Wood to William Boyce, November 13, 1862. See also NAC, William Billington Boyce papers, Journal, August 6, 1861, 319-20.

Protestants, Scots and English – during the forty-odd years after Napoleon’s defeat at the battle of Waterloo manifested itself in a growing sense among missionaries, settlers and Canadian Methodists alike that the Canadas were quickly becoming a virtual extension of the British Wesleyan gospel field and that they needed to be treated as such by both the British Conference and its missionary wing, the WMMS. The connexional authorities in Britain could not have agreed more. Between 1814 and 1874 the leading British Wesleyans developed church structures that would allow them to communicate with and direct the operations of the various Methodist groups in the Canadas and throughout the north Atlantic region. In addition to these official networks, unofficial networks took shape between a growing community of former missionaries in Britain and the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist ministers in Lower and Upper Canada. At the same time, the wealthy British Wesleyan laity of Montreal and Quebec City elaborated their own postal and personal links with the home connexion.

By the 1860s, the Methodists in the Canadas were plugged into a transatlantic British connexion. That does not mean, however, that the Canadian Methodists, the British Wesleyan missionaries, or their lay supporters could simply be identified as transplanted Britons, not very different, in cultural terms, from their fathers and brethren in the Old Country. There were serious tensions at play within both the official and unofficial networks that linked British Wesleyanism and Methodism in the Canadas. Bureaucratic failures on the part of the WMMS and of the British Conference, combined with the sheer difficulty of transoceanic communication, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century, often left the colonial Methodists feeling ignored or

abandoned by the home connexion. As a result, what the missionaries and ministers in the Canadas saw as a need to insist on their equality with, if not superiority to their fathers and brethren in the home connexion thoroughly complicated their sense of membership in a 'greater' Britain.

A similar pattern can be found among other denominations active in Lower and Upper Canada and, indeed, within the imperial system itself. As Richard Vaudry points out, the men and women who made up the colonial Church of England "operated within transatlantic networks of politics, commerce, the church and the military." But as was the case with the Methodists, these multiple networks were never seamless in their operation and, while certainly helping to unite colony to metropole, also produced tensions between Anglicanism at home and abroad. Between 1806 and 1808, for instance, Bishop Jacob Mountain of Quebec travelled to Britain, but was dismayed to find that his opinions about what constituted Lower Canada's best interests did not necessarily accord with the official mind of His Majesty's government. In general, members of the Mountain family were frequently left with a "sense of exile and abandonment" that would have been all too familiar to the British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters or the Canadian Methodists.¹⁷⁹ The colonial elites encountered the same feelings of frustration in their relations with the imperial centre. The gentlemen who made up the Family Compact in Upper Canada always thought of themselves as Britons. They sometimes went so far as to try to start life anew in the Old Country – attending Oxford or Cambridge, studying for the English bar, or using whatever patronage they could muster

¹⁷⁹ Richard W. Vaudry, *Anglicanism and the Atlantic World: High Churchmen, Evangelicals and the Quebec Connection* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 13-38.

among the great and good to break into the world of British high politics. When they almost invariably returned to the more constricted society of the Canadas, these colonials were repeatedly enraged to discover just how little the bashaws of the Colonial Office actually knew or cared about their corner of 'greater' Britain. At such moments, members of the Family Compact were not above arguing that a day might come when they would have to break with the metropole in order to maintain their own sense of Britishness.¹⁸⁰

By examining the forces that united transatlantic Methodism in the sixty years after 1814 and those that tended to pull it apart, we have seen that the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada – whether British or American in origin – were involved in a relationship with the British connexion that cannot be adequately explained as a story of the growth of Canadian Methodist exceptionalism. Neither, however, can it be viewed as an example of British cultural domination. Instead, the Wesleyan Methodists in Britain and their brethren in the Canadas were locked together in the same love-hate relationship that took shape among settler communities not only in British North America, but across the empire. Groups as diverse as nineteenth-century Ulster Protestants and white, Rhodesian farmers in the middle of the twentieth century had a dual identity: they were both Britons abroad and inhabitants of a new and different country that required new and different modes of thought and existence.¹⁸¹ In the Methodist case, the British Wesleyan

¹⁸⁰ Phillip A. Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815-1850* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 101-5; Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1794-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1963), 109, 226-7.

¹⁸¹ Donal Lowry, "Ulster resistance and loyalist rebellion in the Empire," in Keith Jeffery, ed., *'An Irish Empire'? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), *passim* provides a suggestive comparison of Ulster and Rhodesian settler identity.

leadership did not stop considering their ministers or lay followers as fellow Britons once they went abroad; and those ministers and laity did not stop identifying themselves as Britons once they had settled in a new land. Given their new environment, however, they could not remain completely the same as the men and women they had left behind in England, Ireland and Scotland. How exactly this tension played out among the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters in Lower and Upper Canada will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

“The storm so strangely raised in the...British Provinces”: British Wesleyanism’s Errand into the Wilderness, 1814-1834

The question of what it meant to be a Methodist was a complicated one in early-nineteenth century Lower and Upper Canada. As we have already seen, there were two groups of Methodists active in the Canadas between 1814 and 1834: Methodist Episcopalians from the United States and Wesleyans from Britain. Historians have tended to analyze the relationship between these admittedly quite different connexions primarily in terms of a basic split between American liberalism and British conservatism. Nancy Christie, for instance, presents the Methodist Episcopal preachers who began to arrive in Upper Canada in 1791 as the zealous bearers of “American republican values” in the form of a “culture of popular religion.” These radical itinerants dominated the back country of the colony, leaving the cities to the more conservative ministers of the Church of England. According to Christie, when the British Wesleyans finally put in an appearance in Upper Canada after the War of 1812, they attempted to buttress the paternalistic authority of the Anglican establishment – or, at least, they did nothing that might strike at the close link between the colonial state and Anglicanism that John Graves Simcoe had attempted to forge during his term as Lieutenant-Governor of the province in the early 1790s.¹ J.I.

¹ Nancy Christie, “‘In these Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion’: Popular Religion and the Challenge to the Established Order, 1760-1815,” in George A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990* (Burlington: Welch Publishing Company Inc., 1990), 22-3, 28, 41-3. On John Graves Simcoe’s time in Upper Canada (1791 to 1796) see Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1963), 20-41.

Little finds a similar situation in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada in the 1820s. There American Methodist laymen and women often clashed with British Wesleyan missionaries trained in a religious tradition that was becoming “increasingly conservative and middle class in outlook and composition.”² It is a persuasive picture at a general level. However, by portraying the British Wesleyans as a uniformly conservative force in the north Atlantic world, it also tends to obscure as much as it reveals about the interaction between the British Wesleyan core and periphery in the twenty years after 1814.

The leading ministers of the Wesleyan connexion in Britain and the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters in Lower and Upper Canada cannot be treated as a monolithic whole. As Goldwin French and Neil Semple both point out, there were serious disputes between the British Wesleyan community in the colonies and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS) during the early 1820s and again in the early 1830s. In each instance, the missionaries and a significant number of the laity vehemently objected to WMMS policies which, they felt, were either shortsighted or entirely wrongheaded – especially a general withdrawal of all British Wesleyan ministers from Upper Canada in 1820 and a union with the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada in 1833. French describes the “violent protests from Wesleyan sympathizers in Upper Canada” that arose in 1820 and how the British Wesleyan laity in that colony looked on the union of 1833 “most unfavourably.” Yet, primarily concerned with the political and cultural development of Canadian Methodism, French makes little effort to analyze the

² J.I. Little, “The Methodistical way: Revivalism and popular resistance to the Wesleyan Church discipline in the Stanstead Circuit, Lower Canada, 1821-1852,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 31, no. 2 (2002), 172-3

meaning of these agitations.³ For his part, Semple dismisses the missionaries' objections to the union of 1833 as the product of merely "personal antagonisms and differing perceptions of the conduct of the church."⁴ Neither French nor Semple touches on the possible cultural implications of such transoceanic divisions. What impact, if any, did they have on the way the British Wesleyans in the Canadas defined their collective sense of self and their position within a larger British and Wesleyan world?

That question cannot be answered without placing the British Wesleyan community in Lower and Upper Canada in both its transatlantic and its North American contexts. Each of these contexts influenced how the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in the Canadas perceived their role, not only in those colonies, but also within a larger British connexion. In the six years after 1814, the combination of British Wesleyanism's violent reaction against the political forces unleashed by the French Revolution and the conditions they found in North America convinced the missionaries and their lay supporters that they were embarked on their own errand into the wilderness. With the aid of the British connexion, they would preserve Lower and Upper Canada from the double-barrelled threat of republicanism and revolution posed, they believed, by the Methodist Episcopalists. Between 1820 and 1834, however, the relationship between the Wesleyan Methodists in Britain and the American Methodists underwent a dramatic shift. As a result, a culture began to emerge among the British

³ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 72-4, 146-7. See also J.I. Little, *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity, 1792-1852* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 151-2, 158 for a similar approach to the events of 1820 and 1833.

⁴ Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 86-8.

Wesleyans in the Canadas that remained conservative in comparison to that of the Methodist Episcopal, but which also differed in significant and subversive ways from the culture of metropolitan Wesleyanism.⁵ After 1820, the missionaries and their lay supporters became increasingly determined to preserve what they saw as a pure version of Britishness and Wesleyanism in Lower and Upper Canada, even if they had to defy the home connexion in order to do so.

The French Revolution was a little over a year and a half old when six working men carried John Wesley's body to the grave in March 1791. Over the next quarter century the interplay of external and internal factors – Britain's long war against revolutionary and Napoleonic France and the discontents that surfaced among laity and ministers alike after Wesley's death – laid the groundwork for a conservative, if not reactionary temperament among the British Wesleyan pastorate.⁶

Politically speaking, the 1790s and early 1800s were the worst of times for the quickly-expanding British connexion. The Conference could happily report on membership increases of thousands, but it also had to contend with a growing suspicion among government officials, the gentry and the vehemently anti-revolutionary clerics of the Church of England that Methodism's itinerant preachers were, or were in immediate danger of becoming a Jacobin fifth column.⁷ From 1792 on, the government of William

⁵ This general pattern of cultural formation was first outlined in Perry Miller, "Errand into the Wilderness," in idem, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), 10-15.

⁶ A point made in David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1987), 59.

⁷ On British Wesleyanism's expansion see Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 67.

Pitt zealously put the screws on political dissidents of all kinds; it began to insist on specific pledges of loyalty from the British connexion by the end of 1795.⁸ At the same time, numerous anti-Jacobin novels and tracts portrayed the Methodists as naive, sometimes crack-brained enthusiasts who fluctuated between preaching the doctrines of Jesus Christ and preaching those of Tom Paine.⁹ Anglican ministers delivered the same message from their pulpits. In his 1800 charge to the clergy of Rochester, Bishop Samuel Horsley argued that Methodist schools were havens of Jacobin influence, more concerned with teaching atheism and sedition than religion.¹⁰ The Reverend T.E. Owen was even more forthright two years later, stating that the Wesleyans and other Dissenters aimed at nothing less than the “overthrow” of Britain’s “religious and political constitutions” and the unleashing of “a revolution in these dominions similar to that which has deluged France with blood.”¹¹ The British connexion’s leaders had to find a way to weather this storm or they risked going under completely.

With few exceptions, the Wesleyan ministry threw itself behind the cause of King and country. In 1792 Samuel Bradburn, who, only a year earlier, had delivered some favourable “observations (from the pulpit) on the *Rights of Man*,” performed a

⁸ H.T. Dickinson, *British Radicalism and the French Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1985), 37-42; W.R. Ward, “The French Revolution and the English Churches: A case study in the impact of Revolution upon the Church,” *Miscellanea Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 4 (1972), 66.

⁹ M.O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61, 83-4, 97, 112.

¹⁰ Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 170-2; John Munsey Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation: Studies in Methodism and Ecumenism in England, 1740-1982* (London: Epworth Press, 1985), 119.

¹¹ T.E. Owen, *Methodism Unmasked* (1802), v quoted in John Walsh, “Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” in Rupert Davies, et al., eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-88), 1:303.

complete about-face and began to argue that there were no “better subjects in the British Empire than Methodists” since their “principles respecting Civil Government” were based on “holy scriptures.”¹² That year’s British Conference went one better, decreeing that “none of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently to the Government under which he lives.” The ministers also resolved that “the oracles of God command us to be subject to higher powers” and “that honour to the king is there connected with the fear of God.”¹³ The first President of the connexion after Wesley’s death, William Thompson, wrote to William Pitt personally in 1793, pledging Wesleyan Methodism’s support for the government.¹⁴

At the same time, the connexional press started to churn out sermon after sermon aimed at convincing both the powers that be and Wesleyanism’s own lay supporters that the itinerant ministry was determined, above all else, to teach the world to “[f]ear God and honour the King.”¹⁵ By 1794 ministers like John Pawson were being swept up in the first great wave of wartime patriotism. He might oppose Pitt’s war against revolutionary France, but Pawson also insisted that “I am as well affected to, and as heartily pray for the King, etc., as any man upon earth...”. The Dissenters, he added,

¹² John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter JRULM), Methodist Archives and Research Centre (hereafter MARC), Samuel Bradburn papers, Samuel Bradburn to Richard Rodda, June 23, 1792 quoted in W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), 29; Samuel Bradburn, *Methodism Set Forth and Defended* (Bristol, 1792), 51-2 quoted in Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 127.

¹³ *Minutes of several conversations between the preachers late in connexion with the Rev. Mr. Wesley* [hereafter *Minutes*] (London, 1792), 270-1 quoted in *ibid.*, 127. See also Watts, *Dissenters*, 351.

¹⁴ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 62; Watts, *Dissenters*, 351.

¹⁵ Semmel, *Methodist Revolution*, 127-8. The quotation is from Joseph Benson, *A Defence of the Methodists in Five Letters Addressed to the Rev. Dr. Tatham* (London, 1793), 42 quoted in *ibid.*, 127.

“have on all occasions distinguished themselves as the most loyal subjects.”¹⁶ Driving the point home, the Conference of 1796 declared that “no man, nor number of men, in our Connexion, on any account or occasion” should henceforth “do or attempt to do anything new.”¹⁷ Panicked reaction could hardly go much further than that.

The Wesleyan ministry was also driven rightward in response to a series of internal upheavals during the 1790s. Soon after John Wesley’s death in 1791, the itinerant preachers faced a powerful lay agitation for complete separation from the Church of England. This campaign centred on a desire on the part of a large number of laymen and women for the administration of the Lord’s Supper in the connexion’s chapels: a practice that had not been a part of regular services under Wesley’s iron rule.¹⁸ At the same time, the ministers were confronted by strong opposition to any such change in Wesleyan worship. This challenge came from the trustees of the chapels – mostly men of property who were predisposed to support any organization in church or state that promised to ensure social stability.¹⁹ Facing insurrection on two fronts, some of the ministers were all for fighting the trustees into the last ditch. “If the preachers among us are united,” William Thompson declared in 1792, “it will then be out of the power of any

¹⁶ For Pawson’s opposition to the war see John Pawson to Charles Atmore, July 15, 1795 in John C. Bowmer and John A. Vickers, eds., *The Letters of John Pawson (Methodist Itinerant, 1762-1806): From the Conference of 1794 to the Conference of 1799* (Peterborough: WMHS Publications, 1994), 53. The quotation is from John Pawson to Joseph Benson, November 21, 1794 in *ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷ *Minutes* (London, 1796), 1:364 quoted in Semmel, *Methodist Revolution*, 119.

¹⁸ W.R. Ward, “The Legacy of John Wesley: The Pastoral Office in Britain and America,” in *idem*, *Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth Press, 1993), 237.

¹⁹ John C. Bowmer, *Pastor and People: A Study in Church and ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley (1791) to the death of Jabez Bunting (1858)* (London: Epworth Press, 1975), 21; Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 60-1.

rich or overbearing men among us, or even Devils to prevent our usefulness.”²⁰ Others, like the excitable Thomas Coke, wanted to put down the laity, convinced that any move in the direction of Dissent would flood the connexion with men prepared to “toast...*a bloody summer and a headless King*.”²¹ In the event, calmer counsels prevailed and the Conference of 1795 put forward a ‘Plan of Pacification.’ The Plan basically constituted a compact between the ministry and laity; it forbade the general administration of the sacraments across the British connexion, but permitted it on a chapel by chapel basis, provided that a majority of the local laity, the trustees and the Conference agreed. By allowing – and sometimes forcing – the preachers to celebrate the Lord’s Supper apart from the Church of England, the Plan slowly but surely transformed Wesleyanism into a genuinely dissenting denomination.²²

Even this change in church government did not, however, go far enough for one minister. Alexander Kilham identified himself as a thoroughgoing Whig, bent on parliamentary reform and on ridding his own connexion of all its various antidemocratic trappings.²³ He became the self-appointed champion of lay rights within British Wesleyanism, publishing a pamphlet in mid-1795 – signed, significantly enough, ‘Martin Luther’ – arguing that no one could oppose greater power for the laity “but narrow-

²⁰ United Church Archives (hereafter UCA), Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the British Conference, Reel 4, Album 4, William Thompson to Richard Rodda, May 29, 1792.

²¹ JRULM, MARC, Thomas Coke papers, Thomas Coke to Joseph Benson, July 15, 1791 quoted in Ward, *Religion and Society*, 28. Emphasis in original.

²² Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 35; Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 65-6; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 33.

²³ Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 46; D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 3; Walsh, “Methodism,” 1:283, 1:307.

minded bigots and lordly, overgrown bishops. The devil and his angels, with all their helpers, cannot hinder the people...”²⁴ In the autumn of 1795, Kilham went further in his *Progress of Liberty among the People called Methodists*: a vitriolic attack on what he saw as the utterly despotic tendencies of many of his fellow preachers. “We detest the conduct of persecuting Neroes and all the bloody actions of the great whore of Babylon,” he wrote, “and yet in our measure we tread in their steps.” “[T]he *cool dispassionate voice of the people*, is the voice of God,” Kilham added.²⁵ He was at it again in 1796, noting that

every thinking person must be convinced, that our people have not the privileges which belong to them as christians. And until they come forward to help in managing our affairs, it will be impossible to give them satisfaction.²⁶

Even a later Wesleyan malcontent like James Everett was shocked by this call for democratic reform. He described Kilham as the human equivalent of a horsefly “which invariably passes over the sound part of the animal, but instinctively finds its way to a sore spot...”²⁷

Many of Kilham’s contemporaries in the pastorate felt the same way and they were determined to drive him and his revolutionary politics out of the Wesleyan

²⁴ Quoted in Benjamin Gregory, *A Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles and of Wesleyan-Methodist Polity and History* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1888), 141.

²⁵ Alexander Kilham, *The Progress of Liberty among the People called Methodists* (Alnwick: J. Catnach, 1795), 19, 34. Emphasis in original. See also Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 68; Watts, *Dissenters*, 361-2.

²⁶ Alexander Kilham, *A Candid Examination of the London Methodistical Bull* (Alnwick: J. Catnach, 1796), v.

²⁷ [James Everett], *Wesleyan Takings: or, Centenary Sketches of Ministerial Character* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1841-51), 1:318. On James Everett see 247-8 and 306-7 below.

fold. Samuel Bradburn, for instance, was quick to denounce Kilham's "dream of Equality" as "worthy only of such inexperienced novices...".²⁸ Other leading members of the Wesleyan ministry, organizing to expel the troublemaker from the connexion, assured themselves that none of their "truly pious and useful men" would leave "the main body of the Preachers and people, and as to the others, such as Kilham, the sooner they go the better."²⁹ Thomas Coke was even more blunt, writing about the desirability of aiming "a fatal blow" against "Methodist Jacobinism."³⁰ When the British Conference met in 1796, Kilham's fellow ministers unanimously drummed him out of their ranks. In response, Kilham really let fly, arguing that "[n]o government under heaven, except *absolute monarchies* or the *papal hierarchy*, are so despotic and oppressive as ours is...".³¹ Over the following year, he toured England, convincing about 5,000 like-minded laymen and women to abandon the old connexion and to join him in establishing a New Connexion. Kilham promised to grant the laity an equal share in the government of their own church.³² Wesleyan ministers, like John Pawson, responded by denouncing the New Connexion as "mere Tom Paineites" who were determined to diffuse "their levelling and destructive principles" across the embattled nation.³³ The British Conference would do its utmost to

²⁸ JRULM, MARC, Samuel Bradburn papers, Samuel Bradburn to J. Reynolds, April 12, 1796 quoted in Semmel, *Methodist Revolution*, 119.

²⁹ John Pawson to Joseph Benson, May 6, 1796 in Bowmer and Vickers, eds., *Letters*, 78.

³⁰ JRULM, MARC, Thomas Coke papers, Thomas Coke to Joseph Benson, February 6, 1796 quoted in Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 69.

³¹ Alexander Kilham, *An Appeal to the Methodist Societies of the Alnwick Circuit* (Alnwick: n.p., 1796), 2. Emphasis in original.

³² Alexander Kilham and William Thom, *Out-Lines of a Constitution proposed for the Examination, Amendment and Acceptance of the Members of the Methodist New Itinerancy* (Leeds: n.p., 1797), 5-7, 30-1. On the Kilham's agitation see Walsh, "Methodism," 1:288; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 37-8.

³³ John Pawson to Joseph Benson, December 14, 1796 in Bowmer and Vickers, eds., *Letters*, 102; John Pawson to Joseph Benson, April 13, 1797 in *ibid.*, 116.

suppress all such radical activity, both among its own laity and in society in general.

If anything, the post-1815 resurgence of British radicalism reinforced this conservative temperament.³⁴ Following the Peterloo massacre of 1819, Wesleyan preachers across the north of England became convinced that murderous revolutionaries lurked in every shadow. In response, the ministry worked hard to drive any lay radicals out of the connexion – “They are down,” John Stephens gleefully reported in 1821, “and we intend to keep them down” – and to instill obedience to Caesar on all the circuits.³⁵ The Conference issued a general circular in 1819, declaring that “the government that affords us protection is entitled to our constitutional subjection and support.” Wesleyan laymen and women were to “submit themselves to every ordinance of men for the Lord’s sake.” The laity could certainly unite with their fellow subjects “in every proper and lawful demonstration of attachment to our free constitution and of loyalty to our venerable Sovereign,” but they must “meddle not with men that are given to change.” Following popular agitators like Henry ‘Orator’ Hunt would gain godly men and women nothing and might lose them everything they held dear, from “the peace of your minds,” to “[t]he domestic comforts of your families,” “your civil liberties, as well as your religious privileges, and the protection of your persons and property by wholesome laws!”³⁶ By the early 1820s, radicalism, republicanism and democracy had become the

³⁴ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 55-84; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 34-9, 85-7.

³⁵ See for example Robert Pilter to Jabez Bunting, October 23, 1819 in W.R. Ward, ed., *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-1829* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1972), 21-4; J.B. Holyroyd to Jabez Bunting, December 23, 1819 in *ibid.*, 24-6. The quotation is from John Stephens to Jabez Bunting, February 1, 1821 in *ibid.*, 61-2.

³⁶ The circular was reprinted in the *Montreal Herald*, February 12, 1820. See also David Hempton, “Thomas Allan and Methodist Politics, 1790-1840,” in *idem*, *The Religion of the People: Methodism and popular religion, c. 1750-1900* (London: Routledge, 1996), 115-19; Watts, *Dissenters*, 403-5.

great bugbears of the British Wesleyan pastorate.

It should come as no surprise, then, that when the British connexion sent an initial contingent of missionaries to Lower and Upper Canada in 1814, they quickly fell out with the Methodist Episcopal ministers from the United States who had been establishing their own circuits in the Eastern Townships, the Bay of Quinte and around the major urban centres of Montreal, Quebec City and Kingston since the early 1790s.³⁷ These American Methodists came north from New York state and New England preaching a gospel that was at once otherworldly and overtly republican and populist. Drawing on their own dreams and visions, they strove mightily to draw people out of the moral corruption of this world; they also attempted to maintain the proper subordination of laity to ministry, while, like Alexander Kilham in Britain, equating the experiences and actions of the common folk with the will of God.³⁸ When “hostilities” between Britain and the United States erupted in 1812, many of the Methodist Episcopal ministers in the Canadas returned to the safety of their native land – though some, like the former pugilist Henry Ryan, stayed in the colonies, hauling supplies for the British army and proving, to his own satisfaction at least, his loyalty to the crown and the colonial government.³⁹ With the Treaty of Ghent in 1815, the American Conference began to reestablish its

³⁷ Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 40-7.

³⁸ Christie, “In these Times of Democratic Rage and Delusion,” 22-3, 32-3; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 6-9, 49-56; John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 106-10, 115-18.

³⁹ Francis Asbury, Journal, July 23-6, 1812 in Elmer T. Clark, et al., eds., *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* (London: Epworth Press, 1958), 2:703; Francis Asbury to Joseph Frye, August 12, 1813 in *ibid.*, 3:443; Goldwin French, “Henry Ryan,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967-), 6:671.

presence in Lower and Upper Canada, but was careful to station only ministers “of British birth” or “Americans of moderate politics” north of the border.⁴⁰ The Bishops who led the Methodist Episcopal Church probably hoped that this precaution would allow their preachers to avoid any charges of disloyalty or subversion. They could not have been more mistaken.

The first British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas denounced the Methodist Episcopal preachers they encountered as a dangerous and, indeed, an anti-British element within colonial society. Riding through Cornwall, Upper Canada, in 1817, Henry Pope declared that the presence of American Methodist ministers in the colony was “more than English blood would (or could) endure!!” The Methodist Episcopalists, according to Pope, were “disaffected” men.⁴¹ In the Bay of Quinte, the missionaries charged their American Methodist brethren “with being ‘democrats,’ and enemies to our Government...”.⁴² According to the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the British Wesleyans aimed to justify their presence in the Canadas by arguing that “[t]hese are British provinces,’ ‘We have a better right,’ ‘You are aliens,’ ‘Tis more loyal to join us,’ ‘It is contrary to the law for his Majesty’s subjects to come under a foreign Ecclesiastical jurisdiction...’”.⁴³ The British Wesleyans in Lower and

⁴⁰ George F. Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1862), 144.

⁴¹ Emory University, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Special Collections and Archives (hereafter Emory), William M’Kendree papers, Box 1, File 4, Peter Jones to William Case, January 25, 1817; *ibid.*, Box 1, File 4, William Case to William M’Kendree, March 17, 1817.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Box 1, File 10, Address of the Bay of Quinte Circuit to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, January 15, 1820.

⁴³ Drew University (hereafter Drew), Methodist Episcopal Church, Genesee Conference, Papers Relating to Canada, 1810-1823, Report of the Committee, appointed to examine the above ‘Report,’ 1817.

Upper Canada, like the ministers at home, sided with the governing powers – a position which, in their own minds, put them in opposition to the “democrats” of American Methodism. As the missionary Robert Lusher put it in 1819: “the fact is, American Preachers as well as people are known in general to be so much opposed to Englishmen, to their glorious Constitution and to their beloved Country, that *true subjects* will not hear them.”⁴⁴ The implication was that such “*true subjects*” would flock to British Wesleyan services.

This was, in some ways, a very convenient argument for the missionaries to make. Highlighting the American Methodists’ republican roots gave these British Wesleyan ministers an opportunity to extract themselves from the awkward position that they found themselves in during the early years of their redeeming work. The missionaries quickly realized that, if they were to confine their labours to areas untouched by their Methodist Episcopal brethren, they would be locked out of Upper Canada, Montreal and Quebec City. They would be forced, in fact, to concentrate on rural Lower Canada, which, thanks to its largely French and Roman Catholic population, proved a particularly stony gospel field. Even John DePutron – one of the British connexion’s few French-speaking missionaries – found things hard going, noting, in November 1816, that “[a]ll the doctrines of the church of Rome” were “zealously inculcated” among the Canadiens and that “whosoever preaches J[esus] Christ is branded with the usual epithet of heretic and carefully avoided by all good Catholics.”⁴⁵

Over the following two years, the missionaries regularly reported on the

⁴⁴ UCA, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Correspondence (WMMS-C), Box 3, File 35, #17, Robert Lusher to Joseph Taylor, July 12, 1819. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Box 2, File 23, #26, John DePutron to James Wood, November 1816.

opposition they met with from “the Roman Catholics” of Lower Canada.⁴⁶ In 1817, for instance, DePutron lamented that “[h]ad we been amongst Protestants, many would now be earnestly seeking the Salvation of their souls,” but the state of the Canadiens was “truly pitiful in many respects, which is a great hindrance to this mission.”⁴⁷ The upshot, James Booth explained in 1816, was that he and his fellow ministers found it “very difficult to form new circuits in Lower Canada in consequence of so very few English settlements” being in close proximity to one another. He could not believe, Booth added, that the home connexion ever intended its missionaries to “be shut up in a small village where only a few can be got who understand them.” Those areas of the Canadas occupied by the Methodist Episcopalians presented a much more fruitful prospect for British Wesleyan usefulness.⁴⁸ If the missionaries convinced the then main organizational body of the British missions, the Committee of Finance and Advice (the CFA), that their American brethren were a revolutionary threat, the home connexion could hardly censure them for breaking up the Methodist Episcopalians’ circuits in the colonies.

In this respect, it helped that, even before the first of the British Wesleyan missionaries arrived in the Canadas in 1814, British Wesleyanism itself held an increasing appeal for many laymen and women desperate to find a way to remain within the Methodist fold without being associated with anything American.⁴⁹ During the 1790s

⁴⁶ See for example *ibid.*, Box 2, File 27, #2, John Hick and James Booth to George Marsden, January 31, 1817; *ibid.*, Box 2, File 27, #8, John DePutron to George Marsden, June 6, 1817; *ibid.*, Box 2, File 30, #8, John DePutron to James Wood, May 21, 1818.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Box 2, File 27, #13, John DePutron to George Marsden, October 20, 1817.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Box 2, File 23, #28: James Booth to George Marsden, December 10, 1816.

⁴⁹ For a similar pattern among the American Methodists during the Federalist period see W.R. Ward, “The Evangelical Revival in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” in Sheridan Gilley and W.J. Shiels, eds., *A History of Religion in Britain: Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1993), 268.

and early 1800s there were numerous invasion scares in the Canadas, all of them connected, in one way or another, with the United States. In 1793 and 1794, the French minister to the American republic, Edmond Genêt, attempted to prepare the ground for a French attack on Lower Canada, using agents like the Canadian expatriate Henri Mezière to circulate revolutionary propaganda through the colony from his base in New York state. Another agent in the service of the French Republic, the New Englander David McLane, was tried and executed for treason at Quebec City in 1797. Four years later, a penurious road builder, Asa Danforth, plotted with Aaron Burr, the Vice-President of the United States, to overthrow the colonial government of Upper Canada.⁵⁰

None of these plans came to anything, but the atmosphere of fear and anti-Americanism that they helped to create eventually affected many a Methodist society. The lay elite of Montreal Methodism – the class leaders and trustees – wrote to the British Conference on the eve of the War of 1812. They complained that their Methodist Episcopal ministers were no longer suitable, that they themselves were being stigmatized “as a set of Jacobins, when in fact only our spiritual guides are so,” and that “[w]e are supposed to be corrupted in the Serbonian bog of democracy, which we abhor!” “On these accounts,” the Montreal laymen continued, “we have long wished and most affectionately desired a union with you, who dwell in a country we are united to by every tie of sacred love and gratitude.”⁵¹ In December 1815, the Secretary of the CFA quite

⁵⁰ F. Murray Greenwood, *Legacies of Fear: Law and Politics in Quebec in the Era of the French Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 3, 76-80, 139-70; Alan Taylor, “A Northern Revolution of 1800? Upper Canada and Thomas Jefferson,” in James Horn, et al., eds., *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 383-409.

⁵¹ G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London: Epworth Press, 1921-4), 1:377.

rightly pointed out that the first missionaries were sent to Montreal because of the “very pressing request of the people of that place...”.⁵²

After the actual experience of invasion between 1812 and 1815 a growing number of the Methodist laity in Lower and Upper Canada proved willing to believe, along with that rising star of the British Wesleyan ministry, Jabez Bunting, that “nothing could be more fatal to real liberty whether in church or state” than democracy.⁵³ In 1817, Paul Glasford, a prominent member of the Methodist society in Matilda, Upper Canada, confidently stated that “the American preachers had no right to preach in Canada – that measures would be adopted to have them paid off and sent out of the country.”⁵⁴ Three years later, the Methodist laity of Newcastle, Upper Canada, argued that the gospel labours of the “American Methodist Preachers...were they sufficient, are for many reasons, unacceptable to the inhabitants of Canada.” The Methodist Episcopal ministers’ connection to Yankee politics made them repugnant to the colonial authorities in Upper Canada and this “much limited their usefulness to His Majesty’s subjects, many of whom, though not opposed to Methodism, never hear them.”⁵⁵ This view was shared by a group of fifty-six Irish immigrants, just about to leave Limerick for the New World in June 1819. “[W]e request,” they wrote, that the British Conference would send them

⁵² UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, James Buckley to William Bennett, December 30, 1815.

⁵³ Between 1817 and 1820 the membership on the British Wesleyan circuits in Lower and Upper Canada rose from 164 to 744. See UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, Reel 3, March 13, 1817; *ibid.*, Reel 3, February 7, 1820. The quotation is from Jabez Bunting to William Beal, May 10, 1821 in Ward, ed., *Early Correspondence*, 74.

⁵⁴ Emory, William M’Kendree papers, Box 1, File 10, Testimony of John Rose, John Gould, John Vancamp and Catherine Vancamp, January 1, 1820.

⁵⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #16, Henry Ruttan et al. to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, January 12, 1820.

“preachers from England & Ireland” who, they believed, would be “more profitable to us and acceptable to the Government of the country where we are going than those of the United States who hold different sentiments with respect to Kingly Government to what we do...”.⁵⁶ Whether post-1815 immigrants or pre-1815 settlers, a section of the Methodist laity in the Canadas was more than willing to support and propagate the conservative ethos of British Wesleyanism.

For their part, the Methodist Episcopal quickly realized that there was more at stake here than control of this circuit or that circuit: they were in danger of being labelled disloyal and so driven out of the Canadas. American Methodist preachers, like Henry Ryan, struck back as hard as they could, pointing out, in one instance, the mixed motives that might have lain behind the Montreal laity’s initial request for missionaries from Britain. One of those laymen, Ryan charged, had been “a disgrace to God’s cause” and was in danger of being expelled from the Montreal society by the Methodist Episcopal preachers, who knew all about his presumably lurid past. Only the introduction of an entirely new set of ministers could save him. However, since the American Methodist preachers could hardly discredit all of the pro-Wesleyan laity in Lower and Upper Canada in this way, they dedicated most of their energy to stressing their own loyalty to the colonial regime. They were “conscientious in praying for Kings and all that are in authority,” Ryan stated in 1815.⁵⁷ In January 1818, another leading Methodist Episcopal minister, Nathan Bangs, scoffed at the idea that the British

⁵⁶ School of Oriental and African Studies (hereafter SOAS), Methodist Missionary Society Archives (hereafter MMSA), WMMS, Europe, Ireland Correspondence, Fiche #813, Petition from Members of Society in Canada, June 29, 1819.

⁵⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 1, File 20, #11, Henry Ryan to the General Secretaries of the CFA, October 9, 1815.

missionaries had any right to lecture their American brethren on the meaning of loyalty. After all, he pointed out, it was those very British missionaries who were urging the Methodist Episcopal laity in the Canadas to abandon their old allegiance to the American Methodist connexion. “What a wonder,” Bangs wrote sarcastically, “that aliens surrounded by *such loyal Subjects* are permitted to preach at all, or even to escape the Gibbet.”⁵⁸ “It is indeed something very singular,” Ryan declared in a general circular published in April 1818,

that has caused those men [the British missionaries] to swarm out of England...and express by their practice, a desire to crowd themselves upon the people in the Canadas, where a large majority of Methodists are in pointed opposition to their procedure.

The British Wesleyan invasion of Lower and Upper Canada was quite simply an unjustifiable act – the American Methodist preachers stood in as good a stead with the government of the colonies as any of the British missionaries.⁵⁹

Laymen and women across Upper Canada also defended the character of their Methodist Episcopal ministers, striving to define them as the very epitome of British loyalty. While the leading laity of Montreal insisted that their ongoing association with American Methodist preachers had led others to view them as “a *nest of sedition*,” eighty-one members of the Yonge Street and Ancaster circuits pointed out that “most” of those preachers had actually “become subjects of this Government...”. The latter could see no good reason to accept missionaries from the other side of the Atlantic simply

⁵⁸ Emory, William McKendree papers, Box 1, File 7, Nathan Bang’s copy of a letter from Enoch George to Richard McGinnis, January 12, 1818. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Reel 2, #2, Circular written and published by Henry Ryan, April 14, 1818.

because they were “British born.”⁶⁰ In the Bay of Quinte, a group of four laymen and two preachers stated that “[m]otives of Conscience influence our attachment to our Christian and Beloved Sovereign and to the happy constitution of our Country,” but they nevertheless wished to remain within the bounds of the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁶¹ There was, in their minds, no difficulty in reconciling being loyal Britons and worshipping as American Methodists. Ninety-two laymen in Kingston were of the same mind. “We feel an attachment to our King and Country,” they wrote in a petition to the CFA in mid-1817, “but was it justified for National prejudice to interfere in the Church of Christ[?]” The Methodist Episcopal ministers had, after all, “been subject to our Government and the most of them are residents among us and have been treated with respect by our Government.”⁶² The laity who stood by the American Methodists continued to hammer this argument home. In 1820, twenty-six members of the Bay of Quinte circuit pointed out that they did not know whether their ministers were “democrats or federalists, or neither,” since “we never heard them say what they were. Nor have they...ever made politics any part of their public ministry, except to teach obedience to the laws; to fear God and honor the King.” In this, they were no different from the British missionaries.⁶³

Still striving to establish a presence in Lower and Upper Canada, the British missionaries continued to see things in an entirely different light. They wrote to

⁶⁰ Ibid., Box 1, File 20, #12, Members of the Montreal Society to the General Secretaries of the CFA, November 11, 1815; *ibid.*, Box 2, File 23, #29, Brethren of the Young Street and Ancaster Circuits to the General Secretaries of the CFA, December 14, 1816. Emphasis in original.

⁶¹ Ibid., Box 2, File 27, #4, The Bay of Quinte Circuit to James Wood, February 4, 1817.

⁶² Ibid., Box 2, File 27, #1, Henry Ryan to the General Secretaries of the CFA, March 8, 1817.

⁶³ Emory, William M’Kendree papers, Box 1, File 10, Address of the Bay of Quinte Circuit to the General Conference, January 15, 1820.

the CFA in 1816 reporting that the trustees of the Montreal society were “resolved” to lock up their chapel, rather than allowing the “American preachers” to occupy it.⁶⁴ According to the missionaries, this trend was general across the Canadas: “tho[ugh] he preach like an Angel,” John Strong wrote, most laymen and women would not accept a Methodist Episcopal minister.⁶⁵ The laity were repulsed by these “strong Democrats”; indeed, the hatred between settlers and American Methodist preachers far exceeded “any that ever subsisted between France & England” during the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.⁶⁶ The experience of the War of 1812, the missionary Henry Pope stated in 1817, had made the Methodist Episcopalians unacceptable in the Cornwall area.⁶⁷ His brother, Richard Pope, found the same thing in the Eastern Townships, where “the late unnatural and destructive war” had given religion “a dreadful blow.” “Since the peace,” he continued, “the American Preachers have been sent to some of the circuits as before, but in vain.”⁶⁸ In the autumn of 1818 the missionary James Booth spelled out the British Wesleyan position in stark terms. He argued that “it was the duty” of the American Methodist ministers “to retire, and give place to those from England,” adding that “it looked more loyal, and that politics and religion in this instance must go hand in hand...”.⁶⁹ By the late 1810s the question of who had the right to abrogate the label of ‘loyal Briton’ had created a formidable barrier between the British Wesleyan and Methodist Episcopal

⁶⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 2, File 23, #24, William Bennett, John Strong and Richard Williams to James Buckley, July 10, 1816.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Box 2, File 23, #30, John Strong to James Buckley, May 14, 1816.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Box 2, File 27, #2, John Hick and James Booth to George Marsden, January 31, 1817

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Box 2, File 27, #5, Henry Pope to James Wood, February 11, 1817.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Box 3, File 30, #2, Richard Pope to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, April 8, 1818.

⁶⁹ Emory, William M’Kendree papers, Box 1, File 10, Testimony of Stephen Miles, January 10, 1820. See also *ibid.*, Box 1, File 12, Joseph Murdoch to William Case, April 27, 1820.

communities in Lower and Upper Canada.

In the six years after 1814, the leadership of the Wesleyan connexion in Britain managed to exacerbate that division through a combination of confusion and conviction. The CFA, in particular, often seemed to be only vaguely aware of conditions in Lower and Upper Canada, much less of the rancorous conflict taking shape between its missionaries and the American Methodists. In 1816 the CFA published an official report stating that the people of the Canadas were without Protestant ministers and were “verging towards complete heathenism,” or, even worse, “constantly attaching themselves to the Roman Catholics.”⁷⁰ Yet, a year earlier, the Methodist Episcopalals had pointed out how wrong such ideas were and had demanded the immediate withdrawal of the British missionaries from Lower and Upper Canada.⁷¹ The CFA’s Secretary, James Buckley, replied, arguing that the British Wesleyans could hardly abandon those colonies now that they had missionaries there. They did not wish to stress politics, but the “general habits and prejudices” of an increasing number of settlers in the Canadas “must be in favour of this country and of English preachers...”. The “congeniality of sentiment etc.” between missionaries and laity, Buckley added, “might tend to facilitate the success of the Gospel in those parts which are under the British government.”⁷²

At the same time, Buckley also instructed two of the leading ministers in the Maritimes, William Bennett and William Black, to attend the quadrennial gathering of

⁷⁰ *The Report of the Executive Committee for the Management of the Missions first commenced by the Rev. John Wesley, the Rev. Dr. Coke, and others* (London: Thomas Cordeux, 1816), 25.

⁷¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 1, File 20, #11, Henry Ryan to the General Secretaries of the CFA, October 9, 1815.

⁷² UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, James Buckley to Francis Asbury, December 31, 1815.

the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church scheduled to take place in Baltimore in 1816. Bennett and Black, Buckley wrote, must do their best to settle the British and American connexions' dispute over the gospel work in Lower and Upper Canada. The British Wesleyan leadership was "anxious by every just & possible means to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" between themselves and the Methodist Episcopalians. "Their motto," Buckley declared, "is 'Let brotherly love continue.'"⁷³ Two months later, however, Black and Bennett received emphatic instructions from the CFA to "[l]et nothing be wanting in power to keep possession of Montreal and if possible to obtain the Canadas."⁷⁴ Five months after that, following the failure of Bennett and Black's efforts, the CFA changed direction again and ordered its missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada to avoid politics, to eschew conflict with the American Methodists, but not to abandon their own stations.⁷⁵ This was highly problematic, however, since many of the British Wesleyan stations were already established in the midst of preexisting Methodist Episcopal circuits.⁷⁶ Here was confusion worse confounded.

This pattern of transatlantic miscommunication and mutual ignorance changed completely after July 10, 1820. On that day, the Methodist connexions in Britain and the United States found a way to settle their differences in the Canadas. This compromise was primarily the achievement of one American Methodist minister: John

⁷³ Ibid., James Buckley to William Bennett, December 30, 1815.

⁷⁴ Ibid., James Buckley to William Bennett, March 14, 1816. See also *ibid.*, James Buckley to John Strong, February 26, 1816.

⁷⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the CFA, Reel 1, August 10, 1816.

⁷⁶ See for example Emory, William M'Kendree papers, Box 1, File 4, Peter Jones to William Case, January 25, 1817; *ibid.*, Box 1, File 10, Testimony of Evan, Dorothy, Hannah and Mary Roys and Sybil Campbell, January 3, 1820.

Emory. Emory was a man of undoubted talents. He entered the Methodist Episcopal ministry in 1809 and joined the Philadelphia Conference. He transferred to the Baltimore Conference in 1818 and, in 1828, became Book Editor for the entire connexion. Emory's career reached a pinnacle in 1832 when he was elected Bishop.⁷⁷ In terms of the relationship between British and American Methodism, however, his most significant appointment came in 1820 when the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church selected him to act as its delegate to that year's British Conference.⁷⁸ He was instructed to "express to said conference our earnest desire...to cultivate the most friendly and harmonious relations with our brethren of the British connection...". Emory was also given the more specific task of proposing a way to settle the conflict between the two Conferences in the Canadas. "[Y]ou are at liberty," the Methodist Episcopal Bishops wrote, "to stipulate that our preachers shall confine their labours in Canada to the upper province, provided the British missionaries will confine theirs to the lower."⁷⁹

Emory was well received in Britain. True, there was some confusion. One layman told Emory that he spoke English very well and asked if English was much spoken in the United States. "Such are queries," Emory noted, "which have been frequently put to me."⁸⁰ The British Wesleyan ministry reacted to the American delegate with more intelligence. One of the leading men of the connexion, Joseph Entwisle,

⁷⁷ For a short biography of John Emory see James Kirby, et al., *The Methodists* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 294-5.

⁷⁸ Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: G. Lane and C.B. Tippet, 1845), 3:111-12; Robert Emory, *The Life of the Rev. John Emory, D.D., one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: George Lane, 1841), 93.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 93-4.

⁸⁰ Southern Methodist University, Bridwell Library (hereafter SMU), Leete Manuscript Collection (hereafter LMC), Journal of John Emory's trip to Liverpool (1820), August 21, 1820; *ibid.*, August 22, 1820.

observed that Emory was

a thin spare man, about thirty-years of age; modest, grave, and pious, in his appearance and spirit; very intelligent, and interesting as a speaker, without the least parade or display. He began by speaking of the love of the American Methodists to us. We, the parents. They, the children.⁸¹

Emory knew how to work a crowd. Adam Clarke, the famous Wesleyan theologian and political half wit, was so taken with Emory that he invited him home and ran up the Union Jack in greeting. “[H]e would have added the American stripes,” Emory wrote, “if he could have procured them...”⁸²

The executive members of the recently-formed WMMS were equally taken with the American representative. On July 10th, they approved his suggestion to split the gospel work in the Canadas between the two connexions. Emory’s assurance that it grieved the Methodist Episcopalians in those colonies to be represented as disloyal interlopers helped his cause. So did his statement that the American Methodist ministers in Lower and Upper Canada “teach loyalty and subjection to the higher powers.”⁸³

There was some opposition to Emory’s plan when the senior Missionary Secretary, Richard Watson, presented it to the Conference: one outspoken minister accused the Methodist Episcopalians of preaching republicanism in the Canadas. Watson silenced the speaker.⁸⁴ That opinion was no longer accepted by the British Wesleyan leadership.

⁸¹ William Entwisle, *Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Entwisle*, 4th ed. (London: John Mason, 1856), 293-4.

⁸² SMU, LMC, Journal of John Emory, August 8, 1820. On Adam Clarke and politics see Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 99-100.

⁸³ Emory, *Life of Emory*, 115-16; UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, July 10, 1820.

⁸⁴ SMU, LMC, Journal of John Emory, August 2, 1820.

The compromise struck by Emory and the WMMS proved to be a watershed in the relationship between the British Wesleyan communities in the home country and in Lower and Upper Canada. After July 1820, the WMMS attempted to impose much more direct and consistent control over its missionaries than the CFA had been able to achieve during the previous six years. All confusion vanished from the instructions that the new Missionary Secretaries sent to the colonies. The WMMS's constant theme was 'oneness' and the need to preserve the newly-established unity between British Wesleyanism and American Methodism. In August 1820, the WMMS resolved

that as the American Methodists and ourselves are but one body, it would be inconsistent with our unity, and dangerous to that affection, which ought to characterize us in every place, to have different Societies and Congregations in the same towns and villages, or to allow of any intrusion on either side, into each other's labours.⁸⁵

At the same time, the Missionary Secretaries let their preachers in the Canadas know that the Parent connexion had "recognized the principle, that the Methodist Body is one throughout the world, and that therefore its members are bound to cordial affection, and brotherly union." All political considerations, including otherwise praiseworthy loyalty, were to be ignored in the interests of transatlantic harmony.⁸⁶

The WMMS ordered its missionaries to withdraw from Upper Canada.

This measure, the Missionary Secretaries stated, would "prevent collision, without

⁸⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, August 23, 1820.

⁸⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Joseph Taylor to John Hick [?], August 23, 1820

sacrifice of public good.” They realized that there might be some opposition among the “warm spirits” of the British Wesleyan societies in the Canadas, but such “local prejudices” should be ignored. The missionaries were to “act upon the great principles sanctioned by the Conference...”.⁸⁷ Given the rather lax administrative efforts of the CFA between 1814 and 1818, these new orders signaled something of a revolution in church government. A new centralizing power – the WMMS – was endeavouring to exert its authority over the connexional periphery.

While there were some instances of rapprochement between the British Wesleyan and American Methodist ministers stationed in Lower and Upper Canada, these ultimately proved short-lived. Even before the two Conferences settled their differences at an official level, social and semiofficial links were being forged between some members of the two connexions. When, for instance, the British missionary Edward Johnston arrived in the Canadas in 1818 he was quite taken with the Methodist Episcopalists. The American Methodists were doing good work in the colonies, Johnston reported to the WMMS. “[T]he morals of the people in general are better and their religious views less exceptionable than the generality of even the Protestants of our own country,” he declared, “so far are the people from turning to Popery or verging to complete heathenism.”⁸⁸ While not exactly lying about conditions in the Canadas,

⁸⁷ Ibid. This notion of ‘oneness’ also came out clearly in the WMMS circular of 1820. It recorded John Emory’s “ardent wish to draw the bonds of union between” the British and American connexions “as close as possible” and the “agreement” that had “been entered into by the two Conferences, to furnish all the co-operation in their power for the furtherance of their common object..”. See SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Circulars, Fiche #1986, September 25, 1820.

⁸⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 3, File 30, #4, Edward Johnston to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, April, 1818. On Edward Johnston see also Norman W. Taggart, *The Irish in World Methodism, 1760-1900* (London: Epworth Press, 1986), 81-5.

Johnston wrote, his fellow missionaries had not been telling the complete truth either.⁸⁹ Stung by such charges, the missionaries shot back, accusing Johnston of culpable naïveté and blaming his behaviour and statements on the machinations of the leading Methodist Episcopal preacher in Lower Canada, William Case.⁹⁰ Johnston left the Canadas in disgust eight months after he arrived, paying for his passage home by selling the books and some of the clothes that the WMMS had given to him when he was dispatched overseas.⁹¹ The Methodist Episcopal of the Bay of Quinte regretted his departure, regarding him as the only honest man among the British missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada.⁹² A fleeting, if troubled bond had been forged between the connexions.

Less spectacular, but more lasting exchanges took shape between some British Wesleyans and American Methodists. When Elias Bowen, a Methodist Episcopal minister, was stationed in Montreal in 1818, William Case wrote to him warning of the nefarious misdeeds that the British missionaries in that city were apparently planning. “[Y]ou are to be aware of any intrigue which may be used by our opponents there,” Case wrote, “& to hold not deliberations with any of them on any subject...”.⁹³ Despite Case’s paranoia, a month later Bowen was having tea with Robert Lusher, Montreal’s resident British missionary. According to Lusher, a meeting over a soothing beverage was

⁸⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 3, File 34, #1, Edward Johnston to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, September 28, 1818.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Box 3, File 35, #5, John DePutron to Joseph Taylor, January 20, 1819; *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #12, James Booth and Richard Pope to Joseph Taylor, May 24, 1819.

⁹¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 3, File 34, #1, Edward Johnston to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, September 28, 1818

⁹² Emory, William M’Kendree papers, Box 1, File 8, Darius Dunham (copier) to Edward Johnston, August 29, 1818. For William Case’s favourable opinion of Johnston see Drew, Nathan Bangs papers, William Case to Nathan Bangs, March 30, 1818.

⁹³ SMU, Elias Bowen Papers, William Case to Elias Bowen, August 22, 1818.

possible with a man who was “a fellow-labourer in the vineyard of our Lord...a Teacher of the same glorious doctrines of a free, a full and a present Salvation, which distinguish us as Wesleyan Methodist Preachers...”.⁹⁴ Bowen, it would seem, agreed. Eight years later, he and Lusher were still writing to one another on familiar terms.⁹⁵ The barriers between the two connexions in the colonies were not insurmountable. Unfortunately for the prospects of Methodistical unity in the Canadas, however, the case of Elias Bowen and Robert Lusher proved atypical.

By mid-1820 the majority of the British missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada were beginning to think along different lines than the Methodist leadership in either the United States or Britain. In June 1820, Robert Lusher informed the WMMS that he had “just received information by letter from New York...”. His American correspondent reported that the Methodist Episcopalals had “appointed a delegate to our ensuing British Conference” to put the affairs of the Canadas on a permanent and friendly footing. Lusher hoped that the conflicts between the missionaries and the American Methodist preachers would be “speedily and amicably adjusted.” He also trusted, however, that, as a result of the negotiations between the Methodist Episcopal delegate and the British Wesleyan hierarchy, “my dear Brethren in the Upper Province” would be able “to prosecute their pious labours free” from what he saw as the “*unnatural and cruel opposition* which they have hitherto experienced from the Preachers belonging to the

⁹⁴ Ibid., Robert L. Lusher to Elias Bowen, September 18, 1818; *ibid.*, Robert L. Lusher to Elias Bowen, October [?], 1818.

⁹⁵ By 1826, however, Lusher was stationed in Nova Scotia and Bowen was living in New York state. Perhaps their removal from the scene of conflict in the Canadas made friendship easier to maintain. *Ibid.*, Robert L. Lusher to Elias Bowen, August 5, 1826.

American Conference...".⁹⁶ Writing to the WMMS in September 1820, Richard Pope agreed with Lusher. The "unparalleled & malignant conduct" of the Methodist Episcopalians was hindering the British Wesleyans' usefulness in the Canadas. "No language can portray," Pope wrote,

...the one half of those artful measures which they have adopted to overturn our cause & to render your Missionaries useless in Canada... We hope however these divisions [will] soon be brought to an happy issue by the interference of the two Conferences.⁹⁷

In other words, the missionaries expected the British Conference to uphold their rights in all parts of the Canadas.

When definite news about the outcome of Emory's mission reached Lower and Upper Canada, the reaction of the majority of the missionaries was not what one might expect from dutiful Wesleyan ministers. Their dislike of the Methodist Episcopalians continued unabated, despite orders from the Missionary Secretaries to love thy neighbour. Robert Lusher wrote that he deeply regretted the plan adopted by the WMMS and the British Conference; a plan which, Lusher felt, the authorities at home would

not have adopted had a just representation been made to you by the American Delegate of the circumstances of the Upper Province or were you fully aware of the fatal influence it is likely to produce on the religious and political interests of the Country...

Among those fatal influences were "the introduction of a number of foreign religious

⁹⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #24, Robert Lusher to Joseph Taylor, June 19, 1820. Emphasis in original.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #28, Richard Pope to Joseph Taylor, September 9, 1820.

Teachers who it is well known hold our Constitution and government in the utmost contempt...”.⁹⁸ William Sutcliffe, having just arrived in the Canadas in October 1820, was quick to take up the same line as Lusher. He wrote that the plan to split the colonies between the two churches was “one of the most unadvised steps that ever our Dear Fathers and Brethren took...”. More significantly, Sutcliffe began to differentiate between the Wesleyans in Britain and those in the Canadas. “Permit me to say, that, as *Englishmen* you were *unsuspicious*,” he wrote, “you were not aware of the *Yankee spirit*, which obtains among the *Americans*. Our *preachers* have been treated very indifferently by some of them...”.⁹⁹ Sutcliffe’s letter seemed to suggest that the missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada were in a better position to say what was or was not good for those colonies. This had a hint of insubordination about it. Within a month, the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas had turned against the connexional authorities in London.

The line of reasoning adopted in the letters and petitions that the WMMS began to receive in late 1820 testify to the beginnings of an indigenous British and Wesleyan culture in the Canadas. Many laymen and women who had already nailed their colours to the cause of British Wesleyanism in Upper Canada found themselves torn between their attachment to the home connexion and their growing fear that the WMMS and the British Conference were about to abandon their missions to the colonies as a result of their détente with the Methodist Episcopalists. From Matilda, Paul Glasford wrote that thousands of newly-converted Methodists in Upper Canada exclaimed

⁹⁸ Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #37, Robert Lusher to Joseph Taylor, November 17, 1820.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #42, William Sutcliffe to George Marsden, October 31, 1820. Emphasis in original.

“against the injustice and cruelty” of the WMMS’s new plan for the colonies. He pointed out that the “greater part” of those laymen and women would

not go to hear a preacher from the United States...the sufferings of the inhabitants of this province by the plunder and destruction done by the American troops during the late war as well as old sufferers during the American Revolution has fired a prejudice not easily removed...

Glasford ended with a warning. “[Y]ou may perhaps be surprised to learn that the arrangement with the American Delegate will not be carried into effect;” he wrote, “the members of Society, raised and brought to God through the instrumentality of your Missionaries refuse to be transferred.”¹⁰⁰

The leading laity of the British Wesleyan societies in Kingston and the Bay of Quinte agreed with Glasford. Acting quite independently of the missionaries, these laymen informed the WMMS that they too refused to be handed over to the tender mercies of the Methodist Episcopal. “To submit to the decision of our Conference relative to the transfer,” the leaders and stewards of the Kingston society wrote, they could never do while they still retained any memory of “the abuse we have received from them [the American Methodists]...”. “[A]nd we are fully persuaded,” they continued, “that if our Conference and Committee were fully acquainted with all particulars they would never have put us to the necessity of remonstrating against it.”¹⁰¹ One hundred and twelve British Wesleyan laity in the Bay of Quinte took a somewhat different tack. They argued that, in disobeying the directives of the British Conference and WMMS,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #43, Paul Glasford to Joseph Taylor, November 23, 1820. See also *ibid.*, Box 5, File 44, #12, Paul Glasford to Joseph Taylor, January 17, 1821.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #1, Neil McLeod et al. to Joseph Taylor, January 2, 1821.

they were actually following the example of their brethren in the Old Country.

“Gentlemen,” the petitioners wrote,

you will not allow any radicals to rule in your societies, nor ever to remain among you lest the[y] should poison the minds of others. Your remonstrants act on the same principle. Those radicals are not loyal to their king and you put them from amongst you. Those Americans are disaffected to this government and enemies to our King and we cannot nor will not give ourselves to them and you can censure us for our conduct in this respect.¹⁰²

In defying the will of the connexional authorities in Britain, the British Wesleyans in the Canadas were trying only to create a perfect, untainted replica of the home country and connexion in the New World.

This rebellious loyalism was soon general across the entire mission District. In several petitions, the laity of Fort Wellington bade defiance to the orders of the WMMS, stressing both their sense of Wesleyanism and Britishness. They could not ignore

the dangerous consequences that may attend ourselves and posterity by being placed under a foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction...being sensible that such an arrangement...would now leave many hundreds of Methodist members who have lately Emigrated to this Province from Great Britain destitute of the Gospel as they refuse to be placed under the American Conference.¹⁰³

Joining the Methodist Episcopal was also “incompatible with our duty as British

¹⁰² Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #8, Members, Trustees etc. of the Bay of Quinte Circuit to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, [1821].

¹⁰³ Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #11, Members of the British Wesleyan Methodist Society of Fort Wellington to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, January 3, 1821.

Subjects.”¹⁰⁴ The Kingston layman Maitland McCracken agreed, arguing that “[t]o join the Americans is impossible...As soon may we join radicals in England.”¹⁰⁵ Seventy-six members of the London and Burford societies stated even more emphatically that the WMMS’s plan to split the gospel work in the Canadas would not be borne by people from “England, Ireland, and Nova Scotia, with some of the loyalists...”¹⁰⁶

William Lunn of Montreal reiterated these sentiments in 1824, pointing out that the Methodists in Upper Canada were hopelessly divided into two camps: settlers of American origin and “those from Great Britain and the Natives.” “[B]ut how can this great evil be remedied,” Lunn asked, “but by sending out British Missionaries to a British Colony, as the American Preachers, in conversation with the Members of their respective congregations generally mix their political principles with religious subjects, thereby making them disloyal to our Government...”. The only way to preserve the province and foster its Britishness was for “the English Conference to negotiate with that in the States that Upper Canada, a British Colony, may be supplied with British Preachers.”¹⁰⁷ The ‘oneness’ of Methodism was to be subordinated to the ‘oneness’ of the British Empire. If the government of the Canadas was a transcript of that in Britain, so too must British Wesleyanism be maintained in all its purity. This would be done even if it meant defying the centralizing power of the WMMS. The culture that began to emerge within the British Wesleyan community in Lower and Upper Canada after 1820 was one built on contradictions.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #36, Samuel Adams to Jabez Bunting, May 2, 1821.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #38, Maitland McCracken to Joseph Taylor, June 8, 1821.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #9, Members and Friends of London and Burford to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, February 20, 1821.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Box 8, File 56, #3, William Lunn to Richard Watson, February 3, 1824.

However, if the British missionaries and their lay supporters in the Canadas expected this language of political and connexional loyalty to sway their fathers and brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, they were doomed to disappointment. Having carefully examined the various letters from the Canadas, the Missionary Secretaries went on the offensive. They declared that the tone of several of those letters was “somewhat high, when it is considered that none of the Stations in Upper Canada support themselves, and some have contributed scarcely any thing to the support of the Missionaries they profess so highly to value...”. They stated that, when “religious help from other quarters is within...reach,” they were under no obligation to provide missionaries. The Missionary Secretaries instructed the members of the societies in the Canadas to “judge the Ministers who may be appointed by the American Conference with candor.” “If they preach the truth with ability,” they argued, “conduct themselves as good subjects, and exhort all to do the same, as the scriptures enjoin, the Committee cannot see on what Christian ground they can be objected to...”. Then the Missionary Secretaries went for the jugular. The continued presence of British Wesleyan missionaries would not avert the danger that the British Wesleyans in the colonies feared. “They speak as if we were already in command of the religion and conscience of a province which contains about 90,000 people,” the Missionary Secretaries wrote,

when our Societies amount only to 401, and our Missionaries to five or six. Whereas the Americans from their long establishment have a society of near 3,000 members, and 28 travelling, and 41 local preachers: and the American influence would still remain, unless we were to engage in a larger plan to displace them by British Missionaries...

That was not going to happen. It would be unchristian and, just as important to an increasingly cash-strapped WMMS, far too expensive.¹⁰⁸

Despite these arguments, animosity towards the settlement of 1820 continued unabated even among those missionaries who returned from Lower or Upper Canada to take up a circuit in Britain. Writing from London in 1823, Thomas Catterick cast the events leading up to the partitioning of the Canadas in the form of a classic narrative of sin and salvation. “While we were...anticipating better days,” he stated, “the enemy of souls...was permitted to send a servant of God from America, with fair words, to his Brethren in England, which words were heard, rec[eive]d and believed by you.” Such ingenuousness led to the inevitable Fall: “resolutions were passed that greatly affected our Mission in Canada. They in fact gave a death blow to all our prospects & resolutions.” Paradise had been lost, largely thanks to the actions of the WMMS and the British Conference. The upper province now had to be redeemed “from its present fallen state.”¹⁰⁹ And even though the WMMS agreed to retain some sort of missionary presence in Kingston in 1821, those British Wesleyan preachers still stationed in Lower Canada kept up the pressure on the home connexion to recommence its gospel work in Upper Canada in general. Such a move would be “attended with considerable advantage,” they argued.¹¹⁰ It would return that colony to the right path to salvation.

¹⁰⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, June 20, 1821.

¹⁰⁹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #118, Thomas Catterick to Richard Watson and Joseph Taylor, August 20, 1823.

¹¹⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 7, File 52, #29, John Hick to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 15, 1823. On the WMMS’s decision to make Kingston “an exempt case” see UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, June 20, 1821 and UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, the General Secretaries of the WMMS to Robert Stanton, July 10, 1821. In making this decision, the WMMS was motivated, primarily, by the large British military and naval presence in the town.

The lay opponents of the compromise of 1820 in the Canadas remained equally determined to resist any change imposed by the connexional centre. They insisted that it was not their duty to join any denomination, Methodist or otherwise, against their own consciences. They argued “[t]hat the Ministry of the Missionaries from England has been more profitable to their souls than any other ministers they have ever heard...”.¹¹¹ In January 1824, the most outspoken of the Upper Canadian laity declared that they were no longer willing to be associated with what they saw as a disloyal American connexion. They demanded “British Preachers, under British direction...”.¹¹² The missionary Joseph Stinson found the same attitude among the members of the Kingston societies nine months later. These laymen and women, he reported to the WMMS, would not unite with the Methodist Episcopal “because they preach and act contrary to what they have been accustomed to...”.¹¹³ There was both a political and a religious imperative at work here.¹¹⁴ There was no guarantee, one layman in Perth, Upper Canada, wrote in 1827, that the American Methodist ministers would “remain with us in time of peace and in time of war...”. British missionaries, in contrast, would be guaranteed to stay the course. Moreover, if the American Methodist preachers left the colony and British Wesleyans took their place, a glorious revival would doubtless ensue. “There is not,” this layman concluded,

a District in this Province where the inhabitants are so exclusively British born subjects, nor a place in which the manners and customs of our Mother country are more

¹¹¹ Ibid., Box 7, File 52, #24, John Hick to Joseph Taylor, May 10, 1823.

¹¹² Ibid., Box 8, File 56, #2, James Knowlan to Richard Watson, January 25, 1824.

¹¹³ Ibid., Box 8, File 56, #22, Joseph Stinson to Joseph Taylor, October 18, 1824.

¹¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of the British Wesleyan missionaries’ response to American Methodist worship, see 285-7 below.

cultivated and addressed...a British Minister would be received with open arms, be a matter of rejoicing to the Wesleyan Methodists in the District, assimilate their minds, and prove a blessing to the Community...¹¹⁵

A vocal segment of the Methodist laity was still striving to maintain what it saw as untainted Britishness and Wesleyanism despite British Wesleyan policies.

This cultural shift among the British Wesleyans in the Canadas – defining themselves against both the home connexion and their American Methodist brethren – was consolidated during the 1830s as a result of another sudden shift in the British Conference’s colonial policy. In 1832 and early 1833 the British connexion began to move towards a union with the recently-independent Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada.¹¹⁶ Try as they might, however, to keep the negotiations around this measure a “secret,” the Missionary Secretaries rapidly found themselves contending with heated opposition from their own preachers in the Canadas. Having heard news of the proposed union during an audience with Lieutenant-Governor John Colborne, John Barry took the lead in getting up an anti-union agitation among his fellow missionaries.¹¹⁷ He simply could not believe, Barry wrote, that the members of the new Canada Conference could be accommodated within a purely British Wesleyan connexion.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 11, File 70, #10, B. Lett to the British Wesleyan Conference, June 1, 1827. The future Missionary Secretary Robert Alder supported Lett’s appeal. “May I be allowed to say,” he wrote while stationed in Lower Canada, “do something for that people, if you can.” Ibid., Box 11, File 70, #11, Robert Alder to George Morley, June 4, 1827.

¹¹⁶ For a more detailed discussion of this process, see 148-55 below.

¹¹⁷ JRULM, MARC, Robert Alder papers, MAM PLP 1.36.3, Robert Alder to John Beecham, January 12, 1833.

¹¹⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 17, File 106, #27, John Barry to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, January 12, 1833; *ibid.*, Box 17, File 106, #29, John Barry to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, March 15, 1833. On John Barry see also Taggart, *Irish in World Methodism*, 152-3.

William Croscombe and John Hick agreed. Positioning themselves as “the guardians of the interests of Methodism in these Provinces,” they felt compelled to warn the WMMS that the Canadian Methodists’ “political character...can never be changed;” their only aim was to “destroy British influence” in the colonies.¹¹⁹ The Canada connexion, Barry added, had “no object in view *but the total and final expulsion of all that is English from Canada.*”¹²⁰ And in yet another letter to the Missionary Secretaries, Barry warned that “if you wish to avoid the charge of radicalism, keep your people forever distinct from a body [the Canadian Methodists], who, I am sorry to say, have made Methodism odious in Canada...”.¹²¹ Once again, the missionaries were defending genuine Britishness and Wesleyanism from what they saw as Methodist Episcopal duplicity and the home connexion’s stubborn wrongheadedness.

It was left to the leading British Wesleyan laity in Lower and Upper Canada, however, to take the anti-union agitation to its logical extreme: the threat of secession from the home connexion. In early October 1833, William Lunn of Montreal warned one of the leading ministers in Britain that, if the WMMS allowed the Canada Conference to take over the British Wesleyan society at Kingston and another that had recently begun to take shape at York, the missionaries stationed in the Canadas might have to “become independent” and establish their own “Wesleyan Missionary Society for Canada” in the Old Country. After setting up shop in Britain, this schismatic group

¹¹⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 17, File 106, #19, William Croscombe and John Hick to John Beecham, May 31, 1833.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #34, John Barry to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, August 2, 1833. Emphasis in original.

¹²¹ Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #35, John Barry to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, August 5, 1833.

would concentrate on performing the gospel labour that the WMMS seemed prepared to abandon – supplying Lower and Upper Canada “with as many zealous British preachers” as its funds might permit. “[A]nd this,” Lunn made sure to point out, “will only be a consequence of the arrangement” that the British connexion had “recently made with the Upper Canada Conference.”¹²² A month later, Lunn urged the Missionary Secretaries themselves to “repeal the Union at once, be firm & decided...”. “[I]f this be not done,” he added, “we cannot answer for the consequences.” He wrote, once again, that if the WMMS forced the British Wesleyan community in Upper Canada to join the Canadian Methodists “they will immediately become Independent, & we shall instantly join them.”¹²³

In Upper Canada, some of the leading laity in York began to translate Lunn’s words into actions, locking the pro-union missionary Joseph Stinson out of their chapel. These laymen also threatened to extend their agitation to Britain itself. “I understand,” Stinson reported from York, “circulars are to be sent to all the Superintendents of Circuits in England by our antiunion Brethren & no means are to be spared to induce the Conference to reconsider & abolish the union next year.”¹²⁴ Such a move, Stinson noted, “might occasion much unpleasant discussion in the Conference and elsewhere.”¹²⁵ The connexional periphery was endangering the stability of the metropole.

This schismatic movement continued to gather force in 1834. The stewards, class leaders and trustees of the British Wesleyan society at York vowed that

¹²² Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #24, William Lunn to John Mason, October 12, 1833.

¹²³ Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #38, William Lunn to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 8, 1833.

¹²⁴ Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #26, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 11, 1833.

¹²⁵ Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #8, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, December 1833.

they would “never consent, on any terms to be united” with the Canada Conference. These laymen assured that WMMS that “we are desirous as you can be for the spread of true and genuine Methodism and would do all in our power to promote it...”. At the same time, however, they were “fully convinced that the intended union with the Episcopal Methodists will not be the best means of affecting so desirable an object.” They also warned that, if the union went ahead, they would feel “compelled to connect ourselves with some other body of Christians among whom our religious privileges will be more permanently established than they at present appear to be.” These transplanted British Wesleyans wanted progress to halt – for the relationship between Wesleyanism in the Old Country and in the Canadas to remain what it had been before 1833 or even 1820. If that did not happen, they would turn to “the Ranters or Primitive Methodists” or to the followers of Henry Ryan.¹²⁶ “[W]e prefer,” they wrote, “either of them to the Episcopal Methodists, among whom we foresee nothing but strife, division and discord...”.¹²⁷

Another member of the York society, John Buttle, also raised the spectre of an “appeal...to every preacher in Great Britain.” “This is a matter of fearful import that may shake the foundation of your Missionary Machinery,” he noted, “I tremble for the result.”¹²⁸

¹²⁶ In 1827 Henry Ryan and a small number of other discontented ministers seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada. One of the Ryanites’ main complaints was that the connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States made the Canada Conference seem disloyal to the British and colonial government. See French, *Parsons and Politics*, 75-7.

¹²⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 18, File 119, #1, Memorial of the Stewards, Leaders and Trustees of the York Society, January 20, 1834.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Box 18, File 119, #12, John Buttle to John Beecham, February 18, 1834.

This argument was not well calculated, however, to appeal to the leaders of the British connexion. The Wesleyan ministry had actually become even less willing to tolerate internal dissent between 1820 and 1833 – a trend most clearly demonstrated by the Leeds Organ agitation of 1827. In 1820 the British Conference had adopted a rule about introducing organs into its chapels. This Organ Rule stated that, in some instances, the Conference would allow the installation of these instruments, but that each application first had to be made to a District Meeting “and if it obtain their sanction, shall be transferred to a committee at the Conference who shall report their opinion as to the propriety of acceding to the request...”.¹²⁹ In theory, this process would allow the ministry both to defend its central control over the connexion and to defuse any arguments between pro- and anti-organ factions that might arise at the local level. The preachers were well aware that there were many laymen and women who saw organs as a sign of either Catholic corruption or worldly declension; but there were also other, mostly wealthier laity who believed organs were a suitable and even necessary sign of Wesleyanism’s rising social status.¹³⁰ The trouble, by the mid-1820s, was that the second generation of Wesleyan ministers were more inclined to side with the latter than with the former.¹³¹ In his first major speech before Conference, for instance, Jabez Bunting defended introducing an organ into a chapel in Liverpool. “The organ,” he wrote in his notes, is “not *Popish*...If there be not flute stop, there will be no voluntaries; no

¹²⁹ *Minutes* (London, 1820), 145 quoted in Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 107.

¹³⁰ *London Quarterly Review*, July 1888, 274-5.

¹³¹ Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1968), 41; Gowland, *Methodist Secessions*, 5-6, 27, 32, 53-4; W.R. Ward, “The Religion of the People and the Problem of Control, 1790-1830,” in idem, *Faith and Faction*, 275, 279.

danger of abuse.”¹³² Unsurprisingly perhaps, this purely technical argument left a large number of the Wesleyan laity unconvinced.

The division between the pro- and anti-organ forces within the British connexion produced open conflict in 1826 in Leeds, where the wealthy trustees of the Brunswick chapel decided to install an organ. They soon encountered opposition from a majority of the members on the circuits in the city. In October, sixty local preachers protested against the trustees’ plan, arguing that an organ would not only be an unmethodistical innovation, but also a financial drain on the city’s poorer societies. When, in accordance with the Organ Rule, the question went before the Leeds District Meeting, the ministers present ruled against the introduction of an organ. Four of the Brunswick chapel trustees, however, refused to accept that decision and appealed it to the Conference. It was a tactic that bore bountiful fruit, from the trustees’ point of view. The Conference of 1827 decided to side with the well-to-do gentlemen of Leeds: it set aside the Organ Rule, overturned the judgment of the Leeds District Meeting and declared that an organ could and should be allowed in the Brunswick chapel.¹³³

This decision triggered a ferocious reaction among those local preachers and laity in Leeds who continued to oppose an organ. One particularly hotheaded local preacher, Matthew Johnson, began to organize his fellows into a protest movement against what he declared to be the Conference’s centralizing and arbitrary power. When

¹³² Benjamin Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism during the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth-Century, 1827-1852* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1898), 74; JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 18. 12. 4, Notes on the Liverpool Organ. Emphasis in original.

¹³³ The above paragraph draws on Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 103-18; Gregory, *Side Lights*, 52-4; John Kent, “The Wesleyan Methodists to 1849,” in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 2:246 and Watts, *Dissenters*, 414.

the circuit superintendent, Edmund Grindrod, attempted to suspend Johnson, more than seventy local preachers sided with the latter, joining an increasingly raucous public agitation. Johnson was eventually expelled from the connexion, but, in the short term, that only made matters worse.¹³⁴ Faced with mounting public opposition, a thoroughly beleaguered Grindrod decided to call in ministerial help, including the Secretary of the Conference – Jabez Bunting. These carpetbagging ministers formed a Special District Meeting and, under Bunting’s guidance, declared that the anti-organ agitation in Leeds was nothing less than “an insurrection against the pastoral office.”¹³⁵ The local preachers “were largely infected with the spirit of revolt against the first principles of our existing Church Government.” This “*radical* faction” had “assumed all the fearful characteristics of a *Methodistical Luddism*...and of whom it was indispensable to the *permanent peace* of the Society that it should be forthwith purged.”¹³⁶ And purged it was: Matthew Johnson took 1,040 members out of the Leeds District. The ministerial hierarchy did nothing to halt the exodus; they viewed it as a necessary disciplinary exercise.¹³⁷ “The Yorkshire Methodists,” Bunting had told the Conference of 1827, “with all their excellencies, need teaching a lesson.”¹³⁸

The agitation, however, soon spread from Leeds until “[f]rom the north bank of the Tyne to the south bank of the Thames, the societies were shaken with a

¹³⁴ On Matthew Johnson and his role in the Leeds Organ agitation see Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 103-4; Gregory, *Side Lights*, 55 and Ward, *Religion and Society*, 144-5.

¹³⁵ Bunting used this phrase at the Conference of 1828. See Gregory, *Side Lights*, 59. See also Thomas Percival Bunting and G. Stringer Rowe, *The Life of Jabez Bunting, D.D.* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts / T. Woolmer, 1859-87), 2:236-8.

¹³⁶ Jabez Bunting to Joseph Entwisle, December 22, 1827 in Ward, ed., *Early Correspondence*, 164. Emphasis in original. See also Kent, “Wesleyan Methodists to 1849,” 2:214-15.

¹³⁷ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 144-7; Watts, *Dissenters*, 414.

¹³⁸ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 72.

perilous excitement.”¹³⁹ Donald Frazer, a minister stationed in Durham, described the tumult in apocalyptic terms. “There can be no medium course steered by us now,” he warned Bunting,

either we shall be the greatest instruments God ever employed in renovating the world, or we shall fall to pieces and lose what we have gained. May God pour upon us the spirit of love and of a sound mind!¹⁴⁰

Motivated by similar feelings, the connexion’s ministerial leaders worked hard to impose what they believed to be correct discipline throughout the circuits. They did this, primarily, by ruthlessly hacking away at dissent wherever it reared its head.¹⁴¹ In 1829, for instance, the Conference received remonstrances from several of the connexion’s largest and most influential circuits, including Liverpool and Sheffield, against the way it had handled the Leeds Organ agitation.¹⁴² In each case, the petitioners argued that, in dealing with the Leeds dissidents, the ministry had departed from both the spirit and the actual words of the Plan of Pacification.¹⁴³ Bunting was quick, however, to strike back, denouncing the Sheffield address as “arrogant and presumptuous.” The majority of his fellow preachers agreed and decided to stand by their actions. They officially chastised the Liverpool and Sheffield circuits for daring to question the Conference’s overriding authority. As Bunting pointed out, the first job of the Methodist ministry was to

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴⁰ Donald Frazer to Jabez Bunting, March 14, 1828 in Ward, ed., *Early Correspondence*, 175.

¹⁴¹ See for example Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, May 20, 1828 in *ibid.*, 176-7; Jabez Bunting to Joseph Entwisle, October 24, 1828 in *ibid.*, 190-1.

¹⁴² Gregory, *Side Lights*, 75, 80; Thomas Galland to Jabez Bunting, January 12, 1828 in Ward, ed., *Early Correspondence*, 168.

¹⁴³ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 82; William Henshaw to Jabez Bunting, January 9, 1828 in Ward, ed., *Early Correspondence*, 168.

instruct and “to *govern* our people.”¹⁴⁴ The British Wesleyan hierarchy was prepared to apply the same rigorous approach to connexional discipline to its overseas missions.

When news of the missionaries’ objections to the union reached London, the Missionary Secretaries initially attempted to put a brave face on things. At the Conference of 1833, John Beecham mentioned that the missionaries and laity in the Canadas were making “considerable opposition” to the union scheme. He outlined the objections that both of those groups had urged against it and demonstrated “wherein the arrangement had been misunderstood, and that the apprehensions of their Missionaries in Lower Canada that the measure, if carried, would occasion a serious split among the preachers and Societies in Upper Canada, were not well grounded...”. Jabez Bunting added that the union was “desirable for the interests of our *common Methodism*.”¹⁴⁵ The Missionary Secretaries were less sanguine in their private counsels. The usually imperturbable Bunting was taken aback when Barry’s letters began to arrive at the Mission House in November 1833. “But what shall be done,” he wrote to Alder and John Beecham, “to allay the storm so strangely raised in the...British Provinces? Barry & his party have acted most preposterously.” Bunting was also quick to suggest a way to deal with the problem: the imposition of harsh connexional discipline. “I question,” he continued, “if we ought not to recall him [Barry], or send him at all events to South Africa, or some other place quite out of range of North American feeling & influence.”¹⁴⁶ The Missionary Secretaries did not, however, take any immediate action. Half a month

¹⁴⁴ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 78-9, 83. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁵ *Christian Guardian* (hereafter *CG*), October 16, 1833, 194.

¹⁴⁶ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 18.15.10, Jabez Bunting to Robert Alder and John Beecham, November 18, 1833.

later the WMMS met. The twenty-one ministers and laymen in attendance noted “that very great dissatisfaction respecting the Union with the Upper Canada Conference prevails among some of our preachers and principle friends in Lower Canada.” The WMMS was worried that “the adoption of extreme measures by some of our Societies is threatened” and therefore appointed a subcommittee of high-powered ministers and laymen to meet in three days to discuss a proper response.¹⁴⁷

On December 20, 1833 the WMMS reconvened and adopted the report of that subcommittee. Viewing the whole, the Wesleyan leadership turned once more to stressing notions of Methodist unity on one hand and wielding the disciplinary rod with the other. The WMMS

marked with deep and painful feeling, the bitter and uncharitable spirit manifested by some of our preachers and friends against their brethren of the Upper Canada Connexion...whose loyalty has been testified by judges as competent to decide on the subject...

They refused to make Upper Canada into “the scene of unhallowed rivalry, and unbrotherly contention, between the two bodies of Christians bearing the same name, holding the same doctrines, and having one common origin.” To deal with the issue at once, the Missionary Secretaries transferred John Barry to Bermuda and sent letters of chastisement to him and to William Croscombe, demanding explanations for their schismatic behaviour.¹⁴⁸ The WMMS also dispatched Edmund Grindrod and Robert

¹⁴⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, December 6, 1833.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Reel 1, December 20, 1833. See also UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Jabez Bunting to William Croscombe, December 30, 1833; *ibid.*, Robert Alder to John Barry, December 30, 1833.

Alder, who had served as a missionary in the Canadas between 1825 and 1827, to the colonies in the spring of 1834. They were supposed to settle things once and for all among the missionaries and their lay supporters.¹⁴⁹ The WMMS expected the British Wesleyans in the colonies to accept the new regime.

As in 1820, the response of the British Wesleyan laity in the Canadas was not what the connexional leadership at home hoped or expected. Having received news of the outcome of the December 20th meeting of the WMMS, the leading lights of the Montreal circuit once more took up their role as exemplars of rebellious loyalism. They put forward a contract view of the relationship between connexional centre and periphery – a view hitherto overlooked by Wesleyan Methodist communities overseas. Having “voluntarily submitted themselves...to the instruction and pastoral care of the B[ritish] W[esleyan] Connexion,” they considered “themselves under the special protection of the Conference...”. Indeed, they believed that the British connexion had given them

a pledge that no infringement whatever upon their rights and privileges should be suffered, & in possession of this confidence many of them left their Native shores where their liberty was not invaded, believing that no change in temporal circumstances could effect their religious privileges under its control.

The union of 1833 had broken this contract and the Montreal, York and Kingston societies were now joined together in an effort to stop the British Wesleyan hierarchy from destroying the prospects of British Wesleyanism in the Canadas. The Montreal laymen argued that the next British Conference had to critically evaluate the union. They

¹⁴⁹ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the Canada Conference, Edmund Grindrod to Egerton Ryerson, March 4, 1834.

claimed “this right on their behalf” on the strength of the Plan of Pacification.¹⁵⁰ Much like the Leeds Organ agitators, the Montreal laity attempted to draw on connexional law in order to defeat the purposes of the connexional leadership. It was not a development calculated to appease the ministerial autocrats of the WMMS.

The British Wesleyan hierarchy became increasingly determined to impose its will on the missionaries and their lay supporters in Lower and Upper Canada. On March 8, 1834 Jabez Bunting noted that “[w]e have received other letters from Canada...they...strengthen our conviction that a crisis has arrived, and that no possible means must be neglected of directing it, by the divine blessing, to a permanently peaceful and beneficial issue.”¹⁵¹ At their meeting on April 23, 1834, the WMMS refused to allow either William Croscombe or John Barry to return to Britain to defend themselves and brushed aside the arguments of the Montreal laity.¹⁵² John Beecham wrote to Croscombe and the Montreal lay leadership two days later, noting, significantly, that he was directed to express the WMMS’s “deep regret” that the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas had adopted principles that were “utterly at variance with British Methodism, and which have produced all the defections and divisions in our societies in this country from the separation effected by [Alexander] Kilham down to the time of the agitation on the organ question at Leeds.”¹⁵³ This dispute was quickly degenerating into an out-and-

¹⁵⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 18, File 112, #4, James Ferrier and John Mathewson to Jabez Bunting, March 8, 1834.

¹⁵¹ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.3, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, March 8, 1834.

¹⁵² UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, April 23, 1834.

¹⁵³ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, John Beecham to William Croscombe and the Trustees, Stewards and Leaders (Montreal), April 25, 1834. See also *ibid.*, Jabez Bunting to John Barry, April 25, 1834; *ibid.*, Jabez Bunting to William Croscombe, April 25, 1834.

out battle over the definition of what constituted proper British Wesleyan belief and practice. Bunting wrote to Edmund Grindrod on the same day that the WMMS met. “We have had letters this week from Messrs. Croscombe & Barry,” he noted, “full of self-vindication by mere assertion & vague declamation, & containing nothing satisfactory in defence of their flagrant violation of discipline & of methodistical order.” “The Committee,” Bunting added, “are *very* determined on this occasion to enforce a due submission to Rule; & resolved that they see no reason to alter their former decisions.”¹⁵⁴ There was no openness to compromise here.

The presence of Robert Alder and Edmund Grindrod brought the recalcitrant British missionaries and their lay supporters in Lower and Upper Canada to heel at least temporarily. Alder was very pleased with his own efforts. “The state of feeling is much worse than I anticipated,” he wrote from the Lower Canada District Meeting, “if a stranger had come amongst them, he would have been placed in very painful circumstances, but when they approach me with their rigid countenances, I smile at them, & in spite of themselves kindly feelings are revived in their hearts.” He brought William Lunn on side – “A person told me yesterday, that it was expected I would twist Mr. L[unn] around my finger” – and he met the leaders of the Montreal society “who are in a high state of inflammation. I shall endeavour to bleed & poultice them.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, in the end, deference to the actual WMMS, as embodied in the person of Robert Alder, seemed to subdue the nascent cultural differentiation among the missionaries and laity.

¹⁵⁴ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.10, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, April 25, 1834. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 18, File 112, #9, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting and John Beecham, May 19, 1834.

Against the opposition of Croscombe and Barry, Alder seized control of the District Meeting and the missionaries as a whole obediently denounced all their previous, schismatic actions. In the case of York, the ministers placed the blame squarely on two of the leading laymen: Robert Hawke and John Fenton. Such men, the missionaries declared, “would pollute a nation & would never do any good to our society.”¹⁵⁶ This was an understandable tactic, though hardly an honourable one. The missionaries reiterated their rather abject surrender to central, connexional authority in their annual District Letter. They also noted, however, that they would not be doing justice to their “People” unless they stated their firm belief that “any appearance of opposition to the wishes of the Conference and Committee arose from a fear of their separation from the British Conference, and not to any diminution of affection to Methodism...”.¹⁵⁷ Even in a deferential mood, the missionaries’ sense of self was no simple reflection of the will of the home connexion.

The early history of Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada has often been portrayed in terms of a conflict between British Wesleyan conservatism and Methodist Episcopal liberalism; and that picture does hold true for the six years after 1814. The first British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas were the bearers of a reactionary world view, formed during Britain’s great national struggle against revolutionary and imperial France and during the internal strife that troubled their

¹⁵⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 18, File 112, #11, Minutes of Several Conversations at the Montreal District Meeting, May 16, 1834. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Box 18, File 112, #10, Matthew Lang to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, May 23, 1834. See also *CG*, May 28, 1834, 114.

connexion in the years after John Wesley's death in 1791. It was a temperament that had an almost automatic appeal for various laymen and women in Lower and Upper Canada. Having experienced years of threatened American subversion in the 1790s and the early 1800s and then American invasion between 1812 and 1815, many of the Methodist laity in those colonies were keen to cut themselves loose from their Methodist Episcopal ministers. The British Wesleyan missionaries did nothing to dampen that particular form of lay enthusiasm; they saw it, in part, as their way to break into the fruitful gospel field that the American Methodists had been cultivating in the Canadas since the early 1790s. As long as the CFA was either unaware of the missionaries' activities or openly approved of them, everything seemed to go well from the point of view of the growing British Wesleyan community in Lower and Upper Canada.

However, the situation changed dramatically after July 10, 1820. Urged on by that most talented of ecclesiastical diplomats, John Emory, the British Conference and the recently-created WMMS embraced a new sense of transatlantic 'oneness' with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. In practical terms, this *détente* translated into the WMMS's decision to withdraw all of its ministers from Upper Canada. In response to this initiative and to the Missionary Secretaries' determination to enforce it, the missionaries and their lay supporters in the Canadas increasingly saw themselves as the lone guardians of a pure version of Britishness and Wesleyanism, betrayed by those who should have been their most steadfast allies. In effect, they embraced a highly conservative culture which was also radical and subversive. It could be turned against both their fathers and brethren in Britain and their more liberal opponents

in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The British Conference's decision to enter into a union with the Canadian Methodists in 1833 only reinforced this cultural shift among the colonial Wesleyans. For their part, the leaders of the British connexion saw the anti-union agitation in the Canadas as a colonial equivalent of the Kilhamite and Leeds Organ secessions of the 1790s and late 1820s. And they were bent on putting it down. However, while the missionaries and their leading lay supporters felt compelled to accept the union in 1834, they had gone too far to simply return to their older, pre-1820 sense of self. In cultural terms, by the mid-1830s, the British Wesleyans in the Canadas had become a separate entity within north Atlantic Methodism.

A similar pattern of cultural formation was being reproduced by other groups in British North America in the early-nineteenth century. Indeed, the British Wesleyans were only one of several groups in the Canadas who were prepared to redefine the meaning of Britishness and of loyalty to the governing authorities. Under the leadership of Ogle Gowan, for example, the Orange Order of 1830s Upper Canada laid claim to a loyal, British identity that was calculated to appeal to an increasingly English and Irish immigrant population.¹⁵⁸ Yet, as was the case with the missionaries and their lay supporters, this self-identification could as readily be turned against the powers that be as in its favour. When, in 1832, some leading members of the Family Compact spoke about the possibility of seceding from the Empire, Gowan declared that his Orangemen would "continue to fight under the British colours; and if our Canadian fellow subjects are

¹⁵⁸ Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 146-7; Hereward Senior, "Ogle Gowan, Orangeism, and the Immigrant Question, 1830-1833," *Ontario History* 66, no. 4 (December 1974), 202-10.

disposed to hoist the Canadian flag, instead of the British, down with them, say we.”¹⁵⁹ The Orangemen may have heartily supported the government of the colony during the rebellions of 1837-8, but they were also perfectly willing to denounce that same government as treacherous and anti-British if and when they considered the conditions warranted.¹⁶⁰

This cultural dynamic was not, however, confined to the more conservative side of the colonial political spectrum. Among the ranks of the political reformers in the Canadas, the idea of self-rule in the colonies was often tied to the maintenance of loyalty to a pristine, indeed purified, vision of the British constitution. In the first decade of the 1800s, the agitator Joseph Willcocks argued for a definition of loyalty to Britain that bears a strong resemblance to that used by the British Wesleyan missionaries after 1820. “True loyalty,” Willcocks stated,

is to be faithful to your King, to guard his prerogative, to support him in his dominions, to protect inviolably the constitution of which he is the head, and to obey and uphold the law which he has sworn to administer and maintain.

But, Willcocks asked rhetorically, how could it be loyal “to assist a monarch in rendering himself absolute, [for] who would overturn the constitution and subvert the law?”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ *The Antidote*, January 15, 1833, quoted in Hereward Senior, *Orangeism: The Canadian Phase* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), 23.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 25-34. See also Houston and Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore*, pp. 26-8; David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1860* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 85-9, 112-13 though Mills downplays the conditional nature of Orange loyalty.

¹⁶¹ *Upper Canadian Guardian*, August 27, 1807 quoted in Graeme Patterson, ‘Whiggery, Nationality, and the Upper Canadian Reform Tradition,’ *Canadian Historical Review*, 56, no. 1 (March 1975), 30.

Those who fought against supreme executive power in Upper Canada, Willcocks concluded, were true patriots. By calling for root and branch reform they were upholding the pure British constitution against subversion and perversion at the hands of a corrupt, colonial junto and a deluded government at home.¹⁶² When Upper Canada became more like Britain it would be a successful colony; this would be accomplished even if that meant fighting the British authorities in the colony and at home.

More broadly yet, the experience of the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in Lower and Upper Canada was analogous to that of other British settler communities in the nineteenth century. The Protestant community of Ulster had a similarly intense attachment to a sense of Britishness. This group felt threatened, however, by the Catholic majority of Ireland and by a government at Westminster that seemed more than willing to undermine the integrity of the Protestant Empire. Over such issues as Catholic Emancipation or the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the British parliament appeared to reward the disloyal, rebellious Catholics of 1798 and to turn a blind eye to good, loyal, Protestant subjects. When the threat of Home Rule for Ireland became a real possibility in 1886, many Ulster Protestants argued that such an act would deprive them of their imperial heritage and reduce their standing in the world as Britons. Even more importantly, perhaps, Home Rule was perceived as a betrayal of their long-standing loyalty to the Protestant constitution of Britain. Through their own Orange lodges and local political and church organizations the Ulster Protestants bade defiance to both the Irish Parliamentary Party and William Gladstone's Liberals,

¹⁶² Ibid., 30-1.

proclaiming their attachment to an older, unsullied version of Protestant Britain.¹⁶³ As J.J. Lee puts it, the Ulstermen “would be loyal to the crown as long as the crown protected their interests. And they, not the crown, would define those interests.”¹⁶⁴ This could just as easily summarize the mentality of the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas after 1820. By the 1840s the Canadian Methodists were beginning to think along the same lines, as we shall see in the next chapter.

¹⁶³ David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740-1890* (London: Routledge, 1992), 161-87. See also David Hempton, *Religion and political culture in Britain and Ireland: From the Glorious Revolution to the decline of empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 93-116; David W. Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1978), 43-121.

¹⁶⁴ J.J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 14.

CHAPTER THREE

“The wretched business of Canada”:

Union and Schism in Transatlantic Perspective, 1827-54

Historians examining the turbulent relationship between Canadian Methodism and British Wesleyanism between 1827 and 1854 have tended to focus on its British North American context alone. When they have looked at developments on the eastern side of the Atlantic, they have largely spoken in generalities. There is little sense in the work of Goldwin French or Neil Semple that there was something other than a monolithic British Wesleyanism that the Canadian Methodists had to grapple with during the negotiations around the unions of 1833 and 1847 and during the transatlantic battles that followed the collapse of the first union in 1840. They do not, for example, mention the connexional disputes that rocked the British Conference in the 1830s.¹ John Moir quite rightly criticizes French for reducing the complex story of British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist interaction to the theme that “the clash between the Canadian party and the British party was evidence of a growing sense of Canadian self-awareness and identity by one side and an insensitivity to local issues and feelings on the other.” Moir is somewhat more attuned than either French or Semple to the changing nature of British Wesleyanism during this period and to the critical and sometimes anomalous role that the British Wesleyan missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada played in the give-and-take

¹ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 134-64, 171-91, 217-242, 248-53; Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 76-86, 92-9.

world of colonial church governance. However, the picture that he presents probes neither the wider British context, nor the process of cultural formation among the various groups involved in the conflicts that bedevilled Canadian Methodism during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.²

Since Goldwin French wrote in the 1960s, the history of Wesleyanism in Britain has been almost completely rewritten. The British Methodist scene, especially in the period between 1827 and 1852, is now best seen as one of violently clashing factions from the highest ministerial levels to the lowliest local Sunday school. All the groups caught up in the quarrels that divided the Wesleyan church in the 1830s had their own image of what it meant to be a Methodist. They also had a very good idea of the way in which their opponents were threatening to destroy the heritage of John Wesley.³ David Hempton, John Munsey Turner and W.R. Ward also emphasize the impact that external actors and events had on the changing shape of British Wesleyanism, especially during the 1830s and 1840s. The Oxford Movement after 1833, the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, Sir Robert Peel's Maynooth Grant in 1845, and the financial depression of the 'hungry forties' all found an echo within the Wesleyan connexion.⁴ However, the place of the Wesleyans' overseas missions in the home connexion's "age of disunity" has

² John Moir, "Notes of Discord, Strains of Harmony: The Separation and Reunion of the Canadian and British Wesleyan Methodists, 1840-1847," *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers*, 4 (1984), 2, 10, 12-13.

³ David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1984), 179-216; W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), 135-177, 236-47, 251-77; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 458-469, 614-625.

⁴ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 188-9, 191-4; John Munsey Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation: Studies in Methodism and Ecumenism in England, 1740-1982* (London: Epworth Press, 1985), 146-72; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 216-17, 241-4.

never been addressed.⁵ This is a particularly surprising omission, especially given the strong missionary impulse that actuated the British Conference from John Wesley's time onward.

This chapter is an attempt to place Canadian Methodism's period of upheaval between 1827 and 1854 in the wider context of British Wesleyanism's age of disunity and to analyze the impact of this relationship upon questions of identity. This transatlantic perspective demonstrates the validity of Goldwin French's observation that the Canadian Methodists' post-1840 sense of self was sometimes expressed in terms of a British "outlook" or a British "spirit". However, French's overall argument that the product of union, disunion and reunion was a more vigorous sense of Canadian nationality "freed...from concern about metropolitan influences" needs to be rethought.⁶ The outcome of that process was more complex. At one level, the battles fought between and within the British and Canada Conferences between 1827 and 1854 were about issues of church governance: who should lead and who should follow. They were also about who would define the meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism in the north Atlantic world. The connexional warfare waged across the Atlantic after 1827 destabilized both the Canada and British Conferences and, in doing so, led to the formation or reinforcement of several competing conceptions of British and Wesleyan identity in the home country and the colonies. The outcome of this conflict, however, was a mutually agreed upon definition of Britishness and Wesleyanism. Between 1847 and 1854, the leaders of both the British and Canada Conferences proceeded to impose that shared identity on all the

⁵ The quotation is from John Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (London: Epworth Press, 1966).

⁶ French, *Parsons and Politics*, 188-9, 271, 286-7.

colonial groups that fell under their purview. If there was a distinctly Canadian Methodist “self-awareness” by 1854, it was one cast in a British Wesleyan mold.

Between 1827 and 1852 one group of ministers established a stranglehold over the governing machinery of the British Wesleyan church. They were the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS), the President and Tutors of the Theological Institution created in 1834, and often either the President or Secretary of the Conference itself.⁷ At the centre of this clique stood Jabez Bunting, described by one of his critics as “great in mind, and great in influence – too great to be forgiven...”.⁸ Between ten and twenty ministers closely followed Bunting’s lead and made repeated efforts to elevate him into every available position of power within the connexion.⁹ Chief among this “Buntingian Dynasty” were Robert Alder, John Beecham, Edmund Grindrod, John Hannah, Elijah Hoole, Thomas Jackson, George Marsden, Robert Newton and Richard Watson.¹⁰ They were united not primarily by what their detractors believed was a ravenous hunger for place and power, but by a view of what constituted, or, at least,

⁷ G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London: Epworth Press, 1921-4), 1:107-8; Dale A. Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity, 1825-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 50-6; George Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, 3rd. ed. (London: Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), 3:585-6.

⁸ [James Everett], *Wesleyan Takings: or, Centenary Sketches of Ministerial Character*, 3rd ed. (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1841-51), 1:6.

⁹ John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter JRULM), Methodist Archives and Research Centre (hereafter MARC), Edmund Grindrod papers, MAM PLP 47.16.2, Edmund Grindrod to Jabez Bunting, March 11, 1820; *ibid.*, MAM PLP 47.16.22, Edmund Grindrod to Jabez Bunting, January 12, 1824; Kent, *Age of Disunity*, 65.

¹⁰ The phrase “Buntingian Dynasty” comes from [James Everett], *All the Numbers of the ‘Fly Sheets’ Now First Reprinted in One Pamphlet* (Birmingham: William Cornish, 1850), 34. Though Everett used that term in a thoroughly pejorative sense, it is an effective shorthand to describe Jabez Bunting and his supporters.

should constitute proper British Wesleyanism. As far as possible, a good British Wesleyan was supposed to be a Tory. Toryism, in this instance, was broadly defined as support for the established powers. In Buntingite eyes, there was little difference between campaigning for Conservative candidates in elections, celebrating the possible embarrassment or collapse of Whig and Liberal governments, supporting the exclusive privileges of the Church of England, and upholding the ministerial prerogative in the Wesleyan connexion itself.¹¹ In each case Bunting and his allies believed that they were battling the forces of Jacobinical radicalism first unleashed in the 1790s and following the Biblical injunction to “fear...the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change.”¹²

This is not to say that the Buntingites never saw a progressive idea that they did not hate. During their years of dominance in the connexion, the Wesleyan Methodists were at the forefront of the antislavery movement and, in 1829, Bunting himself swung the church behind Catholic emancipation.¹³ On some issues, then, it was perfectly acceptable for both ministry and laity to agitate openly.

For a sizable minority of preachers, however, those issues seemed far too few. There was little common ground between Joseph Beaumont, Joseph Fowler, Thomas Galland and other ministers on the liberal wing of the connexion and the

¹¹ Watts, *Dissenters*, 411-12, 460, 541-2; JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.2.33, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, February 28, 1838; JRULM, MARC, Robert Alder papers, MAM PLP 1.36.7, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, January 11, 1839. For an overview of Wesleyan Toryism see Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 181-6.

¹² The quotation is from Proverbs 24:21.

¹³ Alex Tyrrell, *A Sphere of Benevolence: The Life of Joseph Orton, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary (1795-1842)* (Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, 1993), 67; Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 208-9; Watts, *Dissenters*, 425.

Buntingites. During the second quarter of the century both the liberals and Tories in the ministry fought to make their respective candidates President of the Conference. Bunting and his supporters wanted to defend what they saw as the genuine heritage of John Wesley; Beaumont, Fowler, Galland and the other connexional liberals were bent on reclaiming a Wesleyan heritage that they believed Buntingite centralization was destroying.¹⁴ However, the most serious conflicts occurred between the Buntingian Dynasty and those connexional reformers who preferred to secede entirely rather than accept the implications of Wesleyan Toryism. These two groups – the Buntingites and the reformers – came to blows over two issues in particular in the 1830s: the control exercised by Bunting and his supporters over the government of the connexion and their support for the establishment principle.

Tensions within the Wesleyan church flared up spectacularly in 1834 and 1835 when Dr. Samuel Warren broke with the connexion. The bone of contention in this case was a plan to establish a Theological Institution for the education of itinerant ministers. Warren objected not only to the principle of the thing, but also to the personnel who were selected to manage it. A committee made up primarily of Bunting and his supporters appointed the former both President and Theological Tutor of the Institution; Warren's nominees, including himself, were overlooked. Warren vowed that he would not consent to "such an extraordinary assumption of power."¹⁵ He raised the

¹⁴ D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 16.

¹⁵ Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, 3:233-4; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 161; Watts, *Dissenters*, 465. The quotation is from Smith.

same objection to the Theological Institution at the 1834 Conference.¹⁶ Having lost the battle there, Warren took his struggle to the streets, publishing a pamphlet that argued that the Institution was designed to promote the power of a “*Dominant Episcopal Faction*” and nothing more.¹⁷ Other frustrated liberals among both the ministry and laity piled onto Warren’s bandwagon, attacking the Buntingites’ control over the connexion and calling for the decentralization of Wesleyan decision making, striking at the supreme legislative and executive power of the Conference. More radical yet, these ‘Warrenites’ also demanded the introduction of laymen into positions of power in the church government.¹⁸

To Bunting and his supporters, the Warrenite agitation was hardly a call for reform: quite the opposite.¹⁹ Edmund Grindrod felt “a growing conviction” that something had to be done to diminish the forces of democracy that seemed to be spreading through the circuits. “But this, I am persuaded,” Grindrod added, “cannot be effected without adopting some regulations at ‘Head Quarters’...”²⁰ In other words, the connexional centre had to clamp down on the liberal excesses of the lower echelons of the church. In an even more strident mood, Grindrod prayed that he might live “to join...the

¹⁶ Watts, *Dissenters*, 465.

¹⁷ Samuel Warren, *Remarks on the Wesleyan Theological Institution* (London, 1834), 23 quoted in Ward, *Religion and Society*, 161. Emphasis in original.

¹⁸ W.R. Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism: The correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1830-1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 101, n. 1; idem, *Religion and Society*, 160; Watts, *Dissenters*, 466.

¹⁹ John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, November 26, 1834 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 111. See also Richard Treffry Sr. to an unknown correspondent, July 4, 1835 in Rupert Davis, et al., eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-88), 4:425.

²⁰ Edmund Grindrod to Jabez Bunting, March 2, 1835 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 124-5.

rear of the good old Wesleyan army, in the defeat of Ecclesiastical Democracy.²¹ The Buntingian Dynasty printed a minimum of 18,000 pamphlets to combat the Warrenites, so strongly did they feel about the threat posed to their position in, and vision of the connexion.²² By the time it petered out in 1836, this bout of connexional warfare left Bunting and his supporters more firmly entrenched in the church leadership and more strongly attached to their own vision of British Wesleyanism.²³

Just as the Warrenite agitation was beginning in 1834 another minister was drummed out of the connexion for his opposition to the principle of church establishment. In January 1832 Joseph Rayner Stephens began to use his pulpit at Ashton-under-Lyne to call for the disestablishment of the Church of England.²⁴ In this he was one in a long line of preachers from John Wesley's day onward who wanted the Methodist connexion to take a more overtly dissenting position in regards to the church establishment. Wesley himself always resisted this trend among his coadjutors, seeking to find a comfortable if allusive *via media* between Church and nonconformity.²⁵ The Buntingites thus felt themselves to be on firmly Wesleyan ground when they moved to silence Stephens. While never simply the slavish followers of Anglicanism, the Wesleyan Tories believed that the church establishment deserved their support: it was a means to a positive end. Ideally, it provided the basis for a national religion that shielded Britain

²¹ JRULM, MARC, Edmund Grindrod papers, MAM PLP 47.16.26, Edmund Grindrod to Jabez Bunting, April 17, 1835.

²² John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, November 24, 1834 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 108-9.

²³ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 197-8.

²⁴ On Joseph Rayner Stephens see Michael S. Edwards, *Purge This Realm: A Life of Joseph Rayner Stephens* (London: Epworth Press, 1994), 2-14.

²⁵ Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, 9-29.

from all the horrors of the “wide-spreading Atheism, Socialism, and Libertinism of the age,” reaching everyone from the richest noble to the most wretched of the labouring poor in the new industrial cities. No denomination, they believed, not even their own, could have so extensive a reach without the resources of the state at its back.²⁶ Bunting thus contended that it was the duty of every Wesleyan Methodist “to maintain the most friendly feelings towards the Church, and to discountenance as far as we can...that bitter and unchristian hostility” towards the establishment “which is now too much in fashion...”²⁷

Bunting went even further when the Conference met in August 1834. Referring to Wesley’s refusal to break with the Anglican communion, he asked rhetorically whether his fellow ministers ought to “arm themselves with pickaxes, and pull down the house in which our father [Wesley] was born, and in which he thought he died[?]” He categorically stated that “I will not mix with Methodism, unless the principle of maintaining our exact neutrality be this, not one inch nearer to, nor one inch further from the Church than we now are.”²⁸ Despite receiving some support from Joseph Beaumont and other connexional liberals, Joseph Stephens was forced to resign from the ministry.²⁹ The WMMS’s annual circular for 1834 summed up the Buntingite position

²⁶ *Watchman*, December 12, 1838 quoted in Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 185. See also William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 100-1. For British Wesleyanism’s inability to make much headway among the industrial working class see Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 104-10; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 93-4.

²⁷ Jabez Bunting to James Kendall, April 24, 1834 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 59-60.

²⁸ Benjamin Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism during the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century, 1827-1852* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1898), 155, 161.

²⁹ JRULM, MARC, John Rattenbury papers, MAM PLP 86.28.76, John Rattenbury to Mary Rattenbury, August 6, 1834; Edwards, *Purge this Realm*, 15-16; Gregory, *Side Lights*, 161-4.

on the whole affair. The Conference “could not consistently join in attempts to overthrow the National Establishment, considering that Mr. Wesley to the end of his life avowed, and practically proved, his attachment to the Church of England.” The Wesleyan connexion had to stop “the admission of the principles of Dissent among us.”³⁰ This was a position that the Buntingian Dynasty intended not only to foster in the home connexion, but also to transplant to Methodist communities overseas.

Beginning in the late 1820s, Jabez Bunting and his supporters began to perceive a need to bring the American Methodists in Upper Canada under British Wesleyan suzerainty. On a theoretical level, the British Wesleyans continued to regard themselves as ‘one’ with their brethren in the American church, just as they had in 1820 when the two conferences decided to split the gospel work in the Canadas between them. In actuality, however, the Buntingites were moving away from such transatlantic ecumenism. As Robert Alder made clear in his testimony before the House of Commons Select Committee on the Civil Government of Canada in 1828, the Wesleyan leadership did “not deem it right that the Methodists of Upper Canada should be under the jurisdiction of a foreign ecclesiastical body...”. A plan was in the works, Alder assured the committee, “by which the Methodists of Upper Canada will be brought to act under the direction of the British Conference, as the Methodists of Lower Canada have done for several years.”³¹ Alder himself had floated such a plan in the first weeks of 1828. His overall aim was to draw the Canadian Methodists away from their association with the

³⁰ School of Oriental and African Studies (hereafter SOAS), Methodist Missionary Society Archives (hereafter MMSA), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (hereafter WMMS), Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1988, August 30, 1834.

³¹ *Report from the Select Committee on the Civil Government of Canada. Ordered by the House of Commons, to be Printed, 22 July 1828* (London: n.p., 1828), 295.

American Methodist Episcopalans or, indeed, from any thoughts of an independent existence. Instead, the Upper Canadians would be integrated into a greater British Wesleyan church on the same basis as the Irish Conference. Each year, a British preacher would be sent to Upper Canada to preside over the annual conference; the Canadian Methodists would advertise and sell British Wesleyan literature through their own magazine and Book Room; and the WMMS would grant a certain amount of money to the Canada Conference per annum for the maintenance of its missions. This plan, Alder thought, would meet with the approval of all the Canadian Methodists in the province, except, of course, for those “incorrigible republicans” in their ranks.³²

In directing their attention towards Upper Canada, the British Wesleyan leadership received ample support from two groups with equally conservative credentials: the colonial Church of England and the colony’s executive government. In 1827 the President of the British Conference met with John Strachan, “a clergyman of the Church of England from Upper Canada,” who made a special point of noting that “very great dissatisfaction was felt by the Government of that Province at the introduction of the American Methodists to the pastoral care of so large a portion of the population as attend the Wesleyan Ministry there...”. Strachan thought that it would be for the best if the British Wesleyans would resume their missionary efforts in Upper Canada.³³ A man of definite opinions, Strachan decided quite early on that the Canadian Methodists were a

³² SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #148, Robert Alder to George Morley, January 7, 1828.

³³ United Church Archives (hereafter UCA), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Correspondence (WMMS-C), Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, April 11, 1827.

band of deplorable fanatics.³⁴ They were all “uneducated itinerant preachers” whose main goal was “to pull down all establishments, undermine the loyalty of the people and constitute us a province of the United States.”³⁵ In short, the Canadian Methodists were an affront to Strachan’s views on proper ecclesiastical order and established authority in both church and state.³⁶ The more conservative Wesleyans would be a godsend in comparison. The political authorities in Upper Canada were of the same mind. As the Secretaries of the WMMS prepared to dispatch their agents to the colony, they received word that Lieutenant-Governor John Colborne “was pleased to enter into the views of the [Missionary] Committee...with respect to the employment of our [British] Missionaries in Upper Canada.”³⁷ Like Strachan, Colborne hoped that the Wesleyans would eliminate what he saw as the overtly dissenting, if not disloyal elements within Canadian Methodism.³⁸ Church and king might be in danger otherwise.

This advice and encouragement helped convince the Buntingites that Methodism in Upper Canada had to be saved from itself. What it needed, in fact, was to be grounded in Wesleyan Tory principles, which, to the Buntingites, were genuine British and Wesleyan principles. The WMMS felt sure that this was a course that would find favour with the “immense number of settlers which have gone out from Great Britain and

³⁴ John Strachan to James Brown, July 13, 1803 in J.L.H. Henderson, ed., *John Strachan: Documents and Opinions* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1969), 25-6.

³⁵ John Strachan, *Sermon Preached at York, Upper Canada, Third of July 1825, on the Death of the Late Lord Bishop of Quebec* (Kingston, 1826) in *ibid.*, 92; John Strachan to [?] Hargreave, March 7, 1831 quoted in French, *Parsons and Politics*, 126.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 126-7; Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 19-49.

³⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, November 14, 1832; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 16, File 100, #26, John Colborne to Robert Alder, July 14, 1832.

³⁸ Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 78-9.

Ireland, and are still flowing into the Province in large numbers every year...”.³⁹ These men and women had been British Wesleyans at home and “they naturally looked to the [Missionary] Committee to extend its care to them, and not leave them in destitution of the means of grace in a distant land...”.⁴⁰ The Buntingites also believed that these settlers and others were developing a keenly felt prejudice “against the acceptableness of the Canadian Brethren...”. This, Bunting and his supporters felt, was primarily the result of the political attacks launched in the Canadian Methodists’ official newspaper, the *Christian Guardian*, on the colonial government and Church of England. Such partisan meddling in the civil affairs of Upper Canada “was not in the spirit or according to the practice of British Methodists; and contrary to the abstinence from such pursuits” which the WMMS required of its own agents overseas. It was also calculated to give offence to both the colonial and imperial authorities.⁴¹ To stop what they saw as the rapid deterioration of Methodism in Upper Canada, the Buntingites were willing to pour both men and money into the colony. As one of the Missionary Secretaries, Richard Watson, put it in a letter to the imperial government, he and his fellow ministers would do their utmost both to “counteract anti-British feeling as it might rise up under the influence of a ministry foreign in its origin and too much impressed with the republican character” and to spread their own religious message throughout the province.⁴²

³⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, February 15, 1832.

⁴⁰ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1988, September 9, 1833.

⁴¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, February 15, 1832; Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 79-80.

⁴² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 16, File 105, #17, Richard Watson to Lord Goderich, November 22, 1833.

The main obstacle to the unfolding of the Buntingite programme in Upper Canada was the Canadian Methodist ministers themselves. They had their own ideas about what constituted genuine Wesleyanism. In one key area in particular, their image of John Wesley's heritage was markedly opposed to the Wesleyan Toryism of Bunting and his supporters. In 1826 and 1827 the Canadian Methodist preachers cut their teeth as a separate conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States in fierce combat with the colonial Church of England over what they perceived as the political illegitimacy and spiritual uselessness of a church establishment in Upper Canada.⁴³ By the early 1830s, now ministers of an entirely independent conference, the Canadian Methodists remained committed to opposing the establishment principle. This stance also shaped the Canadian preachers' opinion of the British Wesleyan connexion. When one of their number, George Ryerson, travelled overseas in 1831 he was manifestly unimpressed with the British Wesleyans' deference to Anglicanism. He was disgusted, he wrote, by "their servile & time serving clinging to the skirts of a corrupt, secularized & anti-Christian church." It was preferable, George Ryerson believed, "to bear the temporary censure of enemies in Canada, than the permanent evil & annoyance of having a Church & State" President of Conference from among the British Wesleyans.⁴⁴ Egerton Ryerson, George's younger brother, fervently believed that, in a colony where, he claimed, Methodists outnumbered Anglicans ten to one, the idea of creating an established church was both inherently ridiculous and potentially divisive. The Canadian Methodists' ongoing battle with the Church of England, Ryerson argued in a letter to

⁴³ Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 24-7.

⁴⁴ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 1, File 8, George Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, August 6, 1831.

Richard Watson, was “a *necessary* act of defence for ourselves” and an important duty to the religious peace of the country.⁴⁵

Just as they had done between 1815 and 1820, the Canadian Methodists also objected to any suggestion that they were somehow inherently less British than the Wesleyans in the home country. The sons of a United Empire Loyalist, the Ryerson brothers led the way. Testifying in 1828 before the House of Commons Select Committee on the Civil Government of Canada, George Ryerson specifically aimed to defend the British character of the Canada Conference. In an effort to sweep much of the connexion’s American and often pro-republican past under the carpet, he noted that “all but four” of its ministers were “British subjects” either by birth or by naturalization.⁴⁶ The Canada connexion was also a body in which any British settler could and often did feel at home. According to Egerton Ryerson “[a]ll the preachers in regular standing in your connexion, who have settled in this Province, have, on their arrival here, joined the Canada Connexion and have uniformly expressed their satisfactory conviction that Methodism is the same in U[pper] Canada as in Great Britain.” The same remark could be made about the British Wesleyan laymen and women who had immigrated to the colony.⁴⁷ The conclusion was obvious: in July 1832 the leading ministers of the Canada connexion resolved that

as a large portion of the Canada Conference consists
of Europeans, as the Methodist Societies from Great

⁴⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 15, File 94, #26, Egerton Ryerson to Richard Watson, October 19, 1831. Emphasis in original. See also French, *Parsons and Politics*, 136.

⁴⁶ *Report from the Select Committee on the Civil Government of Canada*, 219. For the American Methodist presence in Upper Canada see 94-102 above.

⁴⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 15, File 94, #26, Egerton Ryerson to Richard Watson, October 19, 1831.

Britain, who have generally united with us, have uniformly expressed themselves satisfied with the economy of Methodism in Canada...the influx of European emigration into this Province does not appear...to render organization of Methodist societies distinct from those already established expedient or advisable.⁴⁸

The only sure result that could come out of such an “appeal to *national* prejudices and feelings” would be the creation of divisions in the Methodist community in Upper Canada on a level not seen since John Emory travelled to Britain in 1820.⁴⁹

Having to choose between disruptions in their congregations or union with the British Wesleyans, the Canadian Methodist ministers decided to accept what they believed to be the lesser of two evils. In June 1832 four British Wesleyan missionaries arrived in York, the capital of Upper Canada, and were invited to meet with the Canadian preachers stationed in the city, including Egerton Ryerson and his brother John.⁵⁰ The *Christian Guardian* reported that “[t]he conversations which have taken place between members of the Methodist Conference and the Missionaries...open up...a cheering prospect to the interests of Wesleyan Methodism in Upper Canada”; that prospect being “the incorporation of the whole into a common system of Christian conquest upon a common principle – and under a common management...”.⁵¹ Egerton and John Ryerson were determined to avoid conflicts between the two conferences, even if that meant

⁴⁸ Ibid., Box 16, File 100, #27, Extracts from the proceedings of the Board of Managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada, [July 2, 1832].

⁴⁹ Ibid., Box 15, File 94, #26, Egerton Ryerson to Richard Watson, October 19, 1831. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁰ Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism: Its Epochs and Characteristics* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1882), 309-10.

⁵¹ *Christian Guardian* (hereafter *CG*), June 27, 1832, 130.

placing their connexion under the direction of the Wesleyans in Britain.⁵² In the event, that is exactly what it did mean. Initially drawn up by the Canadian Methodists in close consultation with Robert Alder and then revised by Jabez Bunting and Alder in Britain, the Articles of Union followed the general pattern that the latter had suggested in 1828.⁵³ They placed the Canadians in the same position *vis-à-vis* the British Wesleyans as the Irish Methodist connexion.⁵⁴ The Canadian Methodists would adopt “the Discipline, Economy, and Form of Church Government in general of the Wesleyan Methodists in England;” all new candidates for the itinerancy would be adopted according to British Wesleyan usage; all the Canadian Methodist ministers would be ordained by imposition of hands, as was done in the British Conference; the British Wesleyans reserved for themselves the right to send one of their own ministers to serve as the President of the Canada Conference; and in exchange for stable funding, all the missions to the Native Americans and “destitute settlers” were to fall under the control of the WMMS.⁵⁵ The union of 1833 was more a matter of absorption than an agreement between equals.

Although Jabez Bunting and his supporters had gained everything they wanted in these negotiations, they nonetheless had serious misgivings about the union, fearing that their attempt to incorporate the Canadians into a larger British Wesleyan

⁵² R.D. Gidney, “Egerton Ryerson,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [hereafter *DCB*] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967-), 11:785.

⁵³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 16, File 100, #30, James Richardson to James Townley, John Beecham and John James, August 16, 1832; UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, June 10, 1833.

⁵⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, John Beecham to the General Superintendent and Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Upper Canada, August 1833; *CG*, October 16, 1833, 193.

⁵⁵ *The Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada, from 1824 to 1845, inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1846), 63-5.

world might well prove to be a double-edged sword. It threatened to bring Canadian Methodist ideas and practices into the British connexion. On March 8, 1834, Bunting wrote to the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, Edmund Grindrod, noting that “[s]ome changes must be made in the plan of Union, or at least in the practical administration of it, in order to secure any decidedly beneficial result.”⁵⁶ The President of the British Conference, George Marsden, was in entire agreement, noting that “the future prosperity of Methodism in British North America, depends much on the foundation being well laid.”⁵⁷ Marsden met with Bunting, Grindrod, John Beecham and Robert Alder in Sheffield in early April to discuss the alterations they felt were needed in the Articles of Union.⁵⁸ Above all else, the *Christian Guardian* had to become a wholly religious journal, avoiding all political controversy.⁵⁹ The cost to the British Wesleyan reputation at home would be too high if the Canadian Methodists continued on their antiestablishment course. As Bunting put it in late April 1834: “I own I do still fear that the political feelings of many of the Upper Canadian Methodists, unless it can be very greatly softened & neutralized, will make it impossible that *we* can long very satisfactorily identify our character with theirs.”⁶⁰ After 1833, the Buntingite aim was to fix the Canada Conference firmly within a Wesleyan Tory framework as much to protect

⁵⁶ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.3, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, March 8, 1834.

⁵⁷ JRULM, MARC, George Marsden papers, MAM PLP 73.17.39, George Marsden to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, March 28, 1834.

⁵⁸ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.6, Jabez Bunting to John Beecham, March 29, 1834; *ibid.*, MAM PLP 19.2.6a, Jabez Bunting to John Beecham, March 31, 1834.

⁵⁹ From Robert Alder’s point of view, the Canada Conference of 1834 promised to avoid all political campaigning in the pages of the *Christian Guardian: CG*, June 12, 1839, 129. See also *Minutes of the Annual Conference... from 1824 to 1845*, 84.

⁶⁰ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.10, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, April 25, 1834. Emphasis in original.

the interests and reputation of British Wesleyanism at home as to redeem Canadian Methodism itself.

Over the next six years, the Buntingite Dynasty's efforts to put their own political stamp on Methodism in Upper Canada proved unsuccessful. Given the different positions of the British Wesleyans and the Canadian Methodists on church establishment, the Buntingites' lack of success was hardly surprising. The Canada Conference simply would not leave the issue alone. In 1839 the Canadian ministry vowed to make the *Christian Guardian* into a purely "religious and literary Journal," but then defined church establishment as a matter of "religious politics."⁶¹ The Canadian Methodists pledged loyalty to the forms of British Wesleyanism approved by the WMMS; they also, however, called for an end to what they saw as the anomalous position of the Church of England in Upper Canada: it had to be entirely disestablished.⁶²

The WMMS sent Robert Alder to Upper Canada in early 1839 in a final attempt to save the union from "the political and antichristian character" assumed by the Canadian connexional press towards the establishment in both church and state.⁶³ This stance was causing trouble in Britain. As the President of the British Conference put it in a letter to the Secretary of the Canada Conference, "[t]he advocacy in the *Christian Guardian*...of the principles of strict and systematic dissent, in opposition to all religious establishments, has given deep and just offence to many of our best friends in England...". "If the *Guardian* persist in the course which it has sometime pursued," Thomas Jackson

⁶¹ *Minutes of the Annual Conference... from 1824 to 1845*, 214-15, 233-4; Anson Green, *The Life and Times of Anson Green, D.D.* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1877), 183-4.

⁶² *Minutes of the Annual Conference... from 1824 to 1845*, 141, 166-7, 183-4.

⁶³ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, January 30, 1839.

added, “the Union of the two Conferences can no longer be maintained.”⁶⁴ Once in Upper Canada, Alder made it clear that, from a Buntingite point of view, the spirit of John Wesley still pervaded the British Conference “and that, in every sense compatible with the ecclesiastical independence of Methodism, the Wesleyan community stand in friendly relation to the established Church of England...”. This was a view “maintained by the Connexion during every period of its history” and especially since the withdrawal of Joseph Rayner Stephens. On behalf of Bunting and his allies, Alder demanded silence on the establishment issue in the *Christian Guardian* in order to “prevent that form of Methodism in Upper Canada with which, by the union, the character of the Methodism of Great Britain is identified from being involved ‘*in suspicion and contempt*’...”.⁶⁵ Canadian Methodism threatened to have more of an impact on British Wesleyan identity than the other way around.

In this respect, the course pursued by Egerton Ryerson between 1833 and 1839 almost seemed calculated to exacerbate British Wesleyan fears. During the first year of the union, Ryerson tried to transform the Buntingites into supporters of the Canadian Methodist campaign against the established church. He argued in 1833 that “[a]s to cordiality of feeling between Methodism and the Establishment, there is not much of it in general” in Britain. He repeated this wishful thought in 1838, stating that, though they were supportive of the establishment at home, the British Wesleyan leaders laughed “at the lofty and exclusive pretensions” of the Anglican church in Upper Canada. The fact

⁶⁴ Thomas Jackson to the Secretary of the Canada Conference, March 23, 1839 quoted in Egerton Ryerson and William Ryerson, *Report of their Mission to England, by the Representatives of the Canada Conference* (Toronto: n.p., 1840), 5.

⁶⁵ *CG*, May 29, 1839, 12; *ibid.*, June 12, 1839, 129. Emphasis in original.

that this was manifestly untrue caused Ryerson to change tack in mid-1838. He began to elaborate a British and Wesleyan identity independent of the Buntingian Dynasty. He seized what, for Methodists, was almost unassailable high ground, basing the Canadian Methodist opposition to colonial Anglicanism on a combination of the 1747 *Minutes* of the British Conference, John Wesley's own lack of support for national establishments in his published writings, and the works of William Blackstock and William Paley. He also bluntly stated that the Canadian Methodists' "loyalty is beyond impeachment – they love and honour their Sovereign – they revere and defend the British Constitution." There was more than one way to be both a loyal Briton and a good Wesleyan. Ryerson stressed that his fellow Canadian Methodists had fought on the side of colonial government during the rebellions of 1837 and 1838 and yet still supported the position of the *Christian Guardian* on the establishment issue.⁶⁶

When Ryerson appealed over the head of the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference to the Governor General for a solution to the establishment question, British Wesleyan patience reached its breaking point. In April 1840, a special committee of the British connexion drew up a series of charges denouncing Ryerson for his antiestablishment campaign.⁶⁷ The majority of the Canadian preachers repudiated those charges and dispatched Ryerson and his brother William to Britain to settle the outstanding issues between the two churches.⁶⁸ The Canadian troubles were quite

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, December 25, 1833, 25; *ibid.*, September 5, 1838, 174; *ibid.*, May 16, 1838, 109; *ibid.*, June 12, 1839, 130; *ibid.*, December 12, 1838, 12; *ibid.*, June 12, 1839, 130.

⁶⁷ JRULM, MARC, Wesleyan Methodist Church, Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1840, 166; UCA, John Douse papers, Box 1, File 3, John Douse to Eliza Douse, June 13, 1840.

⁶⁸ UCA, Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada (hereafter WMC-C), Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 10-19, 1840.

literally coming home to roost.

It was unfortunate, then, for the future of the union that the Buntingian Dynasty's fears of transatlantic infection were progressively bolstered in the late 1830s by letters and reports from the British Wesleyan missionaries stationed in Lower and Upper Canada. Joseph Stinson, for one, was afraid that unless the provinces received a greater infusion of British Wesleyan preachers and influence, the union between the two connexions might degenerate into "a mere farce and greatly injure the British Conference and all lovers of British Methodism...".⁶⁹ He was also alarmed at "the *bare possibility* of the British Conference being in the least degree identified" with the anti-establishmentarianism of the Canadian connexion. He strongly suspected that the Ryersons had entered the union with the ultimate aim of excluding "British influence" and using "the good name of the British conference to accomplish their own ambitions & selfish purposes."⁷⁰ Stinson was supported in such views by his fellow ministers.⁷¹ Unity was what was needed, but unity on metropolitan terms. "You wish to maintain the existence of the episcopal establishment in the British Empire," Stinson stated to Thomas Jackson, "they deny that the English Church is in any sense the establishment of their country & they are determined that no means shall be spared by them to prevent its being so...". "[S]urely," he continued, "that policy which is right in one part of the Empire cannot be wrong in another part of the Empire...". "[I]f the British Conference

⁶⁹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #213, Joseph Stinson to William Lunn, July 28, 1837.

⁷⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 23, File 159, #6, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, May 23, 1839. Emphasis in original.

⁷¹ See for example *ibid.*, Box 23, File 159, #1, Ephraim Evans to Joseph Stinson, January 8, 1839.

would maintain their own consistency & honour – they must either dissolve the *nominal* union which now exists or bring the Canadian Preachers as completely under their control” as the missionaries in Lower Canada, forcing them to accept church establishment.⁷² Matthew Richey stated even more bluntly that “[t]he attempt to protract the union can only humiliate ourselves.” “In the honour of true Methodism,” he added, “& for the sake of the Cause of God, let something be done & done *quickly*.”⁷³

None of the parties that converged on Newcastle-upon-Tyne for the British Conference of 1840 were in a mood to compromise. The British Wesleyan leadership did not trust Egerton Ryerson, believing that “[h]is teachings are in want of faith.”⁷⁴ They felt that it would be a valuable exercise to preserve “sound Wesleyan Methodism” in Upper Canada, but not at the cost of abandoning the original Wesleyan Tory aims of the union and allowing “Egerton Ryerson, or his family” to lord it over the British connexion.⁷⁵ This position was reflected in the initial treatment that Egerton and William Ryerson received when they arrived in Newcastle: they were given what was, in Egerton Ryerson’s view, “a very cool reception from several of the preachers...”⁷⁶ Though the Canadian delegates pressed for an opportunity to address the entire Conference on the union issue at once, they were ushered into a special committee, dominated by the Buntingites and including a recently-arrived Joseph Stinson and

⁷² Ibid., Box 23, File 159, #26, Joseph Stinson to Thomas Jackson, December 9, 1839. Emphasis in original.

⁷³ Ibid., Box 23, File 159, #10, Joseph Stinson and Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, November 9, 1839. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Box 24, File 168, #29, Elijah Hoole to Robert Alder, July 1840.

⁷⁵ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the British Conference, Reel 1, Album 4, George Marsden to Jabez Bunting, 1840.

⁷⁶ Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life: Being Reminiscences of Sixty Years’ Public Service in Canada*, J. George Hodgins, ed. (Toronto: William Briggs, 1883), 273.

Matthew Richey.⁷⁷ These two missionaries had travelled across the Atlantic in order to do their best to end a “partnership with men who speculate on our capital without sharing the profits...”.⁷⁸ Behind closed doors, the British ministers and missionaries determined that the representatives of the Canada Conference had failed to establish any justification for their connexion’s continuing refusal to adopt British Wesleyan practices and policies. If the union was to continue, this situation had to be rectified. As the official organ of Canadian Methodism, the *Christian Guardian* would have to “admit and maintain all the acknowledged principles of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion,” by which the members of the committee meant “that principle of our Body, which asserts it to be the duty of the civil Government to employ their influence...for the support of Christian religion.”⁷⁹

The final act of the union was played out in front of the entire British Conference. It placed the transatlantic nature of the dispute between the two connexions in stark relief. Egerton Ryerson made “a speech enormously long” in defence of his own character and that of the Canadian ministry.⁸⁰ After listening to this “strange medley” for ten hours, Robert Alder noted that “[t]he Union is not yet dissolved but it is passing

⁷⁷ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the Canada Conference, Egerton Ryerson to Jabez Bunting, August 7, 1840; Ryerson and Ryerson, *Report of their Mission to England*, 12; C.B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters* (Toronto: Oxford University Press / Clarke, Irwin Company Ltd., 1937-47), 1:557-8.

⁷⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 168, #32, Matthew Richey to Joseph Stinson, February 14, 1840.

⁷⁹ JRULM, MARC, Wesleyan Methodist Church, Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1840, 166-9.

⁸⁰ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #233, John Scott to an unknown correspondent, August 10, 1840; Ryerson and Ryerson, *Report of their Mission to England*, 14-18.

away.”⁸¹ That was a very good thing from his point of view; it would end all danger of British Wesleyanism being identified with the antiestablishment tendencies of the Canada Conference. “Unhappily,” Alder said, “in this case it is our principles that are at stake. With the prevailing party in Upper Canada, whose organ is the *Guardian*, the mission of Methodism is not to cry ‘Ye must be born again’; but they think they are called to lay the foundations of political government.” Jabez Bunting responded with equal firmness to Egerton Ryerson’s claim that the Canadian ministry should be allowed a wide degree of local autonomy within the union. The thing was impossible: “[o]n great public matters we must merge our opinions. We cannot let the Connexion be committed to a violation of principles which the Conference has affirmed.” The Ryerson brothers, in turn, did not believe that their fellow ministers in Upper Canada would accept a Wesleyan Tory position on church establishment. As William Ryerson put it “[i]n the Old Country an Established Church is good; it is not suitable to ours.”⁸² The union was dissolved by a vote of 38 to 13, ending what the weary President of that year’s Conference called “the wretched business of Canada.”⁸³

Joseph Taylor spoke too soon. Before leaving Britain the Ryerson brothers rushed into print with an excoriating pamphlet in defence of the Canada connexion.⁸⁴ A little under two weeks later, the WMMS, with the aid of Joseph Stinson, determined that “our...operations in Upper Canada should be carried on for the

⁸¹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #229, Robert Alder to Elijah Hoole, August 13, 1840.

⁸² The above quotations are from Gregory, *Side Lights*, 292, 293-4.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 294. The quotation is from JRULM, MARC, Joseph Taylor papers, MAM PLP 105.6.37, Joseph Taylor to Joseph Entwisle, September 1, 1840.

⁸⁴ JRULM, MARC, Elijah Hoole papers, MAM PLP 55.32.34, Elijah Hoole to Jabez Bunting, August 28, 1840; Ryerson and Ryerson, *Report of their Mission to England*, 19.

future...”.⁸⁵ The stage was set for a major battle between the British and Canada Conferences over whose vision of Britishness and Wesleyanism was to hold sway across the north Atlantic.

The Buntingite relationship with the Canada connexion between 1840 and 1845 was most notable for its intransigence. Short of unconditional surrender by the Canadian Methodists, the British Conference would not even consider making terms. In 1842, when the Canadian Methodists requested Joshua Soule, one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, to act as an arbitrator between the estranged connexions, the British Wesleyan leadership refused the offer outright, judging it “inexpedient.”⁸⁶ Two years later, the Buntingites declared that, while in theory they were always ready to consider reunification, they would refuse to “entertain proposals for forming such a union as would identify us with them [the Canadian Methodists] until they are prepared to place themselves under the jurisdiction of this Conference, and so become, in truth and reality, *one with us*...”.⁸⁷ Such inflexibility was to be expected from the Buntingian Dynasty. Their vision of what constituted true British Wesleyanism came under increasingly heavy attack in the early 1840s. Between 1841 and 1843 alone, Bunting and his supporters came to blows with the liberals in the Conference over a variety of issues – whether wearing the Geneva gown while preaching was proper, whether teetotal meetings should be allowed in Wesleyan chapels – and over the

⁸⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 9, 1840.

⁸⁶ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 8, 1842; JRULM, MARC Joshua Soule papers, MAM PLP 98.6.18, Joshua Soule to Jabez Bunting, August 3, 1842; JRULM, MARC, Wesleyan Methodist Church, Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1843, 449

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1845, 634. Emphasis in original.

authorship and publication of the *Wesleyan Takings*, a series of anonymous, hostile pen portraits of Buntingite ministers. These disputes only increased the Buntingites' attachment to their own view of connexional identity. All "tattle about organic changes originates with the devil," Bunting declared. In 1842, the connexion suffered a decrease of 2,065 members and Bunting made "a most extraordinary speech on the importance of submission to Conference." The Buntingites also continued to speak in favour of the principle of church establishment. They refused to yield so much as an inch to any of their growing number of opponents.⁸⁸ The Canadian Methodists were included among this group.

It did not help that Canadian Methodism played a direct role in the British connexional warfare of the 1840s. The collapse of the union gave the liberals in the British Wesleyan ministry another stick with which to beat the Buntingian Dynasty. At the Conference of 1840, Joseph Fowler and Thomas Galland defended the Ryerson brothers from the "intemperance of language" of Bunting and his supporters.⁸⁹ Joseph Beaumont, in moving for the dissolution of the union, denounced Buntingite hegemony in the Canadas. He maintained that "there is just as much reason in the Canada Conference sending Presidents to us as for us to send Presidents to them; and they are just as competent to manage their own affairs, as we are to manage ours."⁹⁰ An older minister, Thomas Ludlam, took his opposition to Buntingism even further. He wrote a letter of

⁸⁸ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 304-7, 308, 321, 331, 338-9, 341, 350-1, 361; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 254-5.

⁸⁹ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 291.

⁹⁰ Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson*, 1:558. Bunting agreed with Beaumont's motion for dissolution, but for different reasons. He believed that the union was "a perfect *ignis fatuus*" – a perfect illusion. Gregory, *Side Lights*, 294.

support to the Canada Conference.⁹¹ One of the few preachers at the Conference of 1834 who voted in support of Joseph Rayner Stephens, Ludlam accused the connexional leadership of acting in a thoroughly ungodly, unmethodistical way in supporting church establishment above transatlantic unity.⁹² The liberals within the connexion were on the attack.

A hostile British press also joined in the fray. This was especially so in the case of the London *Patriot*, which, as John Beecham put it, was soon “feasting away on Egerton [Ryerson]’s pamphlet.”⁹³ In response, the unofficial Buntingite newspaper, the *Watchman*, defended the connexion’s history of arraying “itself against that party...whose dearest object is to injure, and, if possible, to overthrow the National Church of this Realm, as an Establishment.”⁹⁴ In three letters to the *Patriot*, Robert Alder fought back against “misstatements and misrepresentations designed to damage the character of the British Conference.”⁹⁵ Things, however, only went from bad to worse. Copies of the *Christian Guardian* crossed the Atlantic. Pamphlets supporting the Canada Conference and violently assailing the Buntingites were published in London and circulated through the connexion. Egerton Ryerson might argue that the Canadian

⁹¹ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, October 18, 1840; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 168, #12, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 2, 1840.

⁹² JRULM, MARC, John Rattenbury papers, MAM PLP 86.28.76, John Rattenbury to Mary Rattenbury, August 6, 1834; *CG*, November 18, 1840, 13.

⁹³ JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.3.3, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, October 6, 1840.

⁹⁴ *Watchman*, October 7, 1840, 325.

⁹⁵ The quotation is from *ibid.*, October 14, 1840, 334. See also *ibid.*, October 21, 1840, 343; *ibid.*, November 11, 1840, 336. Alder wrote these responses under the pseudonym “Observer.” See JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.3.3, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, October 6, 1840.

Methodists could hardly be blamed if “some numbers” of their connexional newspaper had been sent to Britain, but, at the same time, he hoped that the circulation of newspapers and pamphlets from Upper Canada would “continue to increase until the removal of its causes shall supersede its necessity.”⁹⁶ This direct intervention in the internal affairs of British Wesleyanism only increased the ire of Bunting and his supporters. Robert Alder condemned “the libelous attacks from the pen of Mr. Egerton Ryerson...and others – which are forwarded to this Country for the unworthy but vain purpose of promoting distrust and disunion in our connexion...”. Until they ended, there could be no talk of peace, much less of reunion.⁹⁷ *War à outrance* was the order of the day.

The British Wesleyan missionaries and those laymen and women in Lower and Upper Canada who decided to side with the home connexion were the main players in the Buntingite campaign against the Canada Conference. Their approach to that role and the zeal with which they played it, however, were shaped by more than unconditional loyalty to the Buntingite vision of proper British Wesleyanism. After the dissolution of the union, they were also actuated by the fear that the WMMS was on the verge of abandoning its congregations in the Canadas. As unlikely as such an event was given the Buntingites’ determination to yield no ground in their battle with the Canadian Methodists, it was, nevertheless, a reasonable apprehension: the WMMS had given up its missions in Upper Canada twenty years earlier when faced with stiff competition from

⁹⁶ *CG*, May 5, 1841, 110; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 29, File 201, #21, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, September 13, 1845; *Reply of the Canada Wesleyan Conference, June, 1841, to the Proceedings of the English Wesleyan Conference and its Committees, August and September, 1840* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1841), 40-1.

⁹⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 176, #16, Robert Alder to Joseph Stinson, October 4, 1841.

the American Methodists. In November 1840, an agitated Joseph Stinson informed his superiors in London that Egerton Ryerson was trying to “persuade the public that all we Missionary intruders will be ordered out of the Province [of Upper Canada] next year” by the WMMS. Seeking reassurance on this point, he asked the Missionary Secretaries to “address a letter to the Missionaries & Societies in Upper & Lower Canada – such as will remove this impression...Let us have it as soon as possible.”⁹⁸ Two months later, Matthew Richey prayed that the “vintage ground” of the Canadas might not “be yielded” to the Canada Conference. “I do from my heart,” he wrote, “deprecate our abandonment of a position in this magnificent country which we have it in our power to command, but which if given up[,] no, we shall never be able to recover.”⁹⁹ At their District Meeting in June 1841, the missionaries in Upper Canada declared that they trusted that the WMMS would never think of handing the British Wesleyan laity over “to the influence of those who are your calumniators” among the ranks of the Canadian Methodists.¹⁰⁰ Stinson, Richey and their fellow ministers in the Canadas were not entirely convinced that their interests were in trustworthy hands.

The missionaries and their lay supporters responded to this perceived threat to their position in a wider British and Wesleyan world by zealously embracing their own identity as both Britons and Methodists. Just as they had in the early 1820s, they positioned themselves as the one true offshoot of the home connexion in the Canadas, which the British Conference was obliged to aid and protect for the sake of God and empire. The laymen and women of Toronto and Kingston, for instance, pointed to

⁹⁸ Ibid., Box 24, File 168, #15, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 30, 1840.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Box 25, File 169, #7, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, February 3, 1841

¹⁰⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Upper Canada, Reel 5, June 4, 1841.

the large numbers of British Wesleyan emigrants who had settled in the Upper Canada and who wanted to continue under the home connexion's oversight. They stressed their "attachment to the Ministers, rules and doctrines" of British Wesleyanism and called for no compromise whatsoever with the Canada Conference.¹⁰¹ Joseph Stinson also pointed out that there were "thousands of British Methodists in the country who are disgusted with Egerton [Ryerson]'s proceedings & who *will not* remain under the pastoral care...of the slanderers of their British Fathers & Brethren...".¹⁰² Stinson's fellow preachers took up the same strain, arguing that the "noblest Province of British North America" was entitled to a large share in the considerations of the WMMS. After all, it was full of a "loyal population" who, if they could not have pure British Wesleyanism, would have none at all.¹⁰³ "[T]he Loyal people of Canada," the missionary Thomas Fawcett stated plainly, "do not wish to be separated from the Parent-Country either civilly or ecclesiastically."¹⁰⁴ The British Wesleyans in the Canadas were determined to prevent both those eventualities.

With that end in view, the missionaries openly attacked Canadian Methodism as a threat to British and Wesleyan identity in Upper Canada. The methods

¹⁰¹ The quotation is from UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 169, #35, Leaders and Stewards of Kingston to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, May 17, 1841. See also *ibid.*, Box 25, File 169, #11, Official Members of the Toronto Circuit to Robert Alder, March 1841; *ibid.*, Box 25, File 169, #23, Thomas Fawcett and Hugh Shaw to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, April 26, 1841 written on behalf of the Stewards and Leaders of the Goderich Circuit.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, Box 24, File 168, #12, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 2, 1840. Emphasis in original. See also *ibid.*, Box 24, File 168, #15, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 30, 1840.

¹⁰³ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Upper Canada, Reel 5, June 4, 1841.

¹⁰⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 169, #22, Thomas Fawcett to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, July 14, 1841.

that they used can best be gathered from the connexional newspaper that they established in Montreal as the union began to shake itself to pieces in the summer of 1840: the *Wesleyan*. In the third issue, the editor, Robert Lusher, noted that even though he and his fellow missionaries could not “recognize as truly Wesleyan, in every instance, the principles which have been adopted, and the policy which has been pursued by the [*Christian*] *Guardian*, especially during the last three years,” they did not wish to be either its “Censor or Antagonist.” They wanted to maintain the “friendly relation” with the Canada Conference that was supposed to exist between two branches of John Wesley’s church. By its eighth issue, however, the *Wesleyan* was in full cry against Canadian Methodism, denouncing the “anti-British and anti-Wesleyan” Methodism of “at least the leaders of the Upper Canada Conference” and declaring their own “unqualified abhorrence of the course which the Rev. E[ngerton] Ryerson, and those of his friends, who act with him, seem determined to pursue...”. In an effort to widen the assault on the Canada connexion, Matthew Richey contributed an article describing the missionaries’ “incipient struggles with those who are inveterately opposed to the existence in the Province of a British Wesleyan ministry” and noting that this “opposition is shrewdly suspected...to be rather intimately allied to a sensitive dislike of every thing British...”.¹⁰⁵ The Canadian Methodists were opposed to true British Wesleyanism and therefore to Britishness itself.

This discursive strategy continued to be the stock-in-trade of the *Wesleyan* after it moved to Toronto in mid-1841. In the prospectus for the second volume, the new

¹⁰⁵ *Wesleyan*, September 3, 1840, 22; *ibid.*, October 15, 1840, 49; *ibid.*, November 12, 1840, 65; *ibid.*, January 21, 1841, 105.

editors, Matthew Richey and John G. Manly, adopted a more blatantly political line, promising to “teach and enforce the principles of sound and scriptural loyalty to the noblest of earthly Governments – the Government of Great Britain.” In this, the *Wesleyan* would be conforming to the practice of the “venerated Parent Connexion, and be, therefore, at once *British* and *Wesleyan*,” two things, the editors implied, that the Canada Conference was not. Like the Buntingites at home, the missionaries and their lay supporters venerated the “Glorious Constitution both in Church and State, under which as Britons we have the happiness to live – and our constant aim...is, to maintain inviolable, and support to the utmost of our power, the Altar and the Throne.” Here was the very stuff of Wesleyan Toryism. It would be “one of the heaviest calamities with which this magnificent country could be visited,” Richey and Manly wrote in a later issue, if it were deprived “of the ministrations and institutions of pure, primitive, loyal, uncorrupted, British Methodism. The hearts of the people are at all points prepared to hail its approach, and rejoice in its light.”¹⁰⁶ The implication here, of course, was that, while the people in the colony were redeemable, the Canada Conference itself was hopelessly impure, worldly, disloyal and corrupt. The heavy brigades of British Wesleyanism were well and truly in the field. The difficulty the Buntingites would face, by the late 1840s, would be reining them in.

In the meantime, the reaction of the Buntingites and their missionary allies to the dissolution of the union created a genuine crisis for Canadian Methodism. In Britain, Wesleyan ministers were not above poaching ministers from competing

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, June 24, 1841, 196; *ibid.*, February 9, 1842, 86; *ibid.*, February 8, 1843, 84. Emphasis in original.

Methodist denominations.¹⁰⁷ Those concerned with the Canadas took active steps to draw preachers away from the Canada connexion, arguing that it would “greatly weaken the Ryerson influence & in promoting this we are doing service to the cause of religion” in the colony.¹⁰⁸ By the time the Canadian ministers met at their annual Conference in June 1841, fifteen of their fellows had deserted the church and joined a newly-constituted British Wesleyan missionary district for Upper Canada.¹⁰⁹ Most of these preachers needed no urging from the WMMS to make the move. They departed the Conference pledging friendship, but also publicly complaining about “pledges broken by Mr. [Egerton] Ryerson” and of feelings of long-standing dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the Canada connexion.¹¹⁰ They took their twin messages of discontent and purified Britishness and Wesleyanism to the major centres of both British settlement and Methodist strength in the province, including Hamilton, London and Toronto.¹¹¹

The results were unhappy ones, as far as the remaining Canadian Methodist ministers were concerned. By mid-1841, they recorded the loss of approximately 525 members to the British Wesleyan missionaries spread across ten

¹⁰⁷ JRULM, MARC, James Dixon papers, MAM PLP 34.17.20, James Dixon to Jabez Bunting, March 3, 1842. Dixon noted that it would give him great pleasure to steal away a minister from the New Connexion and so “weaken an antagonist body, founded as it is on a wrong basis...”.

¹⁰⁸ JRULM, MARC, William Lord papers, MAM PLP 70.33.26, William Lord to Jabez Bunting, March 11, 1842. The British Wesleyans succeeded in suborning J.C. Davidson, though it helped that he was already leaning in that direction. See UCA, WMMS-C, Box 26, File 177, #25, J.C. Davidson to Joseph Stinson, January 5, 1842; UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 8, 1842.

¹⁰⁹ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1824 to 1845*, 262; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 168, #12, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 2, 1840; UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Upper Canada, Reel 5, October 28, 1840; *ibid.*, Reel 5, June 4, 1841.

¹¹⁰ *CG*, November 4, 1840, 5; *Wesleyan*, November 12, 1840, 64-5.

¹¹¹ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Upper Canada, Reel 5, October 28, 1840; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 168, #15, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, November 30, 1840.

circuits.¹¹² Though not crippling, such losses were extremely vexing for a church that measured gospel success almost entirely in terms of membership. At the Conference of 1842, the Canadian ministers denounced the “schisms and divisions” being created in their societies by the agents of British Wesleyanism as “causeless, unmethodistic and unjustifiable” and completely at variance with the ideal of Methodist ‘oneness’ that the WMMS had embraced in 1820.¹¹³ This reaction to missionary activity in Upper Canada was characteristic of the Canada connexion’s overall response to the crisis it faced in the early 1840s.

Under the pressure of events, the Canadian Methodists fervently argued that it was the British Wesleyans, both in Upper Canada and on the other side of the Atlantic, who were betraying the heritage of John Wesley. The Canada Conference, they stated, was more purely Wesleyan than either the Buntingites or Stinson, Richey and the other missionaries in the colonies. In October 1840 the Canadian ministers accused the British Wesleyan leadership of unilaterally wrecking the union and so violating those “Wesleyan and Scriptural principles” still upheld by the Canada connexion.¹¹⁴ They also staked a claim to being as orthodox as the British connexion in terms of their regular doctrine and discipline, both of which, they pointed out, had been recognized as “truly Wesleyan” by their fathers and brethren in the home country while the union lasted. On the issue of church establishment, the Canadian Methodist position was equally clear and, to their minds, uncompromisingly Wesleyan. The ministers would not be advocates for

¹¹² *Reply of the Canada Wesleyan Conference*, 34-5.

¹¹³ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 8, 1842.

¹¹⁴ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1824 to 1845*, 257. See also *CG*, December 30, 1840, 38.

the establishment principle in Upper Canada, “especially,” they resolved, “as Mr. Wesley himself and his Conference regarded the National Church as having no ground in the New Testament, but as being ‘a merely political Institution.’”¹¹⁵

By June 1841 the Canadian Methodists were even more keen on defending their identity as unsullied Methodists. Meeting in Conference, the preachers denounced both the Buntingian Dynasty and their missionary agents in Upper Canada for contravening John Wesley’s strictures against schism and his idea of worldwide Methodist ‘oneness’. Both of those British Wesleyan groups were engaged in the most “dreadful” of campaigns in Upper Canada. The missionaries, in particular, were performing “*un-missionary work*” and creating all the “evils of schism, strife, and division” among the Canadian Methodist societies. A year later the Canada Conference levelled its guns at the WMMS, charging that it was a violator of “the sacred principles of Methodist unity.”¹¹⁶ The Canadian preachers, in contrast, refused to invade the missionary congregations in Lower Canada.¹¹⁷ The not so subtle subtext here was that, if anyone was falling into worldly declension, it was the British Wesleyans and not the Canadian Methodists. Despite being buffeted from all sides by those who ought to have been their friends and allies, the latter were remaining true to the old gospel paths first blazed by John and Charles Wesley. They were uncorrupted Wesleyans transplanted in Upper Canada.

¹¹⁵ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, October 27, 1840; *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1824 to 1845*, 251, 258.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 281-2, 293, 324. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁷ Though they did threaten to do so on several occasions: *CG*, December 9, 1840, 25; *ibid.*, December 30, 1840, 38; *ibid.*, April 13, 1842, 98. For the Canada Conference’s official policy see *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1824 to 1845*, 283-4.

The Canadian Methodists were also New World Britons. In October 1840 they revived and elaborated on a claim that they had first made in the early 1830s, stating that their connexion was “as much a British Wesleyan Conference as the Conference held in England.”¹¹⁸ The ministry expanded on this point in an attempt to minimize the inroads that the British Wesleyan missionaries were making in the church’s membership. The Ryerson brothers were the first into the breach, arguing, as they had ten years before, that British immigrants were perfectly at home in the Canada connexion. In their *Report* on their mission to Britain, Egerton and William Ryerson stated that “the *Old Country* part of the members of our Church were the most forward and ardent” in their support of the editorial policies of the *Christian Guardian*. That newspaper, they claimed, had received memorials denouncing the interference of the WMMS in Canadian Methodist affairs from areas where “the official members of our church were almost entirely emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland.” These men and women, freeborn Britons one and all, knew “how to appreciate their rights and privileges on the Western, as well as on the Eastern side of the Atlantic...”¹¹⁹ This was more than desperate propaganda. Henry Mayle, a British emigrant settled near Brantford, denounced the British Wesleyans’ failure to understand that Methodists in Upper Canada would never accept “a dominant Church party nor Tory ascendancy.” By trying to foist both church establishment and Conservative hegemony on the colony, the British Conference was engaged in “nothing less than a factious opposition to the liberal views about to be carried out in Canada by

¹¹⁸ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, October 28, 1840.

¹¹⁹ Ryerson and Ryerson, *Report of their Mission to England*, 7. Emphasis in original.

Her Majesty's Government and our highly valued Governor General."¹²⁰ The Canadian Methodists, in contrast, were paragons of British loyalty.

The Canadian Methodists' adoption of a self-consciously British identity found its most forceful expression in two articles – “A Voice from Canada” and “A Second Voice from Canada” – that appeared in the *Christian Guardian* in December 1840 and February 1841. They were written by George F. Playter, a minister who grew up among the Wesleyans in Britain, emigrated to Lower Canada in 1832, joined the itinerancy in Upper Canada two years later, and who, when the union between the British Wesleyan and Canada connexions collapsed in 1840, decided to side with the latter.¹²¹ In these articles Playter addressed the Buntingites as both a “countryman” and as “a Wesleyan Minister.” From the vantage point of this dual identity he openly attacked the missionaries' attempts to identify themselves as Britons to the exclusion of all others: “*British, British, British,*” the missionaries said, “and their tongues never tire in uttering, nor their ears of hearing, nor their pens in writing ‘*British, British, British.*’” To state that a person was British because he or she was connected with the British Wesleyan Conference was no more than a sophistic sleight of hand. “The name,” Playter argued, “does not bestow the attributes of character, but the attributes of character the name.” Addressing the WMMS directly, he continued:

Monopolizing the name to your party, is insinuating a denial of it to ours. However, while we are more careful about the character than the term, we are consoled with the fact, that as your

¹²⁰ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 2, File 44, Henry Mayle to Egerton Ryerson, November 16, 1840.

¹²¹ Goldwin French, “George Frederick Playter” in *DCB*, 9:634-5.

agents did not bestow, neither can they remove,
that 'good name which is rather to be chosen than
great riches.'

The Canadian Methodists, in Playter's view, had proven their British identity through their actions. The Wesleyans in the colony and in the home country, in contrast, were undeserving of the designation British; they only used it in an "insinuating" and "mean" way to attack those who ought to have been their gospel coworkers in the Canadian ministry.¹²²

This self-image was adopted by the Canada connexion as a whole. At their 1841 Conference, the ministry offered Playter its "cordial thanks" for his "admirable... defense" of their church.¹²³ Indeed, even before the publication of the second "Voice from Canada," the Canadian Methodist preachers began to argue that, when it came to the meaning of Britishness, their connexion had nothing to learn from either the Buntingites or the missionaries in the Lower and Upper Canada. They believed that the laity's "British affection is beyond a just impeachment" and that they themselves were "more...British at the present time than the leading members of the British Conference and the Missionary Committee are." The laymen and women on the Barrie Mission came at the same point from the opposite angle, arguing that "the conduct of those calling themselves British Missionaries" was both "[a]nti-British" and "without principle...". A year later, one self-declared member of the Canada Conference combined these two statements of British identity:

¹²² *CG*, December 9, 1840, 25.; *ibid.*, February 10, 1841, 61.

¹²³ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1824 to 1845*, 269.

one of the greatest obstacles to the civil and religious prosperity of our country is the unholy strife occasioned by our British [Wesleyan] brethren. Canada might now have been something beside a British Province, if native Canadians had not spilt so much blood in its defence.¹²⁴

Unlike the missionaries or their Buntingite leaders, Canadian Methodists were staunch supporters of a united and peaceful British Empire. In effect, they had transformed themselves into better Britons, superior in their cultural purity to the British Wesleyans in the colony and across the sea.

There were, then, several competing and antithetical British and Wesleyan identities in existence among the Buntingites, the Canadian Methodists and the British missionaries and their lay supporters in Lower and Upper Canada by the early 1840s. Yet, in 1846-7, the Canada and British Wesleyan connexions agreed to reunite. And, strange to say, the terms of the union of 1847 were almost exactly the same as those of 1833. The British Wesleyans retained the right to appoint one of their own number as the President of the Canada Conference; like the Irish Conference, the Canada connexion was required to submit all its “acts, admissions, expulsions and appointments, whatsoever” to the British Conference for approval; the British Wesleyan *Book of Discipline* remained supreme, though subject to such changes as might be agreed upon by both conferences; and the missions to the Natives and the destitute settlers were, once again, to be subject to the rule of the WMMS and a General Superintendent appointed by the home connexion. There was one important departure from the terms of 1833, but

¹²⁴ *CG*, December 30, 1840, 38; *ibid.*, January 6, 1841, 41-2; *ibid.*, January 19, 1842, 50.

even this was no triumph for Canadian Methodist autonomy. The new Articles of Union created the post of Co-Delegate: a minister who would take charge of the administrative affairs of the Canada connexion if the British-appointed President was unable to spend a whole year in the colony. This vice president could be either a Canadian or British Wesleyan preacher, though the final say on the appointment rested, as always, with the British Conference.¹²⁵

According to John Carroll, Canadian Methodism's most gifted nineteenth-century historian, the explanation for the union of 1847 lay in changes in British Wesleyanism itself. Carroll described Jabez Bunting admitting to Egerton Ryerson that "in some respects, with regard to public questions, the Canadians had been 'right,' and they [the British Wesleyans] had been 'wrong'."¹²⁶ In contrast, in 1847, Robert Alder told his fellow ministers that he had found "a total change in the Canadian Conference since 1839."¹²⁷ There was some truth behind each of these quotations. Cultural and structural changes in Canadian Methodism and British Wesleyanism created the conditions necessary for the union of 1847. The leading figures in both connexions came together around a broader, more inclusive British and Wesleyan identity.

The period between 1840 and 1847 witnessed the collapse of both Canadian Methodist opposition to church establishment and Wesleyan Tory exclusiveness among the Buntingites. Change came to the Canada Conference first. In the

¹²⁵ *Minutes of Twelve Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1846 to 1857 inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1863), 35-8; Moir, "Notes of Discord, Strains of Harmony," 12.

¹²⁶ John Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries; or, the Canadian Itinerants' Memorial* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1867-77), 4:432.

¹²⁷ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 420.

late 1830s and early 1840s the imperial government took a long, hard look at Anglicanism's position as the established church of Upper Canada. Governor-General Charles Poulett Thomson arrived in the Canadas in 1839 determined to reform a system of colonial government that had broken down badly in 1837 and 1838; he was not, however, supposed to grant the colonies responsible government. Instead, the Colonial Office instructed him to engineer a political climate in which "harmony" within the Canadas and between imperial centre and periphery could flourish.¹²⁸ With that end in view, the Governor-General turned to the troublesome issue of church establishment.

Just after the union between the British and Canada Conferences fell apart in 1840, Thomson and Lord Melbourne's Whig government in Britain deprived the colonial Church of England of its unique establishment status. Between 1840 and 1854, the Church of Scotland and, to a lesser extent, the other denominations in Upper Canada shared in state funding, creating a plural establishment of which Methodism was a part.¹²⁹ It was not the disestablishment that Canada Methodists had been campaigning for since the mid-1820s; the Canada Conference nevertheless accepted the new arrangement, acknowledging Thomson's "benevolent exertions" for "an equitable and satisfactory settlement of the ecclesiastical affairs of this Province" and expressing the hope that "this long agitated question will be finally set at rest."¹³⁰ By and large it had been and, after

¹²⁸ J.M.S. Careless, *The Union of the Canadas: The Growth of Canadian Institutions, 1841-1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1967), 10-11, 37-8; Ian Radforth, "Sydenham and Utilitarian Reform," in Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 71-5.

¹²⁹ John Moir, *Church and State in Canada West: Three Studies in the Relations of Denominationalism and Nationalism, 1841-1867* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 33-8; Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 104, 106-7.

¹³⁰ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1824 to 1845*, 242.

1840, church establishment ceased to be such a bone of contention for Canadian Methodists.¹³¹

Three years later, the Disruption of the Church of Scotland forced Jabez Bunting and his supporters in the British Wesleyan Conference to rethink their own position on church establishments. In May 1843, Thomas Chalmers led 454 of his fellow evangelical ministers out of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and founded the Free Kirk. At stake here was the right of the state to intrude in the internal affairs of the church, especially around the question of whether lay patrons should have the ability to force ministers on certain parishes. In 1834, the Scottish courts ruled that wealthy laymen did possess that right, much to the dismay of Chalmers and his fellow non-intrusionists. When the civil courts began to interfere with the Church's own courts in 1842, the breaking point was reached; the Free Kirkers determined to forge a national religion outside the pale of the Scottish church establishment.¹³²

The Buntingites supported the Scottish evangelicals even before the Disruption occurred. They joined with others in 1843 to invite Chalmers to London to give a series of lectures discussing “whether it is *practicable* to carry out the *principle* of a Church Establishment without destroying the *spiritual* independence of the Church.”¹³³ Bunting answered the question himself at that year's British Conference, stating, in the wake of the schism, that he had once hoped that “such a thing was possible as an

¹³¹ On this point see Moir, *Church and State in Canada West*, 41.

¹³² Stewart J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland, 1801-46* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 292-312, 348-62.

¹³³ JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.3.13, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, January 12, 1843. Emphasis in original. See also John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, January 14, 1843 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 280-1.

Established Church without State interference. But now I see it to be impossible. I wish two thousand clergymen would leave the English Church in the same way” as the Free Kirkers had.¹³⁴ Though the Buntingites were unwilling to join with militant Dissent in an antiestablishmentarian assault on the Church of England, they readily attacked the practice of church establishment while still paying lip service to the principle.¹³⁵ The *Watchman* summed up the new position of the Buntingian Dynasty early in 1844, stating that “there is no Established Church in existence on behalf of which, as it now stands, we could conscientiously contend.”¹³⁶

The Buntingite view of the Church of England itself also underwent a major shift in the 1840s. Bunting and his supporters were reacting to the rise and progress of the Oxford Movement. The Movement began in 1833 when, in response to the Irish Church Temporalities Bill of Lord Grey’s Whig government, the Anglican minister John Keble preached a sermon in St. Mary’s Church, Oxford on “national apostasy,” denouncing the erastianism of the Church of England. Keble was soon joined in his campaign for Church independence by three other Oxford men: Richard Hurrell Froude, Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman. In the fall of 1833, they began to publish a series of *Tracts for the Times*, aimed at reforming what they saw as the corruption of Anglicanism at the hands of English politicians and evangelical ministers and bishops. In these essays, Keble and his fellows put great stress on the apostolic succession, arguing that the only true ministry was one directly descended from the primitive church. They also emphasized the writings of the Church Fathers against the

¹³⁴ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 348; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 242-3.

¹³⁵ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 350-1; Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 189-90.

¹³⁶ *Watchman*, January 31, 1844 quoted in *ibid.*, 190.

usual Protestant and evangelical reliance on the Scriptures alone. To most evangelicals the Tractarians seemed to be drifting in the direction of Popery by the early 1840s.¹³⁷

Methodism came in for direct attack by the Tractarians in Edward Pusey's 1842 *Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury*. Pusey denounced the Wesleyans for making justification by faith into a heretical justification by feelings. According to this Oxford Don, the Wesleyans substituted class meetings and love feasts for the genuine sacraments. Pusey argued that, for Methodists, the state of one's feelings had become more important than following the Ten Commandments. The Tractarian emphasis on apostolic succession also threatened to deprive the Wesleyan preachers of their status as ordained ministers of God.¹³⁸ That such an attack should come from within the ranks of the established church was particularly shocking to Buntingite sensibilities.

The Buntingian Dynasty turned on the Church of England with all the zeal that it had once used in its defence. In 1841, the same year that John Henry Newman wrote *Tract 90* – demonstrating that Anglicanism's Thirty-Nine Articles were not inconsistent with Roman Catholic doctrine – Bunting made the extraordinary statement that “[n]o person on earth or in heaven...can reconcile Methodism with High Churchism.” “Unless the Church of England will protest against Puseyism in some intelligible form,” he continued, “it will be the duty of Methodism to protest against the Church of England.”¹³⁹ That is exactly what the British Conference set out to do. In 1842 the Buntingite Thomas Jackson wrote a pamphlet in reply to Pusey's *Letter to the*

¹³⁷ C. Brad Faught, *The Oxford Movement: A Thematic History of the Tractarians and Their Times* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 5, 69-70.

¹³⁸ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 165; Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation*, 162-3.

¹³⁹ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 317.

Archbishop of Canterbury, defining Wesleyan Methodism as a virile, masculine alternative to what he and the other members of the Buntingian Dynasty saw as the overt femininity of Tractarian worship. Jackson assailed High Churchmen for their love of an effete religion “adorned with gold lace and ostrich feathers...”. He also accused Pusey himself of seeking a union between the Church of England and Roman Catholicism.¹⁴⁰ Wesleyans, the *Watchman* stated in November 1842, refused to trifle with an Anglican revival of Popish superstition.¹⁴¹ They preferred to align themselves with other strictly evangelical churches to combat resurgent Roman Catholicism in organizations like the British and Foreign School Society or the violently anti-Catholic Evangelical Alliance.¹⁴²

Under such circumstances, cooperation with the Canadian Methodists could hardly be refused. The preface to the Articles of Union, written in Britain by a committee of the WMMS, made that clear enough. In a period

when Evangelical Denominations are exemplifying a pervading and earnest desire to manifest their oneness in Christ, and thus will away the reproach which for so many ages has attached to the division and mutual acrimony of the Protestant Church, it is extremely desirable that the unseemly differences which...have unhappily existed between the two Branches of the Wesleyan Methodists in Western Canada...should terminate...¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Jackson, *A Letter to the Rev. Edward B. Pusey, D.D.* (London, 1842), 99 quoted in Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 166. See also Watts, *Dissenters*, 544.

¹⁴¹ *Watchman*, November 9, 1842, 356.

¹⁴² Edward Jones to Jabez Bunting, November 15, 1844 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 308 and n. 2. See also Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 530; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 218-19; John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 142.

¹⁴³ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 14, 1846.

Among the British Wesleyan leadership, support for both the Church of England and the establishment principle had been effectively eliminated as components of proper Britishness and Wesleyanism by 1846. Reunion had become a viable alternative to continuing factiousness.

The British Wesleyan missionary Joseph Stinson shared this outlook. A change of opinion in regard to both the politics of the Canada Conference and the establishment principle in the late 1830s and 1840s allowed him to become the chief advocate of reunion in Britain. Observing the progress of several of the prominent connexional reformers through Sheffield in 1846, Stinson could not understand why “we should be so distant with the poor sinners” in Upper Canada when “*greater sinners* amongst us at Home are cherished and allowed to occupy the high places of our connexion.” “We have been too thin skinned about Canadian whiggism,” Stinson told Robert Alder, “we have to endure plenty of it in England – lank, straight haired whiggery.”¹⁴⁴ A mild form of political liberalism should not disbar the Canadian Methodists from membership in the British Wesleyan family. Neither should their approach to church establishment. Stinson began to turn on the idea of unconditional support for the Church of England in 1838 while still in Upper Canada. He complained of the unwillingness of Anglican ministers to do Wesleyanism “*common justice*” in the colony and how, in his estimation, “they patronize *Popery*...at the expense of Methodism...”. Methodism, Stinson now believed, should be put on an equal footing

¹⁴⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 30, File 216, #11, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 2, 1846. Emphasis in original.

with the Church of England and become to “all intents & purposes an *Establishment*...”¹⁴⁵ By May 1842 Stinson was even more convinced that the Anglicans cared “just as little about us [the British Wesleyans] as they do about the Canadian Methodists & if they could sweep us all out of the Province they would do so with a good will.”¹⁴⁶ This was very vexing after all the support that the British Wesleyans had given the establishment principle down the years. In Sheffield, in 1844, Stinson explicitly tied his new view of the Church of England to the issue of reunion, arguing that “[t]he aspects of the times at home and abroad surely are plainly indicating that our very existence as a church depends in no small degree upon our unity, particularly in Canada where Popery and Puseyism are likely to attain Gigantic Power.”¹⁴⁷

Many Canadian Methodists began to move towards the same conclusion as they engaged in their own battle with the Oxford Movement in the 1840s. Sharing the Buntingite fear of “diluted popery under the guise of Protestantism” and their disdain for the supposed effeteness of Tractarianism, the Canada connexion called for “[n]o surrender of Wesleyan Methodism to the Puseyites.”¹⁴⁸ In an ecclesiastical version of the enemy of my enemy being my friend, the *Christian Guardian* also began to reprint articles from the British connexion’s official journal, the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, and from the *Watchman* denouncing Tractarianism as a “Popish system of priestly arrogance” and

¹⁴⁵ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #214, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, May 29, 1838. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 26, File 177, #7, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, May 9, 1842.

¹⁴⁷ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 3, File 68, Joseph Stinson to Egerton Ryerson, November 18, 1844.

¹⁴⁸ *CG*, October 31, 1838, 205; *ibid.*, December 14, 1842, 30. For similar reactions to the Oxford Movement see *ibid.*, January 23, 1839, 40; *ibid.*, April 6, 1842, 94; *ibid.*, April 27, 1842, 106; *ibid.*, November 1, 1843, 6; *ibid.*, March 13, 1844, 82; *ibid.*, January 15, 1845, 50.

likening it to the woman of Revelations “upon whose forehead is inscribed the name ‘*Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.*’” By July 1842 the Canadian Methodists were pointing out that the British Wesleyans,

notwithstanding their professed and we believe sincere attachment to the Church of England, are showing the world that they will not submit to the selfish and papistical demands of Puseyism in the Church...¹⁴⁹

Which, in fact, was no more than the truth. Two years later, the editor of the *Christian Guardian*, Jonathan Scott, felt free to commend the anti-Puseyite opinions of “that excellent paper, the London *Watchman*.” “Well is it for that church which has a defender so bold and yet skillful,” he stated – a marvellous reversal from the early 1840s when the Canada connexion stigmatised the *Watchman*’s “anti-British principles.”¹⁵⁰ The Canadian Methodists also began to call for unity among the evangelical Protestant churches – “a charge or broadside from such heavy metal would tell better on the ranks of ‘Puseyism’ than the thousand and one guns which are daily fired without effect,” ‘Cosmos’ of Toronto argued in May 1845.¹⁵¹ The prospect of cooperation with a changed British Conference was in the air among the Canadian Methodists by the mid-1840s.

All of this helped ensure the success of John Ryerson’s efforts to reintegrate the Canadian connexion into the British Wesleyan fold. The leading figure in the Canada connexion after Egerton Ryerson completed his final stint as editor of the

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, March 23, 1842, 85; *ibid.*, April 27, 1842, 106; *ibid.*, July 20, 1842, 154. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, March 24, 1841, 87; *ibid.*, November 6, 1844, 10.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, May 21, 1845, 121. See also *ibid.*, December 10, 1845, 29; *ibid.*, August 5, 1846, 166.

Christian Guardian in June 1840 and accepted the government post of Superintendent of Schools for Canada West (Upper Canada) in 1843, John was the most tory of the Ryersons.¹⁵² For his part, Egerton Ryerson once described his brother as “a lifelong Conservative” – and John did campaign hard among the Methodists in the Bay of Quinte District in the elections of 1836 to keep the Reformers out.¹⁵³ Yet, he was no doctrinaire Wesleyan Tory of the Buntingite school. John Ryerson was prepared to denounce the British Wesleyans in the colony when he thought they were overstepping their authority or taking the connexion in a harmful direction. In 1838 he pilloried the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, William Martin Harvard, for “running about the city [Toronto], fawning, bowing, smiling, eulogizing, flattering etc. etc. etc.; to make proselytes to himself” and the then editor of the *Christian Guardian*, Ephraim Evans, for his support for the British Wesleyan missionaries and their “*dear Church* [of England].”¹⁵⁴ In general, however, John Ryerson believed that the future of Methodism in Canada lay within a wider British Wesleyan world. He struggled to preserve the union at the Canada Conference of 1839, at one point playing an instrumental role in defeating his brothers Egerton and William’s efforts to end it then and there.¹⁵⁵ He threw himself into the effort to rebuild the union with equal verve after its collapse.

In April 1841 John Ryerson approached Joseph Stinson and “expressed in the strongest terms his regret” at the two Conferences being “arrayed against each other.”

¹⁵² Gidney, “Egerton Ryerson,” in *DCB*, 11:787-9, 791; Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 97, 98.

¹⁵³ Thomas H.B. Symons, “John Ryerson,” in *DCB*, 10:639; Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson*, 1:348-9.

¹⁵⁴ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 2, File 35, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, May 22, 1838. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁵ JRULM, MARC, John P. Lockwood collection, Matthew Richey to Jabez Bunting, July 3, 1839.

John acknowledged that his brother, Egerton, had done wrong in making the *Christian Guardian* into a political journal and suggested that the majority of his fellow preachers “would gladly become bona fide members of the British Conference” as missionaries.¹⁵⁶ By the next month, John Ryerson was proposing that, if they became agents of the WMMS, the Canadian ministers would place their church property under the control of the home connexion.¹⁵⁷ According to Ryerson himself, this idea was supported by “the best men” in the Canadian ministry at the Conference of 1841.¹⁵⁸ In November 1843, John reported to Stinson that he had “done all in my power to induce the [Canadian] preachers to an arrangement as much in accordance with your views as possible...” He had successfully prevented references in the *Christian Guardian* “offensive to the British Conference, and indeed I have been trying all in my power, both with preachers and people, to bring about a settlement and restore peace to our Zion...”¹⁵⁹ He convinced Robert Alder of his sincerity.¹⁶⁰ By 1846 he had also convinced the majority of his fellow ministers of the wisdom of the course he had plotted out over the previous six years.

The Canada Conference of 1846 appointed John Ryerson and the equally conservative Anson Green as representatives to the British connexion to negotiate a reunion.¹⁶¹ This may have been an immediate reaction to falling membership: in 1845 and

¹⁵⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 169, #12, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, April 16, 1841; *ibid.*, Box 25, File 169, #13, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, April 20, 1841

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Box 25, File 169, #18, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, May 3, 1841

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Box 25, File 169, #19, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, June 16, 1841.

¹⁵⁹ UCA, Matthew Richey papers, Box 1, File 2, John Ryerson to Joseph Stinson, November 7, 1843.

¹⁶⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 30, File 216, #10, Robert Alder to Joseph Stinson, March 4, 1846.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Box 30, File 216, #9, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, June 30, 1846; UCA, WMC-C Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 3, 1846; Green, *Life of Anson Green*, 290-1.

1846 the Canada connexion lost 2,100 members to the British Wesleyan missionaries in Upper Canada and to other denominations.¹⁶² It was also the culmination of a new willingness among the Canada Conference to rejoin a wider British Wesleyan world under vastly altered transatlantic circumstances.

In cultural terms, the new union that was created in 1847 came to rest on the basis of a commonly agreed upon sense of British and Wesleyan identity among the leading elements of both Conferences. As John Ryerson had suggested, the Canadian Methodists freely accepted a subordinate position within a larger British connexional organization. Between 1847 and 1862, only British Wesleyans served as President of the Canada Conference.¹⁶³ When, in 1855 and 1856, several Canadian ministers floated the idea that one of their own should be made President of the connexion, the suggestion was greeted with “amusement” by their fellow preachers. Asahel Hurlburt, who had been one of the chief opponents of the reunion, “deprecated any alteration from the fact of our present success, and which had marked the history of the past years.”¹⁶⁴ When Anson Green became the first Canadian preacher to fill the Presidential chair in 1863, he declared that “the ice is now broken, and the way prepared for other Canadian ministers to fill our Conferential chair...”¹⁶⁵ Evidently, this was a minority opinion. Over the next eleven years, only three more native-born Canadians served as President.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² French, *Parsons and Politics*, 248-9; Moir, “Notes of Discord,” 11.

¹⁶³ George Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1881), 30.

¹⁶⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 40, File 291, #[?], Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, William Arthur and George Osborn, [1856].

¹⁶⁵ Green, *Life of Anson Green*, 389.

¹⁶⁶ Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada*, 30. The Canadian Presidents of Conference were Richard Jones (1865), James Elliott (1867) and Samuel D. Rice (1873 and 1874).

It helped that the British Wesleyans who were appointed to the Presidency of Canada Conference after 1847 said what their colony colleagues wanted to hear. The days of a Buntingite minister travelling across the Atlantic in order to charge the Canadian Methodists with political disloyalty and flagrant breaches of faith and doctrine were over. The post-reunion British Wesleyans Presidents gave new life to a tempered sense of British and Wesleyan identity among the Canadian Methodists: one shorn of its subversive elements. The Canadian Methodists' self-identification as transplanted Britons and Wesleyans no longer threatened to disrupt the inner workings of the home connexion. The Presidents happily described the Canadians as "our children; and, in all future time and contingencies, they will be our brethren. They will carry out and perpetuate all that is valuable in our system, and, planting old England on a new soil, will reproduce our nation on a gigantic scale."¹⁶⁷ Speaking on behalf of their Canadian Methodist charges, they noted that the British Wesleyans had "a great deal of the beautiful, and the wealthy, and the wise, and the morally and materially powerful...which now we cannot compare with; but we have them all in Embryo..."¹⁶⁸

Between 1868 and 1873 the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, William Morley Punshon, went one step further, arguing that, in some ways, Canadian Methodism had already exceeded the home connexion: it had become the real religious establishment of the colony. When he arrived in Canada, Punshon was delighted to find that Methodism was "a great power." Touring Ottawa, he discovered that between twenty and thirty Methodist laymen, some of them "men of considerable

¹⁶⁷ James Dixon, *Personal Narrative of a Tour through a part of the United States and Canada*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Lane and Scott, 1849), 158.

¹⁶⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 43, File 316, #7, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, July 2, 1863.

ability,” were sitting as MPs or MPPs in the new Dominion and provincial parliaments.¹⁶⁹ “This is as it should be and as it will be by-and-by at home,” Punshon noted. “The freedom with which it [Methodism] works out here, with no shadow of an established Church to darken it, is amazing,” he explained to a fellow British Wesleyan minister. In one “thriving Canadian village” that Punshon visited, the Canada connexion had a good church, while the Anglicans had to confine themselves to “a small room which they hire, and in which they have a service once a fortnight.”¹⁷⁰ A year later, he was even more enthusiastic, writing that Methodism in Canada “is no small thing, & must be an important element in the future history of the Dominion.” The Church of England, in contrast, was “largely Ritualistic” and, though materially well off, was “numerically less than either ourselves or the Presbyterians.”¹⁷¹ Addressing the British Conference in 1871, Punshon summed up his views on the Canada connexion: it had triumphantly freed itself from the yoke of church establishment and taken the position which Methodism “ought always to take among the Churches – standing forth in her comeliness, the peer of all...too affluent in spirit and resources to be the poor relation of any.”¹⁷² Not surprisingly perhaps, the Canadian Methodist ministers thanked their President for his “faithful, comprehensive and eloquent exposition...”¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Frederic W. Macdonald and A.H. Reynar, *The Life of William Morley Punshon, LL.D.* (London, 1887), 298.

¹⁷⁰ William Morley Punshon to Thomas M’Culloch, October 12, 1868 in *ibid.*, 316.

¹⁷¹ UCA, William Morley Punshon papers, William Morley Punshon to an unknown correspondent, June 19, 1869.

¹⁷² William Morley Punshon, *An Address delivered in Free Trade Hall, Manchester, at the Open Session of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference* (N.p., 1871), 6.

¹⁷³ *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Ministers of the Welseyan Methodist Church in Canada* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1872), 126. See also Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 52.

Before the British and Canada Conferences could achieve this apotheosis of mutually acceptable British and Wesleyan identity, however, the connexional leadership in Canada and Britain had to tame the more militant notions of Britishness and Wesleyanism that had been set loose after the dissolution of the first union in 1840. They spent seven years after 1847 engaged in that difficult task. It was initially most pressing among the British missionaries in Upper Canada. Their fear of abandonment rekindled by the Canadian Methodist deputation to the British Conference of 1846, the missionaries turned their self-identification as guardians of pure Britishness and Wesleyanism against the home connexion. It would be disastrous, they argued, to withdraw an official British Wesleyan presence from provinces that, in terms of population alone, were becoming increasingly British every year.¹⁷⁴ Even an alliance with the Canadian Methodists threatened to “*prove most fatal to British Methodism in this country.*”¹⁷⁵ William Martin Harvard was in advance of his fellow missionaries; he opposed the idea of reunion as early as 1842 and by 1845 was thoroughly convinced that the Canadian Methodists were a danger to both the ecclesiastical and imperial ties between mother country and colony.¹⁷⁶ In an attempt to scuttle the reunion, he wrote a series of articles for the *Christian Guardian* outlining in great detail all the differences between the Canada and British Conferences.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Upper Canada, Reel 5, June 20, 1846.

¹⁷⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 30, File 209, #4, William Case to Matthew Richey, June 24, 1846. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 26, File 178, #14, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, June 11, 1842; *ibid.*, Box 29, File 201, #25, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, December 6, 1845.

¹⁷⁷ Subsequently published in two pamphlets: William Martin Harvard, *Five Defensive Letters in behalf of the British Wesleyan Conference* (Toronto: Scobie and Balfour, 1846) and *idem*, *Facts against Falsehood*. (Toronto: Joseph Wilson, 1846).

The British missionaries' lay supporters in Upper Canada also reacted badly to the idea of reunion. The laymen of Kingston refused outright to contemplate any union with the Canada Conference that did not secure absolute British Wesleyan hegemony in Upper Canada.¹⁷⁸ The same tune was sounded by the laity of Toronto, Hamilton and London.¹⁷⁹ One Toronto layman put the matter squarely: "I have been a British Methodist all my days and intend to be a British Methodist. No power on earth shall ever make me a Ryerson Methodist," including, apparently, the WMMS.¹⁸⁰ In July 1848 the members of one of the London congregations threatened to leave the new Canada connexion "unless we can have one of our own ministers."¹⁸¹ These missionaries and their lay supporters had become quintessential loyalists: men and women who asserted "a British identity for reasons not always apparent or agreeable to the makers of policy and opinion in the United Kingdom."¹⁸²

The British Wesleyan leadership and several of their missionaries in Upper Canada moved quickly to suppress this revolt against connexional authority. Matthew Richey, who, like Joseph Stinson, had become a convert to reunion, took the lead in the colony. He denounced William Martin Harvard's "morbid propensity for scribbling" and noted that "*it ought to be stopped by an express and authoritative interdicit*" from the

¹⁷⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 30, File 209, #12, Resolutions of the Leaders Meeting of Kingston to William Martin Harvard, Matthew Richey and Robert Alder, November 10, 1846.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Box 30, File 209, #10, Resolutions of the Toronto Stewards and Leaders, November 23, 1846; *ibid.*, Box 30, File 209, #9, Memorial from the Hamilton Circuit, December 7, 1846; *ibid.*, Box 31, File 224, #31, Official Members of the London Circuit to the Chairman and Ministers of the Western Canada in special District Meeting assembled, February 6, 1847.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., Box 31, File 224, #34, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, February 17, 1847.

¹⁸¹ UCA, John Douse papers, Box 1, File 4, J.W. VanNormer to John Douse, July 9, 1848.

¹⁸² J.G.A. Pocock, "Commentary," in Prosser Gifford, ed., *The Treaty of Paris (1783) in a Changing States System* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 205.

WMMS.¹⁸³ Faced with irate memorials from Toronto, Bytown and Kingston, he attempted to calm their anger, but looked to Robert Alder's coming for a definitive settlement of the issues at hand.¹⁸⁴ As early as September 1846, the WMMS had determined to send Alder to Upper Canada to meet with its agents "for the purpose of effectually carrying out the object contemplated" in the new Articles of Union.¹⁸⁵ Once in the province, Alder told the assembled missionaries that "with regard to the printing of resolutions, and exciting the people to disaffection by conversation, it is much to be deplored; they would have done better to have been praying." Having given the missionaries that tongue lashing, Alder declared that there was no going back on the union now that it had been established. In an effort to put a damper on their fears, however, he stressed that the British Conference did retain a veto power over the actions of the Canada connexion.¹⁸⁶

This had the desired effect. In the end, the missionaries passed a resolution stating that, having spoken to Alder and attended "the interesting deliberations of the Canada Conference on the momentous subject," they were "constrained" to recognize in the reunion "the special guidance of Providence and Spirit of God...". They also noted that, since the union with the Canadian Methodists "will not separate us from our esteemed and endeared brethren of the British Conference," they trusted that their

¹⁸³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 29, File 210, #9, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, April 28, 1846. Emphasis in original.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., Box 29, File 210, #19, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, November 25, 1846; *ibid.*, Box 29, File 210, #20, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, December 12, 1846.

¹⁸⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 14, 1846.

¹⁸⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 31, File 224, #[?], Summary of the discussions between Robert Alder and the members of the Canada West District, May 26, 1847.

attachment to British and Wesleyan ways would “increase rather than diminish by these arrangements.”¹⁸⁷ The Britishness and Wesleyanism of the missionaries in Upper Canada had been successfully directed into safer channels. The operation was not as successful with the laity. In 1861 a visiting British Wesleyan minister, William Boyce, found that many of the English immigrants in Upper Canada still bore no love for the Canadian Methodists “except so far as they abide by English usage.” These laymen and women were afraid of what they perceived as a growing American influence within Canadian Methodism. Despite the fact that some of the missionaries shared these concerns – noting that the few sermons they had heard “from Yankee Methodist Preachers were very unsound as to Doctrine” – Boyce’s fear that the English laity might one day leave the Canada connexion entirely never materialized.¹⁸⁸ After 1846 the missionaries were no longer willing to follow any lay secessionists into the spiritual wilderness. They had found a comfortable home within the reconstituted union.

There still remained the problem of dealing with the British Wesleyan community in Lower Canada. By 1852 the WMMS was well advanced in a plan to unite the missionary district in that province with the Canada connexion.¹⁸⁹ The British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, Enoch Wood, was afraid, however, that “the old leaven will be a formidable barrier against the tendencies of the brethren [in Lower Canada] moving in the right direction, notwithstanding the practical evidence of the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., Box 31, File 224, #6, William Martin Harvard and William Scott to the President and Members of the Wesleyan Conference, England, June 17, 1847.

¹⁸⁸ National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), William Billington Boyce papers, Journal, August 6, 1861, 318. Joseph Stinson also feared the prospect of lay secession among the English immigrant population.

¹⁸⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, John Beecham to Enoch Wood, April 7, 1853.

good of the Union in all Canada West.”¹⁹⁰ Wood’s fears were justified. William Squire, one of the leading missionaries in Lower Canada, stated that his District would be more willing to contemplate union with the Canadian Methodists “were the whole work in this country purely British.” Since Methodism was most certainly not “purely British” in Upper Canada, “it will be difficult to assimilate the work, and bring it to a necessary unity.”¹⁹¹ Within a year, however, Wood was able to convince the majority of the missionaries to consent provisionally to the new arrangement, despite the efforts of some of them to stave off all consideration of the plan.¹⁹² It helped that the WMMS had previously chastised the missionaries for daring to assume that they were “especially set for the defence of Methodism in British America, and possess such an independence of action as cannot in the nature of things belong to any District...”¹⁹³

For their part, the Canadian Methodists strove to put the missionaries’ worries about the British nature of their connexion at ease. They stressed that the entire discipline of their church would be extended to Lower Canada, “including the articles of union between the British and Canada Conference.”¹⁹⁴ In other words, like their counterparts in Upper Canada, these missionaries would not be entirely cut adrift from British Wesleyanism; instead, they would become part of an even larger British and Wesleyan family. When the final version of the plan was accepted by the missionaries in May 1854, it emphasized, once again, that they would be governed under the complete

¹⁹⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 26, File 267, #13, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, May 14, 1852.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Box 36, File 260, #13, William Squire to George Osborn, June 18, 1852.

¹⁹² Ibid., Box 37, File 268, #2, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, May 21, 1853.

¹⁹³ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, John Beecham, Elijah Hoole, George Osborn and William Arthur to the Missionaries in the Eastern Canada District, March 30, 1853.

¹⁹⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 37, File 268, #[?], Resolutions adopted by the Wesleyan Conference in Hamilton City, Canada West, June 6, 1853.

Articles of Union.¹⁹⁵ A militant British and Wesleyan identity among the missionaries in the Canadas was dead: killed by a kinder, gentler version embraced by both their leaders overseas and the Canadian Methodists.

The interaction of the British Wesleyan Conference, the British missionaries and lay supporters in the Canadas, and the Canadian Methodists between 1827 and 1854 demonstrates the complexity of British and Wesleyan identity in the north Atlantic world. At the beginning of the period, differing Buntingite and Canadian Methodist visions of Britishness and Wesleyanism became a source of almost continuous conflict between the two connexions. When the first union between those churches collapsed in 1840, the British missionaries' fear of abandonment by the home connexion helped strengthen their perception of themselves as the guardians of a pure British and Wesleyan identity in the Canadas. That self-image was turned on the Canada Conference as the Buntingites strove to protect their own vision of British Wesleyanism from what they regarded as the insidious tactics of Canadian Methodism. In response, the Canada connexion was forced to stake its own claim to an unsullied British and Wesleyan identity. By the mid-1840s, then, there were several conceptions of Britishness and Wesleyanism in play across the north Atlantic, clashing with and reinforcing one another. Cultural and structural change among both the British Wesleyans and Canadian Methodists beginning in the early 1840s ended this situation. The impact of the Oxford Movement and the Disruption of the Church of Scotland on British Wesleyanism effectively undermined the Buntingite vision of an identity based on Wesleyan Tory

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., Box 38, File 281, #21, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, May 22, 1854.

principles. Among the Canadian Methodists, the creation of a plural establishment in the Canadas, the Tractarian issue and the leadership of John Ryerson convinced the majority of the ministry that the future of the connexion lay within a wider British Wesleyan connexional structure. By 1847 the two groups had achieved reunion based, in large part, on a shared concept of British and Wesleyan identity that gave the home connexion a position of leadership and that acknowledged and even encouraged the aspirations of the Canadian Methodists. Over the next seven years, the leading elements in the newly-united Conferences worked together to impose this new sense of self-awareness on the still recalcitrant British missionaries and laity in the colonies. By 1854 there was a cultural unity among the Methodists in the Canadas that would have been almost inconceivable twenty-one years earlier. In the end, however, it was a thoroughly British Wesleyan culture.

The story of conflicting British identities was not unique to Methodism in Canada. In several ways, the long story of the winning of responsible government in Upper Canada paralleled the developments outlined in this chapter. The supporters and opponents of parliamentary reform were divided along the same cultural lines as the Canadian Methodists and British Wesleyan missionaries of the mid 1840s. William Warren Baldwin and his son Robert were convinced that, by implementing executive responsibility to the Legislative Assembly, they would be transplanting a pure version of the British constitution to the colony.¹⁹⁶ They may also have believed that they were embarked on the recreation in western British North America of what their Irish

¹⁹⁶ Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 43-7.

Protestant ancestors had lost when Grattan's Parliament ceased to exist in 1801.¹⁹⁷

Opposed to this view of the future of Upper Canada was one elaborated by the province's Tory leadership. They were equally sure that they were the true Britons, preserving the stable, tripartite division of the British constitution in the colonial government.¹⁹⁸ However, like the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas, the Tories were never comfortable in their reliance on the consistency of British politicians.

They had learned that lesson early on. In 1815 and 1816 the imperial authorities in London put forward a plan to move the capital of Upper Canada from York to Kingston. This idea was vehemently opposed by Tories throughout the colony and most vociferously by John Strachan. Strachan was afraid that the Americans would read the relocation of the capital as a sign of an impending British abandonment of the colony. In opposing this plan, the future members of the Family Compact declared that the British government had an obligation to support and protect their fellow transplanted Britons. Even more importantly, from a cultural point of view, this opposition was based on the belief that transplanted Britons had a right and a duty to hold the home country to its obligations. Changes in imperial policy in London would not be permitted to upset an established British colonial culture.¹⁹⁹ That was wishful thinking. Convinced

¹⁹⁷ Graeme Patterson, 'Whiggery, Nationality, and the Upper Canadian Reform Tradition,' *Canadian Historical Review*, 56, no. 1 (March 1975), 29, 36-7; Paul Romney, *Getting it Wrong: How Canadians Forgot Their Past and Imperilled Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 53-5.

¹⁹⁸ David Mills, *The Idea of Loyalty in Upper Canada, 1784-1850* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 18-19.

¹⁹⁹ Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1963), 85; Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 137-8, 144-7.

by Baldwinite arguments from abroad and by political changes at home, the Colonial Secretary Lord Grey granted the Canadas responsible government in 1848. Like the British Wesleyan leadership during the same period, Grey was motivated, in large part, by the aim of creating the conditions necessary for the formation of a new and stronger British society on the other side of the Atlantic.²⁰⁰

By examining the shifting relationship among the Wesleyans in Britain, their missionaries and lay supporters in the colonies, and the Canadian Methodists themselves, we have seen how important it is to view church governance and cultural change within the widest possible transatlantic perspective. Only by adopting such a framework can we understand the often complex interrelationships that began to give rise to a unified culture among the Methodists of central Canada by the 1850s. A transoceanic point of view also demonstrates that, while that cultural unity, in a Canadian context alone, may seem like an example of a unique Canadian Methodist self-awareness, forged primarily by events internal to the colony and eventually free from the influence of the home country, it is best understood as the product of a series of heated debates over the meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism that divided the Methodist communities of both metropole and colony in the 1830s and 1840s. By the 1850s this was a self-image, however, that was supported by both Canadian Methodists and British Wesleyans in the home country. It had ceased to be a culture of defense and attack. How this process of cultural formation was reinforced by the complex financial interactions between British

²⁰⁰ John Manning Ward, *Colonial Self-Government: The British Experience, 1759-1856* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 211, 235-6, 240-1, 269, 287, 290.

Wesleyanism and the Methodist communities in the Canadas will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘Untiring endeavours to save souls and to raise money’:

Mission Financing and Cultural Formation, 1814-74

In February 1844 the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS) sent a letter to their chief agent in Canada, Enoch Wood. “We regret the necessity which exists of addressing you so frequently on subjects exclusively of a financial nature,” they wrote,

we should prefer to correspond with you on the spiritual interests of the Missions, on the progress of the work of God, and the signs of the times in reference to the Kingdom of Christ. But other matters which are also of importance, and in which the very existence of our Missions is intimately involved, imperatively demand our attention and yours also.¹

“[S]ubjects exclusively of a financial nature” were, indeed, never far from the minds of British Wesleyan ministers whether stationed in Britain or in Lower and Upper Canada. Money and fund raising were also constant concerns to Canadian Methodists before their final union with the British connexion in 1847 and afterwards. As the Canada Conference put it in 1870, “[w]hile financial progress, in the work of the Church, is manifestly only secondary to spiritual progress, it may be made immensely conducive to spiritual progress, and it is necessary to the maintenance of our various spiritual agencies.”² Both

¹ United Church Archives (hereafter UCA), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (hereafter WMMS), Outgoing Correspondence, Jabez Bunting, John Beecham, Robert Alder and Elijah Hoole to Enoch Wood, February 29, 1844.

² *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada*, (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1870), 103.

the British Wesleyans and Canadian Methodists were attuned to the critical role that money played in shaping the life of a church. The same can be said of historians of Methodism in Canada, but only up to a point.

Scholars from the 1960s onward have acknowledged the importance of the interface between missionary financing and cultural formation among the Methodists in British North America. Goldwin French and Neil Semple, for instance, demonstrate that the British Wesleyan missions in the Maritimes were constantly dependent on the WMMS for funding: a situation which contributed, in French's view, to the missionaries' slowness in developing "a genuinely independent attitude of mind that would have led them to throw off the [Missionary] Society's authority." Semple agrees, stating that the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Maritimes remained "Britons abroad, uninvolved and unintegrated into the national aspirations of their adopted communities."³ French and Semple give less attention, however, to how this financial-cultural interaction played out among the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada. Instead, they concentrate on the long-running and extremely rancorous debate over the Clergy Reserves, which were the crown lands set aside by the imperial government in 1791 for the support of a Protestant clergy in Upper Canada. Both French and Semple frame their analysis of this episode largely in terms of a contest between voluntarist Canadian Methodists who believed that every church should pay its own way and British Wesleyans, both at home and in the colonies, who were bent on gaining a share in that potentially lucrative source of funding.

³ Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), 88; Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 36, 103, 107.

Semple does not discuss the possible cultural implications of this debate. French, on the other hand, states that the Canadian Methodists eventually abandoned their more extreme voluntarist position and agreed to take a slice of the reserve pie in the 1840s and 1850s. He quite rightly presents this transformation as evidence of a shift towards a recognizably British Wesleyan position in this specific area of Canadian Methodist life.⁴ But, beyond the issue of the Clergy Reserves, French hardly touches on the idea that the meeting of God and mammon might have produced some interesting cultural transformations among the various Methodist groups in the Canadas.

J.I. Little suggests a more nuanced approach to the relationship between money and cultural change in his study of British Wesleyan missionary efforts in the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada between 1792 and 1852. While making an impressive effort to map the ins and outs of the WMMS's fiscal policies at the transatlantic level, he demonstrates how their sheer complexity could influence the interactions between the church hierarchy in Britain and the missionaries in Lower Canada, sometimes producing sharp disagreements between connexional core and periphery. Little also sheds light on the ways in which the funding disputes between the WMMS and the missionaries affected the latter's attempts to transform the largely American-born population of the Eastern Townships into loyal Britons and Wesleyans. However, he does not come to grips, in any sustained way, with how financial upheaval

⁴ French, *Parsons and Politics*, 185-9, 263, 270; Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 92-5. The most detailed discussion of the Methodist involvement with the Clergy Reserves appears in John Moir, *Church and State in Canada West: Three Studies in the Relation of Denominationalism and Nationalism, 1841-67* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 8-10, 30-1, 33-4, 39-43, 49, 54, 57, 61-2, 66.

at home and in the colonies affected the self-perception of the missionaries themselves.⁵ This is an issue that deserves to be examined in its own right, among both the British Wesleyans and Canadian Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada.

This chapter, then, concentrates on the complex and changing relationship between the financial condition of the British connexion, the fiscal policies of the WMMS and the process of cultural formation among the Methodists in the Canadas between 1814 and 1874. Over those sixty years the British Conference was buffeted by three major fiscal crises that forced it to adopt increasingly restrictive funding policies towards its overseas missions. These efforts at retrenchment and reform sharpened the edge of preexisting disputes over the meaning of Britishness and Wesleyanism first between the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas and the WMMS and later between the Canada and British Conferences. In repeated efforts to secure stable funding, the British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters and the Canadian Methodists self-consciously identified themselves as transplanted Britons and Wesleyans, while taking up positions that were sometimes highly problematic for the connexional authorities in the home country. This continued to be the case after 1840, when the financial needs of the British Wesleyan missionaries and the Canada Conference helped smooth the way for their permanent union under the general oversight of the British Conference. Despite the WMMS's best efforts to force this new Canada Conference to be self supporting from the mid-1850s on, the financial burden that accompanied the Canada connexion's steady growth ensured that the Methodists in the Canadas continued to identify themselves as

⁵ J.I. Little, *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity, 1792-1852* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 164-73, 219-20.

the inhabitants of a greater Britain – and so deserving of British Wesleyan largesse – even after the two conferences officially went their separate ways in 1874.

Between 1815 and the early 1830s the British Conference went through the first of three financial crises that eventually helped shape the course of cultural change among the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada. Chapel building and chapel debt increased at a spectacular rate; the cost of supporting the ministry rose; deflation ate away at the connexional income.⁶

Chapel debt was a problem even during John Wesley's lifetime. The great man made repeated attempts to stop his followers from throwing up chapels wherever a new circuit was established. In 1766 chapel debt stood at £11,383 and Wesley instructed his ministers and the laity to build no new chapels unless two-thirds of the costs had already been subscribed. Four years later Wesley went a step further and banned the building or renovating of any chapels unless the interested parties could pay the entire expense up front.⁷ The British Conference condemned the "needless multiplying of preaching houses" in 1783 and banned all new chapels outright in 1789.⁸ None of these regulations made a difference. Chapel debt spiraled upwards after 1791.⁹ A leading

⁶ For a general outline of these difficulties see David Hempton, "A Tale of Preachers and Beggars: Methodism and Money in the Great Age of Transatlantic Expansion, 1780-1830," in Mark Noll, ed., *God and Mammon: Protestants, Money, and the Markets, 1790-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 125-7; W.R. Ward, "The Religion of the People and the Problem of Control, 1790-1830," in idem, *Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth Press, 1993), 275-6.

⁷ Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 227.

⁸ Richard P. Heitzenrater and W.R. Ward, eds., *The Works of John Wesley: Journal and Diaries* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988-2003), 23:286, n. 34; *ibid.*, 24:148.

⁹ Watts, *Dissenters*, 227-8.

minister in Scotland bought or began building fourteen chapels between 1813 and 1819, none of which the local congregations could afford.¹⁰ At the same time, in the wealthier circuits of the English Districts, well-off laymen constructed increasingly ornate and costly churches.¹¹ In 1818 the British Conference established a chapel fund to raise money throughout the connexion to help finance its growing obligations. Despite collecting £128,154 by 1845, the fund could not liquidate all the church's chapel debts.¹²

If local pew rents or the connexional funds could not cover a chapel's expenses, it was ministerial salaries that suffered.¹³ This was problematic since, from the 1790s onwards, the cost of the Wesleyan ministry also entered a period of steady growth. The itinerants who joined the ministry after Wesley's death shared a desire to be considered the social equals of their Anglican and Dissenting counterparts.¹⁴ They wanted comfortable lodgings, better schools for their sons and daughters and accommodations suitable to married couples.¹⁵ The great difficulty, however, was that the growth in church membership and income could not keep up with the rising expense

¹⁰ W.R. Ward, "Scottish Methodism in the Age of Jabez Bunting," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 20, Part 1 (1978), 49.

¹¹ In Liverpool, the Brunswick chapel had "an Ionic porch and semi-circular interior of acknowledged elegance...". D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 27.

¹² John Kent, "The Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," in Rupert Davies, et al., eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-88), 2:226-7; Watts, *Dissenters*, 228.

¹³ Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales, 1800-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 147-50.

¹⁴ David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1987), 71; Watts, *Dissenters*, 601-2, 609-12.

¹⁵ Hempton, "A Tale of Preachers and Beggars," 127; W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 97, 102; Julia Stewart Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 9-10.

of supporting the ministry.¹⁶ So intractable did the problem seem that, by the 1830s, ministers were praying for revivals not only to bring the redeemed into the fold, but also to increase the number of subscribers to the connexional funds. “God grant us a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit!” Jabez Bunting wrote in 1831, “Then all will be well.”¹⁷ Earlier, in 1818 and 1819, the British Conference took the extraordinary step of cutting back on recruitment to the ministry.¹⁸ This was a move in the right direction, but the connexional leadership failed to deal with the main obstacle to sound financial management: the fact that Wesleyan ministers were paid for their individual expenses rather than a fixed stipend. The increase in ministerial salaries was in lock step with the ministry’s rising social aspirations.¹⁹

The financial pressures on the Wesleyans in Britain also became greater after 1815 for reasons beyond their control. The battle of Waterloo signalled an end to a 23-year long wartime fiscal regime in Britain and the beginning of a period of painful readjustment to peacetime economic conditions.²⁰ During the war years inflationary pressures allowed the British connexion to at least hope that it could, one day, pay off the massive chapel and ministerial liabilities that it was accumulating. Savage deflation after 1815 drove down prices and put an end to the Conference’s dream of financial

¹⁶ Hempton, “A Tale of Preachers and Beggars,” 126.

¹⁷ John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter JRULM), Methodist Archives and Research Centre (hereafter MARC), Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 18.14.8, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, August 10, 1831.

¹⁸ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 103.

¹⁹ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 71; Ward, “Religion of the People,” 276.

²⁰ Norman Gash, “After Waterloo: British Society and the Legacy of the Napoleonic Wars,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5, 28 (1978), 152-7; Boyd Hilton, “The Political Arts of Lord Liverpool,” *ibid.*, 5, 38 (1988), 150-4.

stability.²¹ With members of their congregations thrown out of work, with many of the wealthy laity in England's industrial north facing the prospect of bankruptcy, Wesleyan ministers could hardly expect their collections to increase. The breakneck expansion of the British connexion before 1815 proved to be a product of exceptional wartime conditions, of almost irrational speculation, and so, in the parlance of the time, merely "shadowy and ideal."²² The majority of the English circuits were driven to insolvency by the end of 1815. In 1818 the British Conference could not afford to pay £5000 in ministerial salaries alone. A year later, the Legalised Fund, an old-age pension and survivors benefit scheme for ministers, failed to meet its obligations.²³

In response to these financial pressures, Wesleyan ministers fanned out through the countryside on 'begging tours,' pressing the laity to give more money to stave off connexional bankruptcy.²⁴ Some of the preachers were concerned, however, that the laity could only be pushed so far.²⁵ In 1816 Miles Martindale noted that there were already "not less than 155" collections each year across the connexion. "Was there such a begging system in existence before?" he asked Jabez Bunting, "Almost *every other day* we have our hands in the pockets of our people."²⁶ Viewing the financial situation of the

²¹ A.J. Hayes and D.A. Gowland, eds., *Scottish Methodism in the Early Victorian Period: The Scottish Correspondence of the Rev. Jabez Bunting, 1800-57* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 6.

²² Boyd Hilton, *Corn, Cash, Commerce: The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments, 1815-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 96-7.

²³ Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1968), 30; Hayes and Gowland, *Scottish Methodism*, 6; W.R. Ward, ed., *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-1829* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1972), 5, 6; idem, "Religion of the People," 277.

²⁴ Idem, *Religion and Society*, 98; Watts, *Dissenters*, 225, 227-8.

²⁵ Ward, "Religion of the People," 276-7.

²⁶ JRULM, MARC, Miles Martindale papers, Miles Martindale to Jabez Bunting, July 9, 1816 quoted in Hempton, "A Tale of Preachers and Beggars," 126. Emphasis in original.

British connexion in 1832, William Atherton was equally troubled. "Debt is the besetting sin of the system," he wrote,

It was the sin of Wesley, it made him miserable. It was the sin of the Wesley family. We have more institutions than we have property, or piety to support, & every Charity is in debt, our Sunday schools cost 3/4 more than they need. Perhaps you have not thought on these things. We must all think & feel too. It is easy to ask ourselves, how our burdens are to be borne, our demands met & our debts paid? Can our subscriptions & collections be raised? No they will scarcely keep to what they are.²⁷

Worst of all, according Jabez Bunting, Wesleyan ministers were terrible accountants. "They have need of patience and good humour," Bunting noted, "who have to do with Methodist Preachers in general, in matters of Accounts. Many of our Brethren are not men of business, & do not feel inclined to be taught the art of strict & stern regularity."²⁸

The solution to these financial problems seemed simple enough: retrenchment combined with a centralized, ministerial bureaucracy based in London.²⁹ Overseas missions were included in this drive for efficiency and savings. As we have seen, the founder of the Methodist missionary movement, Thomas Coke, was an extremely poor book keeper. When he died in 1814 the finances of the British Wesleyan missions were in a chaotic state.³⁰ Between 1815 and 1819 the Wesleyan missionaries in Upper and Lower Canada and elsewhere drew money from the home funds to pay for

²⁷ JRULM, MARC, William Atherton papers, MAM PLP 3.14.25, William Atherton to Thomas Slugg, February 27, 1832.

²⁸ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 18.9.1, Jabez Bunting to Jonathan Edmondson, February 10, 1820.

²⁹ Hempton, "A Tale of Preachers and Beggars," 131-2; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 97-104.

³⁰ See 45 above.

everything from chapel construction, to winter clothing, to general circuit expenses.³¹ This method of funding became an open-ended liability for the home connexion. The more missionaries the British Conference agreed to send into the field, the more of a drain the missions became on the Wesleyan treasury. In 1819, the newly-constituted WMMS came out with a set of rules that fixed some missionary salaries, established new regulations for drawing on the home connexion for money and promised to provide all things necessary for health and comfort “but without profusion!”³² Four years later, the Missionary Secretaries sent out a circular complaining about runaway expenditure on the mission stations. From that point on only the senior minister, or Chairman, of each missionary District would be allowed to draw on the WMMS for funds.³³ This was one in a long line of regulations aimed at imposing uniformity on the mission field and at making it into a fiscally viable prospect.³⁴

Several missions around the world, however, continually defied financial control from London;³⁵ the circuits in Upper and Lower Canada were particularly troublesome in this respect. The Missionary Secretaries wrote to their ministers in the

³¹ UCA, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Correspondence (hereafter WMMS-C), Box 2, File 23, #20, Richard Williams to James Buckley, May 20, 1816; *ibid.*, Box 2, File 23, #27, John Hick and Henry Pope to James Wood, November 6, 1816; *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #26, Thomas Catterick to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, September 24, 1819.

³² UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, March 31, 1819.

³³ School of Oriental and African Studies (hereafter SOAS), Methodist Missionary Society Archives (hereafter MMSA), WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1986, August 10, 1823.

³⁴ See, for example, the regulations around chapel building on missionary stations: UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, April 12, 1820.

³⁵ Jamaica provides one example. See JRULM, MARC, Joseph Taylor papers, MAM PLP 105.6.10, Joseph Taylor to John Shipman, June 5, 1819; *ibid.*, MAM PLP 105.6.11, Joseph Taylor to John Shipman, October 19, 1819; JRULM, MARC, Richard Watson papers, MAM PLP 111.7.32, Richard Watson to John Shipman, 1820 [?].

Canadas twice in 1819 to explain the WMMS's new accounting practices and to stress the importance of following directives sent out from London.³⁶ In 1820 the Missionary Secretaries chastised the missionaries for spending far too much on board; they had it on the best authority that food was far less expensive in the Canadas than in Britain. The WMMS also took more drastic measures to bring the expenditure of the Canada District into line with official policies. It decided that the missionaries should abandon any circuit costing more than £60 per annum.³⁷ The missionaries in the Canadas ignored this order and the financial state of the District did not improve.³⁸ In 1825 the Missionary Secretaries noted with exasperation that “[w]e are sorry to say that the Canada accounts have all along been the most confused and unintelligible of any we have had to do with.”³⁹ The stations in Upper and Lower Canada had to be brought under more stringent control.

In 1825 the WMMS adopted the policy of the ‘Maximum’ to deal with what it considered to be the financial recklessness of its agents overseas. The Canada District, like the other Wesleyan missions, would be granted “an allowance for the whole expense of the District.” This grant would be “made annually the amount of which the District shall on no account exceed.” The task of apportioning the grant to “the several Circuits according to their respective circumstances” was left to the missionaries in the colonies.⁴⁰ This process, the WMMS explained, was used by the British Conference to

³⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Joseph Taylor to John Hick, April 2, 1819; *ibid.*, Joseph Taylor to Richard Pope, September 3, 1819.

³⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 20, 1820.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Reel 1, June 20, 1821. See also UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, February 12, 1821; *ibid.*, Reel 3, February 4, 1822.

³⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, James Mason to the Chairman of the Canada District, October 20, 1825.

⁴⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, October 19, 1825. See also *ibid.*, Reel 1, January 4, 1832

regulate its expenses at home; it would be eminently useful to regulate expenses abroad. It would allow the WMMS to secure to each mission “a just proportion of the Funds of the Society, according to circumstances of which no individual District can form a proper judgment, but which can be duly estimated by the Committee.”⁴¹ In other words, the Maximum allowed a degree of centralized control over spending that the old system of Thomas Coke made impossible. The Maximum was also designed, in part, to “induce the members of the several societies to exert themselves more effectually towards the support of the Ministry of the Gospel among them.”⁴² There would be no free rides among the Wesleyan Methodists.⁴³ The WMMS expected the laity in the Canadas to contribute regularly to the upkeep of their own missionaries and to the cost of constructing any chapels; they were also supposed to rent pews in those chapels and to give generously to the home connexion’s general mission fund. If the the laymen and women of Lower or Upper Canada wanted more ministers to supply their circuits, they would have to demonstrate a sustained willingness and ability to raise money over and above the annual grant provided by the WMMS.⁴⁴ To the Wesleyan leadership in Britain, the Maximum seemed to be an efficient and fair policy.

⁴¹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Special Series, Finance, Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee, Fiche #3, October 24, 1827.

⁴² Ibid., Fiche #4, December 2, 1829.

⁴³ Cf. Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 48. Semple argues that the Wesleyan missionaries were more attractive to some pro-British elements in the Canadas because, unlike American ministers, they received a fixed salary from abroad. After 1825 this was less of a factor in the British Wesleyans’ favour.

⁴⁴ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Special Series, Finance, Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee, Fiche #3, October 24, 1827. See also Little, *Borderland Religion*, 164-5 and, on chapel building in particular, UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, July 18, 1815.

A second period of acute financial embarrassment for the British Conference in the 1840s left the WMMS even more determined to implement and enforce the Maximum. The British economy went through a severe depression between 1840 and 1848;⁴⁵ the collections for all the Wesleyan connexional agencies, including the WMMS, suffered as a result. The Missionary Secretary John Beecham noted in 1842 that, while he was generally confident about the Mission House's ability to pay off its debts, "we must go sternly forward on the Total Abstinence principle as to new liabilities, for a considerable time longer."⁴⁶ Such restrained optimism vanished by the end of 1843. In December the Missionary Secretaries issued a circular to all the missionaries in the field. "We are just now painfully anxious," they admitted,

We are *distressed*. We are *alarmed*. We see reason to apprehend, as matters now stand, and unless the most vigorous and determined measures are instantly adopted, *a Deficiency of Income, to meet the Expenditure of the Year, of TEN or TWELVE THOUSAND POUNDS.*

The missionaries would have to do their utmost to make their Districts pay their own way. "Let us," the circular read, "pay as we proceed, and thus redeem our connexional pledges."⁴⁷ In 1844 the Missionary Secretary Robert Alder wrote to the Chairman of the Upper Canada District, created by the WMMS after the collapse of the union between

⁴⁵ Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783-1870*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 2001), 198, 326, 332. For an overview of this period from an ecclesiastical point of view see W.R. Ward, "Church and Society in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in Rupert Davies, et al., eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-88), 2:45-6.

⁴⁶ John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, January 13, 1842 in W.R. Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism: The Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1830-1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 270.

⁴⁷ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1994, December 22, 1843. Emphasis in original.

the British and Canada Conferences in 1840. He stressed the need for further “measures of retrenchment” and suggested that the Maximum was going to be reduced from £2100 to £1500 per annum. Any idea of extending the missions in Upper Canada with the aid of the home funds would have to be abandoned.⁴⁸ In 1841 the Missionary Secretaries issued a new series of regulations in an effort to increase the effectiveness of the Maximum and, in 1844, they made yet another attempt to curtail overseas expenditures.⁴⁹ The metropole was tightening its financial and administrative grip on the connexional periphery.

Ironically, however, by imposing the Maximum on the British Wesleyans in Lower and Upper Canada, the WMMS actually accelerated a process of cultural differentiation already underway among its missionaries. From the beginning, the latter were not thrilled with the WMMS’s bid for central control. At their District Meeting in 1826, the missionaries argued that the Maximum was insufficient to cover the costs of the work in the Canadas. If the WMMS upheld this new policy, it would stunt the growth of the missions in the colonies and so defeat the purpose of the entire enterprise.⁵⁰ Displaying an acute level of exasperation, a year later the missionaries wrote that they strongly objected to the principle of the Maximum and “we trust we shall not have it again pressed upon us.” Then they returned to their other line of argument: such financial stringency, even the threat of it, “discouraged” them in their work. In 1828, the

⁴⁸ UCA, Matthew Richey papers, Box 1, File 2, Robert Alder to Matthew Richey, February 3, 1844.

⁴⁹ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1994, May 1841; UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Jabez Bunting, John Beecham, Robert Alder and Elijah Hoole to Enoch Wood, February 29, 1844.

⁵⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 19, 1826. See also UCA, WMMS-C, Box 10, File 64, #13, James Booth to George Morley, October 9, 1826.

missionaries gave in a little and cut their individual allowance for board to a District total of £52 per annum. “Having done this much to meet the views of the Committee,” they wrote, “we have now reduced our income to the lowest sum possible in justice to ourselves, our families and the Church of God.” Despite this concession, the missionaries clung to the open-ended and all-inclusive financial system of Thomas Coke, arguing that they would be fools to give up “a certainty for an uncertainty.”⁵¹

A year later the missionaries were “resolved to be as economical as possible,” but were still against submitting to the Maximum. In 1830 they stated that the Maximum would “be by us ever resisted.”⁵² The Chairman of the WMMS’s Canada District, James Knowlan, wrote that the prospects of the mission under the Maximum were “sickening.”⁵³ He went a step further in March 1831, pressing official charges against the Missionary Secretaries for advising the WMMS to adopt and “to carry into effect, arbitrary principles, and measures in the payment of the Missionaries...new in themselves...and liable to great abuse, and which have been abused.” The Maximum would never have been taken up, he wrote, “were it not for the evil counsels, and assistance of the persons complained of in these charges.” The Missionary Secretaries were forcing their agents in the Canadas to choose between “absolute submission & prompt resistance,” Knowlan argued, while defying the Maximum themselves and collecting the most exorbitant salaries.⁵⁴

⁵¹ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 18, 1827; *ibid.*, Reel 3, May 15, 1828.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Reel 3, May 15, 1829; *ibid.*, Reel 3, May 13, 1830.

⁵³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 14, File 88, #19, James Knowlan to George Morley, January 7, 1830.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Box 15, File 94, #3, James Knowlan to Richard Watson, March 10, 1831.

In an effort both to justify their resistance to the connexional authorities at home and to shame the Missionary Secretaries into abandoning their new financial policies, the missionaries also began to stress their own dependence on the funds of the WMMS and the WMMS's obligation to support the mission work in the Canadas. Until Lower and Upper Canada attained "a greater degree of maturity," the missionaries argued in 1826, they would have to rely on money from Britain in order "to live, and to appear with becoming decency before the public."⁵⁵ There was more than a little truth behind that claim. Most settlers in the colonies were unable to give as much as they otherwise might wish to the mission cause; in a cash-poor agricultural society, the missionaries often had to accept payment in kind -- cords of wood, for example, rather than a direct contribution to the mission coffers.⁵⁶ There were other problems as well. In 1828 Richard Pope explained the dependence of the Quebec City society on the home funds by pointing out that several liberal donors had left the city, a few others had fallen into financial straits, three of four "respectable" ship captains had not visited the port that year, and Anglican ministers were starting to compete for the limited funds available.⁵⁷ According to the missionaries, competition from other denominations was an increasing problem.⁵⁸ They tried to excuse the deficiency in the accounts of the Stanstead circuit, despite an increase in membership, by stating that "at first people of different denominations supported our missions, but now we are chiefly if not altogether supported by those who are in connexion with us, or who are particularly favourable to

⁵⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada) Reel 3, May 19, 1826.

⁵⁶ Little, *Borderland Religion*, 164-5.

⁵⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 12, File 76, #2, Richard Pope to George Morley, January 9, 1828.

⁵⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 10, File 64, #5, Robert Alder to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, June 13, 1826.

our mission.” There was only so much money to go around. From the missionary point of view, these financial difficulties tied the WMMS inexorably to its agents in the Canadas. As the District Meeting put it in 1830: “We need not say that as we are bound to the Conference and the Committee so the Conference and Committee are also bound to us especially as to supply of our necessary wants.”⁵⁹

The British Wesleyan missionaries responded to the WMMS’s second round of retrenchment and reform in the 1840s with the same language of dependence and obligation. In 1841 the ministers in Lower Canada stated that their annual grant had “never yet been adjusted to the real demands of the District, but merely suggested.” They requested that “the maximum may not be fixed until by a trial of a few years it may be more easy to come to a fair average.” The implication, of course, was that, up to that point, the Maximum had not been fair at all. This was a problem since “with respect to meeting a District deficiency in the District itself...we have not as yet the resources to which we are accustomed to look in the Parent country.”⁶⁰ The next year the missionaries in Lower Canada denied that they had any objections to “the principle of an Annual Grant fixing the maximum for the year although our words will probably bear that construction.” At the same time, however, they demanded a variation in the Maximum from year to year to “meet our necessary wants and to relieve us from the embarrassing fear of debt and insolvency which must act ruinously upon the interests of religion in our District.”⁶¹ In 1844 the Chairman for Lower Canada, William Martin Harvard, insisted

⁵⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 15, 1828; *ibid.*, Reel 3, May 13, 1830.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Reel 3, May 20, 1841. See also UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 169, #22, Thomas Fawcett to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, July 14, 1841.

⁶¹ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 19, 1842.

on the “really Missionary character of our District whose labours...are chiefly among a people who are struggling with the difficulties of settling in a new country with but inadequate means of purchasing and improving their land.”⁶² The WMMS was guilty of overlooking the missionaries’ “untiring endeavours *to save souls and to raise money*” amidst impoverished congregations and stiff competition from the well-funded missions of other Protestant churches.⁶³

Culturally, these notions of dependence and obligation fed into the self-perception as transplanted Britons and Wesleyans – certainly equal and perhaps superior to the ministers at home – that had first taken shape among the missionaries in the early 1820s when the British Conference decided to give up its circuits in Upper Canada. Despite any bureaucratic changes that the home connexion decided to implement, the missionaries insisted that they were and would remain British ministers serving a British population with “very strong claims upon the liberality of the British nation.” The WMMS, in contrast, was in danger of losing sight of the patriotic zeal that, from the missionary point of view at least, motivated the fund-raising laity of the mother country. “Whether our own destitute poor are not to be first supplied in preference to foreigners or even the heathen is a question which we think would soon be decided by a British public,” the missionaries declared in 1830.⁶⁴

The Chairman of the Canada District, James Knowlan, drove this point

⁶² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 194, #14, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, February 13, 1844.

⁶³ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 23, 1844.

Emphasis in original. See also *ibid.*, Reel 3, May 19, 1842; *ibid.*, Reel 3, May 23, 1844.

⁶⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 19, 1826; *ibid.*, Reel 3, May 13, 1830.

home in his own communications with the Missionary Secretaries. How, he asked, would the supporters of the WMMS in Britain feel if they knew that a plan was in the works to “leave a people to many of whom they are connected by the tenderest of ties [to] linger out their days labouring...under severe temporal privation...”. Knowlan had no doubt about the laity’s response. “Let the question be proposed on every Missionary platform throughout the United Kingdom,” he urged, “let the claim of the perishing heathen be placed before them on the one hand and the wants of a British colony on the other” and the people would always see right done by the latter.⁶⁵ If the home connexion turned its back on the British settlers of Lower and Upper Canada, the laity in Britain would not: from the missionary point of view, the transatlantic bond between Britons at home and abroad remained strong, despite the WMMS’s attempt to divide them in the name of fiscal restraint.

Just as they had in the early 1820s, the missionaries also demonstrated a willingness to attack the policies of their leaders in Britain by defending their “just rights” as Wesleyans – rights which, by implication, they accused the WMMS and the British Conference of abrogating. The Maximum, the missionaries declared in 1829, is “an absolute departure from the pledge given by the Committee, and guaranteed by the Conference, when we engaged as Missionaries, ‘that our wants should be supplied.’” Their opposition to the WMMS, they added, was “not dictated by a spirit of defiance;” they were simply Wesleyan ministers who knew what was owed to them.⁶⁶ It was not their concern, the missionaries stated in 1830, if other Districts accepted the Maximum:

⁶⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 14, File 88, #17: James Knowlan to George Morley, May 20, 1830.

⁶⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 15, 1829

“they are no rule to us, they have done in confidence what they may repent of at leisure.” In fact, they argued, no sane people would ever place themselves “at the sole will and pleasure of any other man or body of men[;] and perhaps the alarm exerted by the measures of the Committee towards this District was of advantage to us by putting us on our guard.” They were being treated like “Servants,” rather than “Brethren and agents.” They did not want to be independent of the connexional authorities at home, but they did want to be dealt with on the basis of perfect equality. “[I]t is too much,” the missionaries wrote, “to expect that we should give ourselves wholly into your hands and the hands of your unknown successors and abandon every right we now possess.”⁶⁷

The missionaries’ attempt to derail the Maximum by defining their own Wesleyanism against the apparent backsliding of the connexional authorities at home reached fever pitch in 1831. They embarked on an attack on the Missionary Secretaries. “We merely add,” the missionaries resolved in their District minutes, “that if the Secretaries have not power to manage the Missions it is because they lose sight of those principles of good government by which our Missions were conducted for many peaceful and happy years.” In such circumstances, the missionaries knew what their responsibility as Wesleyans entailed: they had to do all that they could to recall the WMMS “to a principle settled by their predecessors and acted upon for many years...”. They pledged to “do our utmost to effect it, believing it to be our duty to ourselves, to our Bro[ther] Missionaries, to the Committee and to the Conference.” The missionaries, in other words, would bring the home connexion back to the funding system of Thomas

⁶⁷ Ibid., Reel 3, May 13, 1830.

Coke and so save the missions.⁶⁸ James Knowlan offered to come to Britain to act as an emissary from the missionaries in the Canadas and to put things right. He and his fellow ministers were “anxious to establish a perfect good understanding between the Committee & Missionaries without which permanent peace and prosperity cannot be expected.”⁶⁹ That the missionaries thought that the WMMS would even think of endorsing such a plan – the connexional margins correcting the errors of the centre – demonstrates how far they had moved along the road to seeing themselves as better Wesleyans than the British Wesleyan authorities in the Old Country.

This was an argument that the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas could not hope to win. The WMMS meant to impose its financial policy on the overseas districts and would brook no opposition. It threatened to subject the missionaries in the Canadas to the discipline of the British Conference unless they accepted and adopted the Maximum. The WMMS and not the missionaries was to be the final judge of how much of the home funds would be spent in the Canadas.⁷⁰ In January 1832, the Missionary Secretaries called for the Canada District to submit to the Maximum and recalled James Knowlan to Britain to account for his rebellious behaviour. The WMMS also dispatched Robert Alder to the Canadas to “carry into effect” their new financial policy.⁷¹ Faced with the ire of the connexional authorities in London and the

⁶⁸ Ibid., Reel 3, May 20, 1831.

⁶⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 15, File 94, #15, James Knowlan to the General Secretaries of the WMMS [?], November 5, 1831.

⁷⁰ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Special Series, Finance, Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee, Fiche #5, December 8, 1830.

⁷¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, January 4, 1832; *ibid.*, Reel 1, February 15, 1832. In recalling Knowlan, the WMMS was responding to his letter of March 1831 accusing the Missionary Secretaries of hypocrisy.

presence of Alder with his “clear and forceful manner,” the missionaries felt compelled to back down.⁷² Alder was pleased with this outcome: “the *Canadian District is at peace with the Committee* by their acceptance of your plan,” he wrote to the Missionary Secretaries once he had returned to Britain, “and...the affair, as far as the *Brethren there are concerned, is settled*. Their Minutes show that.”⁷³ So did the minutes of the British Conference, which, for 1833, related the story of Alder’s triumph over the recalcitrant missionaries in the Canadas and the vanquishing of James Knowlan.⁷⁴

If, however, the British Wesleyan leadership expected perfect peace to ensue, they were being too sanguine by half. In response to the WMMS’s next round of cutbacks in the 1840s, the missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada once again turned their self image as ministers serving a transplanted British and Wesleyan population against the home connexion. In 1840 the Lower Canada District pointed emphatically to the needs of those “emigrants from the land of our Fathers” whose “spiritual destitution” screamed out for help. The WMMS had to increase the Maximum in order to provide more ministers for these back-country settlers.⁷⁵ A year later, in Upper Canada, the missionary Thomas Fawcett asked whether the “people here” who had left “their Father land shall not have the ministers of their choice and that too at a time while they are destitute of the means of supporting them. I think I almost hear the good people of England...answer *Yes!*”⁷⁶ The missionaries in Lower Canada hinted

⁷² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 16, File 100, #10, John Hick to John James, June 6, 1832.

⁷³ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #177, Robert Alder to an unknown correspondent, July 15, 1833. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁴ JRULM, MARC, Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1833, 12.

⁷⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 21, 1840.

⁷⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 169, #22, Thomas Fawcett to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, July 14, 1841. Emphasis in original.

heavily in 1842 that the WMMS was abandoning its duty to a British and Wesleyan community through “the line of limitation which the Committee have deemed it right to present to *our Canadian work* for the salvation of souls!” Other churches were stealing away what should have been British Wesleyan laymen and women.⁷⁷

At the same time, the members of the Upper Canada District argued that any increase in their expenses should not be viewed as a problem, but as part of “the pains and expense now necessary to lay the foundation of a pure Wesleyan Church in this *Empire Province of Her Majesty’s N[orth] A[merican] Possessions.*” The “continuous immigration to these shores of hundreds and thousands who had been fed in your own spiritual pastures” called out to be consistently sustained by the home funds.⁷⁸ Pristine Britishness and Wesleyanism were being protected by these missionaries. The WMMS, by undercutting them financially, was threatening the loyal and pious community that was taking shape in the wilderness of Lower and Upper Canada.

The reaction of the British Wesleyan laity in the Canadas to the home connexion’s repeated financial crises further complicated the relationship between the WMMS and the colonial Districts. Like their missionaries, the British Wesleyan laymen and women in Lower and Upper Canada wanted to be regarded as Britons and Wesleyans with a strong claim on the home funds. At the same time, however, they wanted to keep their own money for themselves. This mindset fully revealed itself for the first time in 1839 in connection with the Centenary Fund. The British Conference established this

⁷⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 19, 1842. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 26, File 177, #19, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, May 19, 1842. Emphasis in original.

fund to celebrate John Wesley's formation of the United Methodist Societies in 1739 and to bring much needed financial stability to the connexion.⁷⁹ Wesleyan Methodist ministers collected it over several years in every part of the world where solvent congregations existed; by 1844 they had raised approximately £220,000.⁸⁰ The British Wesleyan laity in the Canadas played a reluctant role in bringing about this success. Visiting Montreal in the autumn of 1839, Robert Alder found that "our Friends" were unwilling to give any money to the Centenary Fund unless they were assured that it would be applied to their own financial wants. "I was told again & again," Alder wrote to Jabez Bunting, "that unless this point were conceded to them nothing would be done." Alder did manage to convince the societies in Montreal to give something to the fund by arguing that "while all the Centenary objects have a Connexional character stamped upon them, that they are for that very reason, invested with a Local Character to every Methodist in every part of the World."⁸¹ Once Alder was gone, however, the more prominent laymen of Montreal returned to their insular views of the Centenary Fund. It proved "extremely difficult" to induce the societies "to look away from their own embarrassed affairs to those great connexional objects contemplated in the raising of the Centenary fund."⁸² In October 1840 the leading laymen in Montreal and Quebec City determined to suspend their contributions until they heard what portion of the fund had

⁷⁹ Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, xi, 208, n. 2.

⁸⁰ Kent, "Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," 2:227, n. 26.

⁸¹ JRULM, MARC, Robert Alder papers, MAM PLP 1.36.8, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, September 9, 1839. See also UCA, John Douse papers, Box 1, File 2, Thomas Milner to John Douse, November 7, 1839; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 23, File 153, #35, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, November 21, 1839.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Box 24, File 161, #14, William Lunn, James Ferrier, R. Campbell, John Mathewson, Nicholas P. Ruryzen, and John Hilton to Robert Alder, June 25, 1840.

been allotted to their own chapels.⁸³ This was conditional support with a vengeance.

Financial stringency had an impact on British Wesleyan lay culture in the Canadas beyond the specific issue of the Centenary Fund. In some instances, in their efforts to secure access to all of the home connexion's funds, the laity used the same language of Britishness and Wesleyanism as their ministers. In June 1840 the class leaders on the Montreal circuit wrote to the Missionary Secretaries and pointed out that their congregations needed increased financial aid. Any relief that the WMMS could provide would be of great help to the cause of God in the province; a province which, they insisted, would "probably [be] the future home of many millions of descendants of the British Isles."⁸⁴ The laity also shared their missionaries' sense of the mutual obligation between the WMMS and the mission in the Canadas. In this instance, however, that point of view was calculated to harm the missionaries more than the connexional funds in Britain. The missionaries could not rely on their "respected lay Friends" in the Canadian cities to make up any District deficiencies. The laity saw that as the responsibility of the WMMS.⁸⁵ Indeed, by 1844 many laymen and women were "extremely sensitive as it respects the employment of their means beyond the limit of their own immediate borders." "We mention this," the missionaries noted, "but to indicate to the Committee the localizing tendencies of our Provincial and transatlantic position."⁸⁶ The Wesleyan laymen and women were possessed of a malleable sense of Britishness and Wesleyanism; they tended to become more British and Wesleyan when

⁸³ Ibid., Box 24, File 161, #21, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, October 5, 1840.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Box 24, File 161, #14, William Lunn, James Ferrier, R. Campbell, John Mathewson, Nicholas P. Ruryzen, and John Hilton to Robert Alder, June 25, 1840.

⁸⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 20, 1841.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Reel 3, May 23, 1844.

they wanted money from the home funds and less so when they wanted to keep their own. These settlers could not simply be identified with the church leadership at home. Laity and missionaries alike saw themselves as part of the British Wesleyan mission field, but, when it came to money, as to so much else, they had their own way of viewing that transatlantic world and their position in it.

The same basic pattern of cultural development took shape among the Canadian Methodists during the second quarter of the century: financial issues further envenoming the disputes between the Canada and British Conferences over what constituted proper Britishness and Wesleyanism. Initially, the Canadian Methodists drew on a sense of their own Britishness in an effort to tap into the potentially rich sources of funding in the home country, while still maintaining their existence as an autonomous connexion. In 1831 they decided to send two preachers – George Ryerson and the Native American convert Peter Jones – to Britain to raise money for their already hard-pressed missions, realizing, perhaps, that the WMMS usually managed to collect about fifteen times more money than any North American Methodist church each year.⁸⁷ The British Wesleyans, however, were unhappy with the idea of a rival Methodist group “interfering” with their work or “making private and personal applications for subscriptions” among their lay supporters. In response, the WMMS gave Ryerson and Jones a grant of £300, but only on the condition that they would “agree...to give their best assistance to our funds at such Meetings, as they may have opportunity of attending,

⁸⁷ Charles Dougall, “George Ryerson,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [hereafter *DCB*] (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967-), 11:796-7; Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 80; Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 123-5.

while they remain in England...”⁸⁸

One of the Missionary Secretaries, James Townley, also wrote to the President of the Canada Conference, William Case, warning that the British Wesleyans would severely “discountenance” any “future attempt” to raise “contributions from our friends” independent of the WMMS.⁸⁹ In Upper Canada, the Canadian Methodist ministers John Ryerson and Thomas Vaux replied by pointing out that their connexion had, in fact, undertaken its fund-raising expedition to Britain on the recommendation “of a number of intelligent and respectable *English* Brethren, who stated their conviction, that more Guineas would be given in England in aid of our Indian Missions, than dollars in the United States...”. They also stressed the British roots of the Canada connexion’s overall motivation. As “an Independent Connexion in a British Province, our Indian Missions established within the British Territories,” Ryerson and Vaux explained, “a preference was, of course, felt to making application to the British public.”⁹⁰ For the sake of gaining access to the relative wealth of British Wesleyanism, the Canadian Methodists were willing to situate themselves squarely within the boundaries of ‘greater’ Britain.

That continued to be the case after the Canada and British Conferences agreed to unite in 1833. From a financial standpoint, union with the British Wesleyans made perfect sense for the Canadian Methodists, plagued as they were by “the admitted and notorious fact” of their “inadequacy as a body, both in regard to men and means, to supply all the religious wants of the white settlements and Indian tribes” under their

⁸⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, May 11, 1831.

⁸⁹ Ibid. The quotation is from UCA, WMMS-C, Box 15, File 99, #4, James Townley to William Case, June 13, 1831.

⁹⁰ Ibid., Box 15, File 94, #25, John Ryerson and Thomas Vaux to James Townley, October 14, 1831.

care.⁹¹ And, as befitted their determination to incorporate the Canada connexion into a larger British Wesleyan community on the strictest of Wesleyan Tory terms, Jabez Bunting and his supporters designed the financial conditions of the union in order to subject the Canadian Methodists to the same degree of central control that the WMMS exercised over its own missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada. The Buntingites made a specific effort to “secure the funds” of the British Conference “against any claims on the part of the Canadian Preachers,” while also demanding that the WMMS should have sole authority to determine the amount of support that the Canadian Methodists received from year to year, the sum not to exceed £1000 per annum.⁹² The Articles of Union also made the Canada Conference’s missionary society auxiliary to the WMMS and required it to transfer any subscriptions raised in Upper Canada for mission purposes to the connexional authorities in London.⁹³

Almost from the moment that both Conferences ratified the Articles of Union, however, conflict arose between the British Wesleyan centre and its new periphery over the explosive issues of government grants and the division of the Clergy Reserves. The main difficulty here was that the Canadian Methodists refused to accept money from the state and, despite the conditions of the union, expected to control any money collected in Upper Canada. Bunting and his supporters were quite willing, on the

⁹¹ *The Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan-Methodist Church in Canada, from 1824 to 1845, inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1846), 67. See also Elizabeth Cooper, “Religion, Politics and Money: The Methodist Union of 1832-1833,” *Ontario History* 81, no. 2 (June 1989), 93-4.

⁹² *Minutes...from 1824 to 1845*, 59, 63-4; UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, June 10, 1833; *ibid.*, Reel 1, December 6, 1833. The WMMS also agreed to meet the expenses of any future missions to the “destitute settlers” of Upper Canada.

⁹³ *Minutes...from 1824 to 1845*, 64-5.

other hand, to accept government money and genuinely expected to control all mission funds whether they came from Upper Canada or elsewhere.⁹⁴ This divergence of opinion was especially problematic since the Buntingites had made the decision to send missionaries into Upper Canada in 1832 based, in part, on the imperial government's promise to "afford some pecuniary aid" to the WMMS.⁹⁵ Bunting summarized the nature of the impasse in April 1834. Writing to the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, Edmund Grindrod, he pointed out that the Canadian Methodists had "unhappily *committed* themselves to the Anti-Establishment and strictly voluntary principle, while we, on the contrary, are ready to avail ourselves of Government assistance...". "This," Bunting continued, "is a difference not to be reconciled unless *they* have moral courage enough to retrograde from the position they have taken up, or at least refrain from taking any part in controversy."⁹⁶ In other words, the Canadian Methodists had to become what Bunting and his supporters saw as proper Britons and Wesleyans, embracing both the established church and government aid for the Protestant religion. If they did not, the union could not last.

Faced with the prospect of what they saw as unwarranted interference in their connexional and fiscal affairs, the Canadian Methodists tried to make an end run around the Articles of Union in 1837. That year's Canada Conference passed a series of resolutions denying that it had received any benefit from the Colonial Office's grants to

⁹⁴ For an overview of this dispute see Moir, *Church and State in Canada West*, 8-9.

⁹⁵ Cooper, "Religion, Politics and Money," 101; French, *Parsons and Politics*, 150. See also UCA, WMMS-C, Box 16, File 105, #8, Elijah Hoole to John James and Robert Alder, June 7, 1832. The quotation is from *ibid.*, Box 16, File 100, #26, John Colborne to Robert Alder, July 14, 1832.

⁹⁶ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 19.2.10, Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, April 2, 1834. Emphasis in original.

the WMMS in 1833 and 1834 and renouncing any claim on the Clergy Reserves. The Buntingite approach to both those issues, the Canadian Methodists declared, had led to “vigorous and widely-extended efforts” among colonial radicals, like William Lyon Mackenzie, “to excite prejudices against our Connexion.” Unlike Bunting and his supporters, the Canada Conference remained opposed to

the establishment of one or more Churches in this Province, with exclusive rights and privileges – however well suited such an establishment may be to the condition of the Mother Country, where it is distinctly recognized by the constitution of the government, and includes a majority, and is desired by the great body, of the nation.

At the same time, however, the Canadian Methodists also stated that should “any adjustment to the Clergy Reserve Question be proposed and determined on...by which individual and collective effort can be combined for the religious and educational improvement of the country,” they would be willing to take their fair share.⁹⁷ In other words, the Canada Conference moved to block the WMMS’s access to a government grant, while also claiming full authority, independent of the Buntingites, to control any money that might come out of the Clergy Reserves fund. This tactic found support among at least some of the Canadian Methodist laity: in July 1837, the leading laymen on the Belleville circuit hailed “the Conference *resolutions* on Clergy reserves and government grants...with most cordial and *unanimous* approbation.”⁹⁸

In an effort, however, to ward off the inevitable counterattack from the British Conference and, perhaps, to appeal to the growing number of British Wesleyan

⁹⁷ *Minutes...from 1824 to 1845*, 163-8. See also Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 93.

⁹⁸ UCA, Church Album Collection, Portraits and Letters of the Presidents of the Canada Conference, Anson Green to Egerton Ryerson, July 26, 1837. Emphasis in original.

immigrants in Upper Canada, the Canadian Methodists attempted to justify and actively defend their actions on British and Wesleyan grounds. In their address to the British Conference for 1837, they assured their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic that the Canadian Methodist ministry was doing its collective best to “maintain the integrity of our system,” “to inculcate the fear of God in connexion with honour to the King, and to keep our Societies generally in the love and practice of truth, as taught by Wesleyan-Methodism.” At the same time, as freeborn Britons, they could not blindly abide by John Wesley’s strictures against “intermeddling in secular politics” while an unjust establishment was taking root in Upper Canada. Instead, the Canadian Methodists claimed that their allegiance to “His Majesty’s Government” gave them “an indisputable claim” on equal rights with the Churches of England and Scotland: if those denominations had a share in the Clergy Reserves, the Canada connexion should too.⁹⁹ In its address to William IV, the Canada Conference stressed its determination, as a body of loyal Britons, to maintain “the permanent connexion of this Colony with the Empire of Great Britain.” The Canadian Methodists felt compelled, nevertheless, to point out that the laity who made up their societies could be both “unwavering in their attachment to Your Majesty’s person and Government” and “jealous of their inalienable rights, as British subjects, to the enjoyment of equal civil and religious privileges...”. It might prove a volatile mixture. As “loyal and devoted Canadian subjects” opposed to the idea of church establishment and state endowment, the Canada Conference warned, “nothing could tend more directly to weaken the attachment of the people of this country to the parent state, than the

⁹⁹ *Minutes...from 1824 to 1846*, 166-7, 180. On British Wesleyan immigration to the Canadas in the 1830s, see 36-9 above.

continuance of this system of exclusive patronage of any one church.”¹⁰⁰ Like the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters, the Canadian Methodists were prepared to embrace their position within a wider British and Wesleyan world in an effort to undermine the policies of the imperial and connexional metropole.

This financial-cultural dispute contributed to the collapse of the union in August 1840. Jabez Bunting and his supporters were prepared to meet what they saw as a direct challenge to their authority head-on. The WMMS dispatched Robert Alder to Upper Canada in early 1839 in an attempt to force the Canada Conference back onto the Buntingite straight and narrow.¹⁰¹ He was successful to the extent that the Canadian Methodists rescinded the more obnoxious of their 1837 resolutions.¹⁰² However, this truce proved remarkably short lived, largely thanks to the actions of the new Governor-General of the Canadas, Charles Poulett Thomson. With the blessings of the Colonial Office, Thomson outlined a bill in early January 1840 that would provide for the sale of the Clergy Reserves and the distribution of the annual proceeds among all the denominations in the colony.¹⁰³

Within a week, Joseph Stinson and his fellow British Wesleyan missionary, Matthew Richey, wrote to Thomson to claim a share in the Clergy Reserves for the British Conference as represented by the WMMS.¹⁰⁴ That most opinionated of

¹⁰⁰ *Minutes...from 1824 to 1846*, 183-4.

¹⁰¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, January 30, 1839.

¹⁰² *Minutes...from 1824 to 1845*, 215-16; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 23, File 158, #7, Robert Alder to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, July 11, 1839.

¹⁰³ John Moir, *The Church in the British Era: From the British Conquest to Confederation* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1972), 123-5.

¹⁰⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 168, #21, Joseph Stinson and Matthew Richey to Governor-General Charles Poulett Thomson, January 11, 1840.

Canadian Methodist ministers, Egerton Ryerson, countered with a letter of his own, arguing that “any grants intended to benefit the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada ought undoubtedly to be placed at the disposal of the Conference of that Church.”¹⁰⁵

From the Mission House at 77 Hatton Garden, Robert Alder responded, in turn, to Ryerson’s claims, pointing out to the Colonial Secretary that, though it was unlikely that the British Conference would be able to maintain its union with the Canadian Methodists, there was no question “whatever whether we shall, or shall not prosecute our Missionary operations in Upper Canada...”. That colony was part of the British Wesleyan gospel field and the WMMS was there to stay. As such, Alder objected most vehemently to Ryerson’s “proposal” for “alienating in whole or in part from them [the WMMS] the Annual Grant and transferring it to the Upper Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Conference...”.¹⁰⁶

In April 1840 a special committee of the British Conference passed a series of resolutions rejecting Egerton Ryerson’s stand on church establishment; the largely Buntingite membership of the committee also condemned what it saw as his heinous attempt to “gain the possession, in whole or in part, of the Grant made by the Crown to the Wesleyan Missionary Society.”¹⁰⁷ In June, the Canada Conference repudiated the home connexion’s charges, resolving that “we cannot recognize any right

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., Box 24, File 168, #22, Egerton Ryerson to Governor-General Charles Poulett Thomson, January 17, 1840.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Box 24, File 167, #11, Robert Alder to Lord John Russell, April 29, 1840.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Box 24, File 167, #9, Resolutions of the Committee appointed by the British Conference of 1839 to decide finally in all matters relating to the Union existing between the British Conference and the Upper Canada Conference and to the Indian Missions in Upper Canada, April 29, 1840; JRULM, MARC, Wesleyan Methodist Church (hereafter WMC), Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1840, 163-9.

on the part” of the WMMS “to interfere with...the management of our own internal affairs (except as provided for in the Articles of Union) and especially with our views and proceedings on the Question of the Clergy Reserves...”. As good Wesleyans, the Canadian Methodists disclaimed “any wish to interfere with the legitimate claims” of the British connexion on “the faith and liberality of Her Majesty’s Government...”. As loyal British subjects, however, they were equally prepared to “submit to the proper authorities” respecting the final division of the reserves.¹⁰⁸

Egerton Ryerson reiterated these points when he and his brother William attended the British Conference of 1840. “You require that the Conference in Canada shall receive through you the Government grant, even if paid from Canadian property,” he told the assembled ministers, “This seems to us unjust, and even inconsistent. You have no business with the clergy reserves.” When Bunting declared that “[t]he money from the clergy reserves will be applied by the Mission House to Missionary purposes, for the benefit of the aborigines,” Ryerson argued that the WMMS had no right “to divert the land reserves from the purpose for which they were expressly *reserved*” – the “religious instruction and oversight” of the increasingly British settler population of Upper Canada. The British Conference’s claim to the reserves, he stated, was “a virtual dissolution of the union.” “This Conference is the parent of Canadian Methodism,” Ryerson concluded, “[b]ut the preachers in Canada are not now in their minority.”¹⁰⁹ The Buntingites could not agree; and developments over the following twenty-four years proved them right.

¹⁰⁸ UCA, Box 24, File 168, #29, Elijah Hoole to Robert Alder (Resolutions proposed by various persons at the Canada Conference of 1840), July 1840.

¹⁰⁹ Benjamin Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism during the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century, 1827-1854* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1898), 292. Emphasis in original.

The union of the British and Canada Conferences may have fallen apart in August 1840, but, between the mid-1840s and 1854, new and pressing financial difficulties helped reduce any objections to a reunion among the various Methodist communities in the Canadas. Despite the doubts of the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters in Lower Canada about the value of any connection whatsoever with the Canadian Methodists, by 1854, fiscal crisis in British North America, combined with the home connexion's continuing parsimony, made them at least somewhat more open to the idea that their future might have to be found within the Canada Conference. A commercial depression of the most crippling variety gripped the Canadas following Britain's adoption of Free Trade in 1846.¹¹⁰ The Montreal societies were particularly hard hit.¹¹¹ In August 1848, the Chairman of the Lower Canada District, John Jenkins, complained about the colony's financial state and "our perplexing chapel embarrassment."¹¹² A month later, he let the Missionary Secretaries know that the Montreal laity were labouring under a debt of £16,500 on three chapels. The leading laymen had managed to meet between £300 and £400 of that deficiency out of their own pockets, "[b]ut you are aware that this cannot go on, especially in the present embarrassed state of trade." The chief financial supporters of British Wesleyanism in Montreal had, after all, lost over £70,000 between them since 1846. The Mathewson family alone "was involved...in difficulties which it will take two or three years to surmount."¹¹³ To service its massive debt, the District needed the WMMS's help to

¹¹⁰ Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: The Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 193-6.

¹¹¹ Nathan Mair, *The People of St. James, Montreal* (Montreal: n.p., 1984), 27-31.

¹¹² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 29, File 226, #24, John Jenkins to Elijah Hoole, August 9, 1848.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, Box 29, File 226, #26, John Jenkins to Robert Alder, September 12, 1848.

borrow money in Britain at the lowest possible interest rate.

The situation only grew worse in 1849. By March there were rumours that another financial pillar of the Lower Canada District, William Lunn, was bankrupt after “engaging in flour speculations.”¹¹⁴ Near the end of April, the missionary Charles DeWolfe warned the WMMS that “[b]usiness is in the most embarrassed state and our people [in Montreal] can scarcely keep up our salaries.”¹¹⁵ When the missionaries gathered for their District Meeting in May, they lamented that “[t]he commercial depression in our Cities is alarmingly felt by our leading friends – while scores, yea hundreds...are leaving for other parts of this vast continent.” “The whole [D]istrict is more or less affected by this circumstance,” they continued, “but especially the Cities of Montreal and Quebec, and the towns of Three Rivers and St. Johns. The influence of this embarrassment in Montreal is such as to create almost a panic...”. In response, the missionaries initially resorted to those claims of dependence and obligation that had become so familiar to them during previous times of fiscal crisis. They understood, they wrote, that their fellow Wesleyans in Britain might feel sympathy for strictly ‘heathen’ countries, but “we should respectfully request you to consider if it be not more desirable to prevent a country from sinking into barbarism than even to raise a country from barbarism.” Having made that argument, the missionaries trusted that the WMMS would “place a sum at our disposal more adequate to our wants, and more accordant to our wishes.”¹¹⁶ That, however, was not going to happen.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Box 33, File 235, #2: John Jenkins to Robert Alder, March 1, 1849.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Box 33, File 235, #6: Charles De Wolfe to Robert Alder, April 20, 1849.

¹¹⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 4, May 17, 1849.

The WMMS proved very reluctant to bail the Lower Canada District out of its latest financial difficulties – with remarkable cultural effect. In June 1849 the Missionary Secretary Elijah Hoole informed John Jenkins that there was “no hope that the Com[mittee] can borrow money on the security of property in Montreal & they have no other security to offer.” He advised Jenkins to look to local efforts to raise the necessary funds.¹¹⁷ In response, the British missionaries sent their Chairman to Britain to plead their case for aid in person.¹¹⁸ Jenkins was only partially successful, convincing the Missionary Secretaries to secure a £5,000 loan for the Montreal chapels from a British firm, but without “engaging in responsibilities” on behalf of the WMMS itself.¹¹⁹ Given such grudging support in what they may very well have seen as their hour of greatest need, the laity in Lower Canada began to look to the Canadian Methodists for help. In November 1850, for example, the lay leadership in Quebec City announced that they were unable to support two married preachers; however, instead of emphasizing their identity as transplanted Britons and Wesleyans, these laymen asked the Missionary Secretaries to use their “influence” with the Canada Conference “to procure...the Rev’d. Lachlan Taylor, who is an unmarried man.”¹²⁰ Two years later, John Jenkins went even further, admitting that the Lower Canada District’s fiscal dependence on the WMMS was crippling the energies of laity and missionaries alike: the latter, especially, “probably do not feel the necessity for *financial* exertions which they otherwise would do,” he wrote.

¹¹⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Elijah Hoole to John Jenkins, June 7, 1849.

¹¹⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 33, File 235, #10, Matthew Lang and John Borland to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, July 4, 1849.

¹¹⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 19, 1849.

¹²⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 34, File 243, #17, Peter Langlois, Robert Middleton and John Campbell to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 15, 1850.

“The system in Upper Canada would be much more successfully applied here,” he continued, “than that on which we now work...I begin to be of the opinion that the sooner we are thrown upon our own efforts the better it will be for us.” From a political, geographical, ecclesiastical and spiritual point of view, Jenkins concluded, union with the Canada Conference afforded the best way forward.¹²¹

The Canada connexion’s response to its own financial difficulties would have made it easier for the missionaries and laity in Lower Canada to contemplate amalgamation during the 1850s. The Canadian Methodists themselves were drawn back into the British Wesleyan fold after the mid-1840s. From a fiscal point of view, reunion in 1847 was as mutually advantageous for the Canada and British Conferences as the first union was supposed to have been in 1833. For the Canadian Methodists, reunification offered immediate relief from a falling connexional membership that cast doubt on their ability to maintain an independent existence.¹²² While, as early as 1841, the missionary Joseph Stinson warned the WMMS that he had

little hope that the Missionary Committee will ever or *can ever* supply the country *fully*, independent of the Canada Preachers, hence I am the more anxious, *that if an arrangement can be made on safe and honourable terms* that it should be done.¹²³

¹²¹ Ibid., Box 36, File 260, #10, John Jenkins to George Osborn, march 19, 1852. Emphasis in original.

¹²² John Moir, “Notes of Discord, Strains of Harmony: The Separation and Reunion of the Canadian and British Wesleyan Methodists, 1840-1847,” *Papers of the Canadian Methodist Historical Society* 4 (1984), 11; Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 97. For a more detailed discussion of how this factor fit into the Canadian Methodists’ overall motivation in 1846-7 see 189-90 above.

¹²³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 169, #12, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, April 16, 1841. Emphasis in original.

Bunting and his supporters eventually agreed, convinced, by 1846, that a new union would have a beneficial financial impact on the WMMS's work in Upper Canada.¹²⁴ Reconciliation with the Canada connexion would, after all, allow the Mission House to lay its hands on the grant that the imperial government had first promised in 1833 and then suspended in 1840 when the union fell to pieces.¹²⁵ The Buntingites were further reassured by the fact that the 1847 Articles of Union, heartily endorsed by the Canada Conference, gave the WMMS absolute control over its own expenditure in the Canadas.¹²⁶ In other words, the missions to the Native Americans and the destitute settlers of Upper Canada would be subject to the same policy of the Maximum that, since 1826, had been in operation among the British Wesleyan missionaries in the colonies.

According to the Canada Conference's published *Minutes*, this transatlantic financial system operated very well between 1847 and 1854. Unlike the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in Lower Canada, the Canadian Methodists seemed to move quickly towards fiscal independence. In the first year of the union, the Canadian ministers hailed "the unabated zeal and liberality with which all our institutions have been supported during the past year." Their pastoral address of 1848 noted that "notwithstanding the depression of trade and commerce," the laity's contributions to the mission fund were undiminished. True, this sunny outlook was slightly dimmed by the fact that the preachers were collectively owed about £400 in salaries. The Canada

¹²⁴ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 14, 1846.

¹²⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, Robert Alder to Earl Grey, September 12, 1846.

¹²⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, September 14, 1846. See also UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 3, File 74, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, September 15, 1846.

Conference rebounded entirely by 1849, however, reporting in its official letter to the British connexion that, despite “the great depression which has pervaded all our agricultural, manufacturing and commercial interests,” the income of all of its connexional funds had increased; the collections for the mission work, in particular, had exceeded the previous year’s by somewhere between £100 and £200. Over the next twelve months, as the Lower Canada District drifted towards financial ruin, the Canada connexion’s funds seemed to sail away into the wide blue yonder. This rate of improvement, the Canada Conference informed its lay supporters, had to be maintained: “From year to year let there be an advancement. Whilst you improve in piety, improve also in liberality.” The Canadian Methodist laity responded by adding £1000 to the mission fund in 1851. By 1853 they were contributing “with an increased and noble liberality...to the divine works of missions, to the creation of an unprecedentedly large number of places of worship, to the support of the ministers, and the several connexional funds.”¹²⁷ The Canada Conference had every appearance of being a winning concern by the mid-1850s.

The more private correspondence that passed between the connexional leadership in Upper Canada and the Buntingites in Britain told a different story. Instead of progressing steadily towards financial self-sufficiency, the Canada Conference’s difficulties with the two expenses that had caused the home connexion so much fiscal grief in the early 1800s – ministerial salaries and chapel construction – translated into an increasing reliance on British Wesleyan support after 1847. The leading Canadian Methodists assumed, for instance, that the WMMS would cover the shortfall when the imperial government refused to resume its annual grant towards the connexion’s

¹²⁷ *Minutes...from 1846 to 1857*, 52, 76, 80, 107-8, 127, 177, 247.

missionary work. This was almost a necessity, the newly-appointed General Superintendent of Missions, Enoch Wood, pointed out: the allowances that the ministers in Upper Canada received were “miserably small and not to receive them when due is humiliating enough.”¹²⁸ The Canadian Methodists also proved unable or unwilling to pay the salary of their British-appointed Co-Delegate (or vice president), Matthew Richey. In 1848 Richey was forced to turn to the home connexion for a £125 loan, since, he noted bitterly, “I may as well be referred to a bank in the Moon...as to any fund connected with the Canada Conference.” He made the same point even more forcefully in another letter. “There is,” he stated emphatically, “*no resource here.*” A year later, now serving as President of the Canada connexion, Richey was still asking the WMMS for financial support.¹²⁹ Near the end of 1849, Wood tried to convince Robert Alder that “[i]f the Canadian President’s salary were secured until next June [1850], there would be little difficulty in arranging for the future.” He expected the funds at the disposal of the Mission House to do the securing.¹³⁰ Fiscal independence was not as close as the Canadian Conference’s official *Minutes* suggested.

Debts arising from the Canadian Methodists’ much vaunted construction of an “unprecedentedly large number of places of worship” also tended, over time, to manifest itself in a growing dependence on British Wesleyan largesse. In 1848 the Canadian minister Samuel D. Rice warned Jabez Bunting that the union between the two connexions would fail if funds were not forthcoming from Britain, especially to bail out

¹²⁸ Ibid., Box 32, File 233, #17, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, April 20, 1848.

¹²⁹ Ibid., Box 32, File 223, #41, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, October 7, 1848; *ibid.*, Box 32, File 223, #43, Matthew Richey to Elijah Hoole, October 7, 1848; *ibid.*, Box 33, File 242, #14, Matthew Richey to Elijah Hoole, July 5, 1849. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Box 33, File 242, #27, Enoch Wood to Robert Alder, November 23, 1849.

the indebted chapels of Toronto.¹³¹ In 1849 John Ryerson travelled to the British Conference to secure a loan for two Toronto churches: £1000 for Richmond Street and £500 for Adelaide Street.¹³² Enoch Wood approached the home connexion in 1853 to help raise a loan in Britain to support a new church in the Toronto East circuit. Wood noted that since “[m]oney is so plentiful with our English friends,” the leading Toronto laymen were “in hopes of obtaining a loan from some of the many Wesleyan capitalists, at 6 percent, payable thro[ugh] the Mission House, every half year.”¹³³ Later that year, the laity of the Toronto West circuit turned to the WMMS, asking the Missionary Secretaries to broker a loan of between £5000 and £10,000 at six percent interest.¹³⁴

After uniting with the Canada Conference in 1854, the debt-ridden chapels of Lower Canada fit naturally into what was already a well-established pattern among the Canadian Methodists. In 1856 Enoch Wood pointed out that “[t]he enormous church debt at Quebec [City] must be grappled with, or it will soon be beyond redemption.”¹³⁵ For their part, the Quebec City laymen requested “that the [Canada] Conference do grant that an Agent be appointed to visit England, and lay the whole affair before our Fathers and Brethren, confidently trusting that they will devise means for our relief.”¹³⁶ The

¹³¹ JRULM, MARC, John P. Lockwood collection, Samuel D. Rice to Jabez Bunting, July 13, 1848.

¹³² SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Home Correspondence, Fiche #403, John Ryerson to Elijah Hoole, August 11, 1849; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 33, File 242, #27, Enoch Wood to Robert Alder, November 23, 1849.

¹³³ Ibid., Box 37, File 275, #9, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, March 9, 1853.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Box 37, File 275, #21, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, August 26, 1853.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Box 40, File 291, #7, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, February 21, 1856.

¹³⁶ Ibid., Box 40, File 291, #5, Trustees’ Statement respecting the Present Condition of the Wesleyan Church, Quebec, May 26, 1856. The debt of the Quebec City chapel stood at £8,229.

Canadian Methodists dispatched Anson Green to Britain to perform the task.¹³⁷ At the same time, their own efforts to raise money in Lower and Upper Canada were aided by the British Wesleyans' "noble and generous offer to assist in the removal" of the chapel debt.¹³⁸ The Canada connexion was hardly anxious to detach itself from the British Conference.

The sheer complexity of colonial finances also tended to fix the Canadian Methodists into a wider British Wesleyan world, as the 1855 negotiations around the commutation of the government grant to the missions in Upper Canada demonstrate.¹³⁹ In 1833 the WMMS had agreed to send its missionaries into Upper Canada on the understanding that it would receive a government grant of £700 per annum to help offset any expenses it might incur. That grant became a matter of heated dispute between the Canada and British Conferences, especially when, in 1839, the £700 was transferred from the Casual and Territorial Revenue of the colony to the vexed and troubled Clergy Reserves Fund.¹⁴⁰ In 1854 the legislature of the united province of Canada moved to secularize the Clergy Reserves. The majority of the money was to be applied to municipal improvements. The Act to secularize the Reserves also, however, provided enough money to meet the Crown's continuing obligations to those churches which had received grants out of the fund in the past. Under the provisions of this Act, the WMMS

¹³⁷ Ibid., Box 40, File 291, #13, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, George Osborn and William Arthur, June 28, 1856.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Box 40, File 291, #14, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, July 11, 1856.

¹³⁹ For a summary of this episode see Moir, *Church and State*, 80.

¹⁴⁰ As the British Wesleyans put it, by this "unsatisfactory arrangement the Society became involuntarily mixed up with the agitation respecting that fund which has disturbed the peace of the province for a succession of years." See *Report of a Visit of the Rev. John Beecham, D.D., to British North America, Undertaken at the Request of the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society* (London: John Mason, 1856), 10-11.

could either have its claim on the Reserves secured for twenty years or commute it “according to a fixed scale, providing it were done in the space of one year from the passing of the Act.”¹⁴¹ The WMMS quickly determined that it was best to take advantage of the commutation clause and to place their claim for government support “beyond the reach of any future agitation” in the province.¹⁴² Since the grant officially belonged to the WMMS, even though it was used to support missions under the authority of the Canada Conference, it required the direct intervention of the British Wesleyans to bring commutation about.

The WMMS resolved that a power of attorney should be prepared allowing one of the Missionary Secretaries, John Beecham, “to negotiate...with the local authorities, for the commutation of the Society’s recognized annual allowance in aid of the Missions in Canada...”.¹⁴³ This was no easy task. In association with the official agent of the WMMS in the Canadas, Enoch Wood, Beecham entered a series of often byzantine discussions with the Cartier-Macdonald administration. In June, Beecham admitted that he was “at a stand on the commutation business, for the present, but I hope that I may at last be able to do something towards its settlement.” A month later, the Buntingite newspaper, the *Watchman*, reported that Beecham had found the commutation business “so entangled that he began to fear he should have to return without extricating and settling it.”¹⁴⁴ In the end, Beecham and Wood did manage to bring the negotiations to a

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴² UCA, WMMS, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 2, April 25, 1855; *Report of a Visit of the Rev. John Beecham*, 11.

¹⁴³ UCA, WMMS, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 2, April 25, 1855.

¹⁴⁴ JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.5.12, John Beecham to Jabez Bunting, June 30, 1855; *Watchman*, August 22, 1855, 277.

successful close; but not before John A. Macdonald beat the WMMS's claim on the Clergy Reserve Fund down from £8,944.9.5 to £8,028.18.10 sterling (or £9,768.11.0 currency).¹⁴⁵ Before his departure from Canada, Beecham assigned responsibility for receiving and investing the money over to Wood, making it clear, however, that "the sum of £9,768.11 is thus awarded to the Missionary Society, *in trust*, for the perpetual benefit of the Wesleyan Missions in Canada...".¹⁴⁶ The colonial government paid over the first installment of the grant to the WMMS in November 1855.¹⁴⁷ It remained securely in British Wesleyan hands until the early 1870s.

That does not mean, however, that the Buntingites wanted to retain close financial ties with the Canadian Methodists in perpetuity. Between 1849 and the mid-1850s the British Conference's funds were seriously depleted by the third and most serious financial crisis in its history. This was primarily the work of one embittered, renegade preacher – the Wesleyan reformer James Everett. Various described by historians as an "apostle of discord," "the stuff of which Piltdown forgers are made," an "undistinguished" specimen "of the ministerial race," and, by one contemporary, as "[t]he mole of Methodism working underground,"¹⁴⁸ Everett's entire *raison d'être* was an

¹⁴⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 39, File 282, #11, John Beecham and Enoch Wood to G.E. Cartier, July 5, 1855.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Box 39, File 282, #13, John Beecham to Enoch Wood, July 6, 1855. Emphasis in original. The negotiations are also outlined in UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 2, September 12, 1855.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Reel 2, November 7, 1855.

¹⁴⁸ John Kent, "The Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 2:223; *idem*, *Jabez Bunting, The Last Wesleyan: A Study in the Methodist Ministry after the Death of John Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1955), 56; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 269; Nottingham Record Office, Journal of George H. Harwood, October 25, 1863 quoted in Rowland C. Swift, *Lively People: Methodism in Nottingham, 1740-1979* (Nottingham: Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1982), 96.

all-consuming hatred of the centralized denominational government that the Buntingites had set out to create after 1815. Like all Wesleyan reformers, he yearned for an end to the “iron, menacing, shackling, brow-beating reign of Jabez Bunting” and a return to what he believed to be British Wesleyanism’s days of primitive virtue and power, located sometime back in an entirely imaginary version of the mid-1700s.¹⁴⁹ Everett initially broke with Bunting in the 1820s and embarked on a private war, waged primarily through a combination of clandestine plotting with other ministerial malcontents and unsigned, muckraking pamphlets.¹⁵⁰ During the 1830s and 1840s, as the Buntingites inexorably extended their control over the home connexion and mission field, Everett’s contempt for his enemy and his enemy’s supporters grew apace.¹⁵¹ Between 1844 and 1849 he unleashed the accumulated grievances of over twenty years in a series of anonymous *Fly Sheets*.¹⁵²

In those utterly scurrilous pamphlets, Everett took special aim at what he saw as one of the centres of Buntingite power within the British connexion: the WMMS. With almost fiendish delight, he poured over the Missionary Secretaries’ annual accounts and arrived at some provocative insights. The first *Fly Sheet* contained a table of salaries

¹⁴⁹ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 262; Watts, *Dissenters*, 618-19. The quotation is from James Everett, *Methodist As It Is: With some of its Antecedents, its Branches and Disruptions* (London: W. Reed, 1863), 1:87. For the Wesleyan reformers see 144 above.

¹⁵⁰ JRULM, MARC, James Everett papers, MAM PLP 38.52.10, James Everett to Samuel Broadbent, November 10, 1841; Watts, *Dissenters*, 619-20.

¹⁵¹ Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 65-7; John Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (London: Epworth Press, 1966), 81.

¹⁵² Watts, *Dissenters*, 618. Everett’s authorship of the *Fly Sheets* has never been categorically proven, but their style and content point most directly to him. See Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 68-9; Kent, “Wesleyan Methodists to 1849,” 2:234, n. 39. Oliver Beckerlegge makes an entirely convincing argument for Everett’s authorship in *The Three Expelled, James Everett, Samuel Dunn, William Griffith* (Peterborough: Foundry Press, 1996), 12.

showing “the sums which the self-denying Secretaries have appropriated to themselves, while teaching the missionaries, and others, economy, and applying the screw to both children and adults, rich and poor, at public meetings, and at Christmas, to give.”

According to Everett’s figures, a missionary labouring abroad might expect £200 a year, at most, to live on; a Missionary Secretary, in contrast, had to make due with a mere £500 per annum. That money was not wasted, of course: it paid for the essentials of Buntingite life, like “first class carriages, and frequent stops at first Inns...”. “We lie pretty soft,” Everett sneered, “when we have it in our power to feather our own nests.” He also accused Bunting of frittering away the Centenary Fund in building a new Mission House with “a large room, and two rooms each for himself” and his fellow Missionary Secretaries.¹⁵³

Finally forced to break cover after the British Conference expelled him from the ministry in 1849, Everett was delighted to find that thousands of discontented laymen and women across the connexion took to his anti-Buntingite propaganda like ducks to water. These were his people and they zealously took up the cudgels against the ministerial bureaucrats of the WMMS, arguing that “persons able to manage a Society or concern, with an income of £20,000, might be incompetent to the management of an income of £108,000.”¹⁵⁴

Such charges gave rise to a popular agitation that threatened to tear British Wesleyanism apart in the years after 1849. The atmosphere of hatred and distrust that

¹⁵³ [James Everett,] *All the Numbers of the ‘Fly Sheets’ Now First Reprinted in One Pamphlet* (Birmingham: William Cornish, 1850), 20, 28.

¹⁵⁴ JRULM, MARC, Elijah Hoole papers, MAM PLP 55.32.54, Elijah Hoole to Jabez Bunting, October 13, 1849.

overwhelmed the connexion had a disastrous effect on all of its funds. Like other secessionist groups before them, Everett's followers issued a call to "stop the supplies." They intended to orchestrate an "*immediate, universal, persevering* suspension of all cash payments, until the priests shall give up their absolutism, and surrender into the hands of the Church the rights and powers of which they have stealthily deprived it..."¹⁵⁵ Many ministers and laity, even those who were not among Everett's wholehearted supporters, believed that it might not be a bad thing if the Conference were "compelled to take a lower tone by pecuniary difficulties."¹⁵⁶ In December 1849, in one of its general circulars, the WMMS admitted that "the recent agitations have, to some extent, injuriously affected some of the regular sources of income of the Missionary Society." Many contributors to the mission fund simply refused to give any donations at all. The WMMS urged its missionaries at home and abroad to pay individual attention to any layman or woman who "ceased to render their support."¹⁵⁷

When the personal touch failed to produce results, Wesleyan ministers loyal to Buntingite rule resorted to mass expulsions – driving suspected reformers out of the connexion by the thousands.¹⁵⁸ This policy only cut further into the British

¹⁵⁵ *Christian Guardian* (hereafter *CG*), September 18, 1850, 390. Emphasis in original. See George Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), 3:376-7; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 266-7.

¹⁵⁶ Benjamin Gregory, *Autobiographical Recollections* (London, 1903), 392 quoted in Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 74.

¹⁵⁷ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1997, December 3, 1849.

¹⁵⁸ JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.4.12, John Beecham to William Bain, September 30, 1850. This letter refers to the Chelsea circuit, but the practice was general across the British connexion. See for example JRULM, MARC, William Burt papers, MAM PLP 21.13.4, William Burt to John Beecham, September 17, 1850; JRULM, MARC, William Lord papers, MAM PLP 70.33.12, William Lord to John Beecham, September 7, 1850. See also Watts, *Dissenters*, 623-5.

connexion's money-raising ability; between 1849 and 1852 its general funds fell into a collective debt of £50,000. The WMMS's income decreased from £94,000 to £78,000 per annum.¹⁵⁹ In 1850, the President of the British Conference, John Beecham, advised against calling any new men into the gospel work; the financial impact of Everett's hell raising would make it very difficult for the connexion to pay for their upkeep.¹⁶⁰ A year later, the new President, John Hannah, suggested that the WMMS should reduce all missionary allowances by ten percent. "It appears the only immediate method of relief," he added.¹⁶¹

By the early 1850s, the British connexion's third fiscal crisis had produced a determination among its leading ministers to find a way out of some of their more pressing overseas obligations. Meeting at the height of the *Fly Sheets* agitation in March 1850, the WMMS asked the Missionary Secretaries to prepare a plan to increase the "efficiency" of the missions in "the North American Colonies" and to decrease "their cost to the Society...".¹⁶² Having put their heads together, Bunting, Robert Alder, John Beecham and Elijah Hoole suggested that it might be best to transform the WMMS's older missions to the Empire's settler colonies and to Europe into "affiliated Conferences." The Buntingites expected these new connexional bodies to be self-supporting, self-propagating but not entirely self-governing: the British Conference would remain at the centre of the Wesleyan world. Within two years, the WMMS successfully

¹⁵⁹ Smith, *History*, 3:483; Findlay and Holdsworth, *History*, 1:190.

¹⁶⁰ JRULM, MARC, John Beecham papers, MAM PLP 7.4.3, John Beecham to Robert Coleman, September 10, 1850.

¹⁶¹ JRULM, MARC, Elijah Hoole papers, MAM PLP 55.32.59, Elijah Hoole to Jabez Bunting, 1851.

¹⁶² UCA, WMMS, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, March 13, 1850.

established affiliated Conferences in France and Australia. “We hope that things will soon be ripe for a similar proceeding in reference to British North America,” a new Missionary Secretary, George Osborn, wrote,

and then we shall have more time & more funds for the service of places & parts of the world which stand more in need of our help. God grant it soon! For we cannot but feel that viewed in reference to the masses of paganism all around us, the movements of Missionary Societies are fearfully slow & comparatively feeble.¹⁶³

In other words, with only limited financial resources, the British Wesleyans had decided to privilege their missionary work to the truly ‘pagan,’ non-European world.

John Beecham had the unenviable task of announcing this change of policy to the Canada connexion in 1853. Pointing out the pressing need to relieve the WMMS’s funds from “the embarrassment to which they are subject,” Beecham stated that it was necessary for “our older Colonial Mission...to support their own cause, and exert themselves moreover to extend the work among those around them who are destitute of evangelical instruction.” “We are persuaded,” he warned, “that dire necessity will compel the entire withdrawal of the Committee’s Grants from the whole of British America at no distant period...”. By 1854 the British connexion was well on its way to forming affiliated Conferences in the Canadas, the Maritimes and Ireland. The *Watchman* once again expressed the home connexion’s general hope that “[a]s these young affiliated Connexions advance to maturity” they would become increasingly self sufficient and so free the WMMS “to devote its resources with accumulating strength to the spread of the

¹⁶³ JRULM, MARC, George Osborn Papers, MAM PLP 80.36.14a, George Osborn to William Moister, October 2, 1852.

Gospel among heathen populations, especially in India and China.”¹⁶⁴ Out of the public eye, the Missionary Secretaries were well aware that many British Wesleyans viewed the WMMS’s continuing financial support for the gospel work in the Canadas and in other settler communities as an unwarranted burden. “We have no reason to expect any increase in our Mission Money this year,” Elijah Hoole wrote in 1857, “unless the foreign Districts come to our help...Many of our friends are beginning to ask how it is that at least our Colonial Missions are not self supporting.”¹⁶⁵

As had been the case following 1847, the Canada Conference responded to its new position in the British Wesleyan world with a Micawber-like optimism: they were always sure that something would turn up. In 1856, for example, Anson Green told Elijah Hoole that it was “now all but certain” that the Canadian Methodists would be able to “support all our missions” without asking the WMMS “for a farthing.” “[A]nd I am sure,” he added,

if you knew how much pleasure it affords us to be able to take these burdens off from your shoulders, you would, more than ever, feel that we are *one* in spirit, one in heart and one in cooperation with you.¹⁶⁶

Green spoke too soon. The British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, Joseph Stinson, wrote to the WMMS in 1859 declaring that he hoped that the “day is not far distant when you will receive help from Canada instead of affording it.”¹⁶⁷ That same

¹⁶⁴ *Watchman*, July 27, 1854, 241; *ibid.*, April 25, 1855, 133. See also *ibid.*, May 2, 1855, 144.

¹⁶⁵ JRULM, MARC, Elijah Hoole Papers, MAM PLP 55.32.82, Elijah Hoole to William Moister, December 30, 1857.

¹⁶⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 40, File 291, #19, Anson Green to Elijah Hoole, October 25, 1856. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Box 41, File 300, #17, Joseph Stinson to Elijah Hoole, August 30, 1859.

year, Enoch Wood stated as a certainty that “[t]he day cannot be far distant when all the institutions of the Church here [in the Canadas] will be supported from local resources.”¹⁶⁸ In 1861 Joseph Stinson was happy to inform the Elijah Hoole that “nearly all” new churches in Canada “are built free from *debt*...”¹⁶⁹

When, two years later, a new British connexional newspaper, the *Wesleyan Recorder*, printed an article criticizing the Canada connexion’s continued reliance on the home funds, Enoch Wood protested that “we are not so mean and dependent as the writer...would have the world believe.”¹⁷⁰ A year after that, he let the WMMS know that “we are moving, though not as fast as you wish us, in the direction of self-reliance...”¹⁷¹ In 1868 the new President of the Canada Conference, William Morley Punshon, assured the connexional authorities in Britain that there was, in fact, “a great wish” among the Canadian Methodists to relieve the WMMS “of all [financial] difficulty as soon as they possibly can...”¹⁷² By that point, the Missionary Secretaries would have been entirely justified in viewing this as a noble sentiment, but not much more.

The Canadian Methodists’ reliance on the financial clout of the British Conference and the WMMS remained a constant feature of the transatlantic relationship between connexional core and periphery into the late 1850s. After two years of declining income thanks to “unprecedented revulsions in the trade and commerce” of the colonies, the Canada connexion dispatched Enoch Wood to Britain in 1859 “for the purpose of

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., Box 41, File 300, #23, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, [1859].

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., Box 42, File 307, #14, Joseph Stinson to Elijah Hoole, October 11, 1861. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Box 43, File 316, #19, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, November 26, 1863; *ibid.*, Box 43, File 316, #20, Enoch Wood to William Boyce, November 26, 1863.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., Box 43, File 322, #23, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, [1864].

¹⁷² Ibid., Box 12, Fiche #553, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, August 27, 1868.

negotiating Loans in behalf of several of our Connexional Trusts.” “He possesses our entire confidence,” Joseph Stinson explained to Elijah Hoole, “& we doubt not, but, you will to the extent of your ability, assist him in securing the object of his mission.”¹⁷³

While in London, Wood pointed out that the Canada Conference had lost about £4,000 by 1859. This shortfall had consumed the Canadian missionary society’s entire reserve fund and so he had to borrow. “The plenteousness of the late harvest, and a gradual return of commercial prosperity will tell upon our future resources,” Wood told the WMMS, “but not to such an extent as to free the Society from great embarrassment in the maintenance of the work without some assistance from the Parent Society.” “With all economy and care that can be exerted,” he concluded, “it cannot be less than two years before the income will be sufficient to cover the expenditure, unless by woeful sufferings of the missionaries themselves.”¹⁷⁴

The Canada Conference’s financial condition was slow to improve. By the early 1860s the Canadian Methodists found themselves in a situation very similar to the one the Wesleyans in Britain encountered in the years after 1815: their connexion was expanding more quickly than it could afford. Enoch Wood saw the problem clearly enough in 1861. “Our resources do not increase in proportion to our responsibilities in supporting the work as it is,” he explained to Elijah Hoole, “whilst ardent and zealous brethren will be pressing the appointment of additional labourers to new settlements”

¹⁷³ *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada* [hereafter *Minutes of Several Conversations*] (Toronto: George Sanderson, 1858), 89; *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1859), 93; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 41, File 300, #3, Joseph Stinson to Elijah Hoole, July 19, 1859.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Box 41, File 303, #4, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, September 17, 1859. See also SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Special Series, Finance, Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee, Fiche #28, September 21, 1859.

without giving so much as a thought to “our debt or probable income.”¹⁷⁵ Over the previous seven years, the Canada connexion had taken on four new and costly missions. Between 1852 and 1854, it agreed to absorb the WMMS’s work in Rupert’s Land, even though “it is not in our power to do more than sustain the missions in Upper Canada.”¹⁷⁶ In 1859 the Canadian Methodists also decided to dispatch another group of missionaries to mainland British Columbia and to Vancouver Island in order to preach “the unsearchable riches [of] Christ to the new settlers and destitute Indian tribes of that vast territory.”¹⁷⁷ Closer to home, they began an effort to evangelize the benighted French Canadians of Lower Canada in 1856, convinced that, even if the financial means were lacking at first, “all we want is to create the necessity and the means will be forthcoming.” And, four years later, the Conference established missions among the German communities in Hamilton and the Ottawa region.¹⁷⁸

However, unlike their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, who tried to cut their expenses at home and abroad, the Canadian Methodists became yet more demanding in their calls for fiscal support from Britain. When the WMMS decreed that it would give “no further aid” to the Methodist missions in the Canadas in 1864, the announcement set off a storm of protest among the Canadian ministry.¹⁷⁹ They were,

¹⁷⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 42, File 307, #8, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, [1861].

¹⁷⁶ *CG*, July 21, 1852, 162; *Minutes...from 1846 to 1857*, 211-12, 227. See also J. Warren Caldwell, “The Unification of Methodism in Canada, 1865-1884,” *Bulletin of the Archives of the United Church of Canada* 19 (1967), 13.

¹⁷⁷ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1859), 83, 94. See also John Webster Grant, “Canadian Confederation and the Protestant Churches,” *Church History* 38, no. 3 (September 1969), 335; Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 192.

¹⁷⁸ *CG*, March 25, 1857, 97; George Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1881), 352, 357.

¹⁷⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 44, File 328, #25, Enoch Wood to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, [1865]. Though, in public, the Canada Conference put a brave face on this shift in WMMS policy. See *CG*, November 30, 1864, 194.

after all, a part of a larger British Wesleyan connexion and expected to be treated as such. Some of the preachers, Wood warned the Missionary Secretaries, “were for refusing its recognition altogether – [they] declared it both a violation and withdrawal from the articles of Union on your part...”.¹⁸⁰ By 1866 Wood found that his fellow ministers in Lower and Upper Canada fervently believed that, under the conditions of the union of 1847, the British Conference was required to pour a continuous stream of money into the coffers of Canadian Methodism. According to Anson Green, Wesleyan money was supposed to be sent from the metropolitan to the colonial connexion “as long as grass grows, and water runs.”¹⁸¹ Two years later William Morley Punshon came across the same attitude among the Canadian Methodists. “The Canadian Conference believe that your [financial] obligation is perpetual,” he pointed out to the WMMS.¹⁸² The Canada connexion had become a keener defender of a strict reading of the Articles of Union than the British Wesleyan leadership.

To justify such continuing claims on the funds of the British Conference, the Canadian Methodists also pointed to the thoroughly British character of their new missions, especially in the West. In 1866, for instance, Enoch Wood drew on the WMMS for £794.17.8 to cover a draft for the work in Rupert’s Land. “These Missions,” Wood assured the connexional officials in London,

are prospering and afford every encouragement for the future. A wide field invites the labourer, and though not so sunny, as some other parts of the world, I believe

¹⁸⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 44, File 328, #5, Enoch Wood to William Boyce, [1865].

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Box 45, File 337, #13, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, July 19, 1866.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, Box 12, Fiche #554, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, September 25, 1868. Emphasis in original.

prosperous [Christ]ian Churches will adorn the fertile plains of that great tract of country.¹⁸³

Here, Wood was echoing words he had first used in 1863 when he pointed out that “[t]he whole of that magnificent territory between the shores of the Pacific and the mouth of the Saskatchewan will be covered by the Saxon race.” “Too much stress,” he added, “cannot be laid upon the importance of these missions.”¹⁸⁴ Newly transplanted Britons cried out for consistent financial support from British Wesleyanism.

Some of the leading members of the home connexion accepted and even encouraged this view of the Canada Conference’s missions: in 1868 William Morley Punshon described the West as “another empire for our Queen” in the making.¹⁸⁵ At the same time, however, Punshon’s Presidency of the Canada Conference between 1868 and 1873 marked the home connexion’s final attempt to break free from its financial obligations to the gospel work in the newly-formed Dominion. The WMMS sent Punshon across the Atlantic with definite instructions. “Generally speaking,” the Missionary Secretaries wrote, “it will be wise for the Committee, and particularly for you, so to develop the resources of Canada that it may prosecute the work of Methodism without pecuniary aid from England.” With years of bitter experience to draw on, the WMMS did not expect that such self sufficiency would be

reached at once and by a leap; nor could they desire that it should at any time be realized by contracting the operations which they have so long and successfully carried on; but they hope that by degrees it may be brought with safety to all interests, and honour to all parties concerned.

¹⁸³ Ibid., Box 45, File 337, #3, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, February 8, 1866.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., Box 43, File 316, #19, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, November 26, 1863.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., Box 12, Fiche #572, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, May 27, 1868.

There were “[t]wo or three pecuniary questions” to which Punshon would have to pay particular attention. The Missionary Secretaries needed him to look into a £3,000 grant that the Canada connexion had requested for the mission to Rupert’s Land in 1867. It did not seem like an extravagant claim and the WMMS was prepared “to pay the Balance” and “to continue to pay £1,000 annually for this year and the next.” However, looking at the Canada Conference’s “large debt,” the Missionary Secretaries were “of opinion that this Grant cannot be continued longer, and must cease with the year 1869.” They relied on Punshon to provide “large additions” to the income of the Canada Methodist missions. “We also suggest,” the Missionary Secretaries concluded, “that the state of several organizations in Districts and Circuits should be looked after, and means taken to revive what is languid, and extend what may be but partially attempted.”¹⁸⁶ Here, indeed, was a well-laid plan to sever the fiscal ties between connexional core and periphery.

Once in Canada, Punshon set about fulfilling his instructions with characteristic zeal. He aimed to play on the Canadian Methodists’ sense of Britishness, arguing that “it is proper & patriotic for them to become independent.” Once the colonial ministry adopted that perspective, Punshon believed, all other financial difficulties would pretty much solve themselves.¹⁸⁷ To a certain extent, he was correct. In the fall of 1868, in consultation with the leading Canadian ministers, Punshon agreed that the British connexion would pay the £3,000 requested for the support of the missions in Rupert’s Land. In addition, the WMMS would continue the grant of £1,000

¹⁸⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing Correspondence, William Arthur, William Boyce, Elijah Hoole, George Osborn and George Perks to William Morley Punshon, April 11, 1868.

¹⁸⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 12, Fiche #572, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, May 27, 1868.

for one more year, until the Canada Conference of 1870. Under this arrangement, the Canadian Methodists had no further claim on their British Wesleyan brethren beyond another £3,000 that would “remain in the hands” of the WMMS – “the Canada Conference to draw interest for it at the rate of not more than £200 per annum, such interest to be reckoned as part of the £3,000 in case that were [to] be ever claimed.” The Canada Conference, however, was supposed to do its best to do “without either principle or interest & if the principal be not claimed before the expiration of three years from the Conference of 1870, the claim shall absolutely terminate & cease.” Punshon urged this plan on the WMMS as “the Parent Society will be relieved to an extent which will enable them to employ their resources with profit & blessings elsewhere;” which, of course, it had been attempting to do since the early 1850s.¹⁸⁸

Yet, despite Punshon’s best efforts, the Canadians’ financial needs continued to draw them willingly into the arms of British Wesleyanism until 1874 and beyond. Nothing demonstrates this as well as the case of Victoria College.¹⁸⁹ The Canadian Methodists’ educational institution had never been financially sound. During the first union, the college’s fiscal woes had almost driven the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, William Lord, to distraction.¹⁹⁰ In 1858 – ten years before Punshon arrived in Canada – the Canadian connexion was forced to admit that “our

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Box 12, Fiche #554, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, November 7, 1868. See also *ibid.*, Box 12, Fiche #555-6, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, April 3, 1869; *ibid.*, Box 12, Fiche #557, William Morley Punshon to Elijah Hoole, October 11, 1869.

¹⁸⁹ This episode is discussed in C.B. Sissons, *A History of Victoria University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), 137-140 and A.B. McKillop, *Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario, 1791-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 32-34.

¹⁹⁰ C.B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters* (Toronto: Oxford University Press / Clarke, Irwin Company Ltd., 1937-47), 1:358-9, 1:362-3, 1:389-92.

College with its Halls full of students, is in imminent danger of being closed for want of funds.” Try as they might to halt the college’s long slide towards insolvency, the Canadian ministers could not do so. In 1858 the Conference apportioned the debt of Victoria College among each of the Districts “according to its members and wealth...”.¹⁹¹ It proved difficult, however, to raise the required funds in this way and the college debt remained stubbornly in place when the Conference next met in 1859.¹⁹²

Between 1860 and 1862, each Canadian minister agreed to contribute “at least ten cents to the support of Victoria College during the present Conference year” and they also urged the laity to give to what became known as the “Victoria College Sustentation Fund.”¹⁹³ From 1863 to 1865 the Conference laid an assessment of between one and one-and-a-half percent on the annual income of each preacher, the money to be put towards “the annual deficit arising from the excess of the College expenditure over the income.”¹⁹⁴ To make matters worse, during the first year of Punshon’s presidency the government of Ontario decided to withdraw its annual grant to Victoria, a decision, according to the Canada connexion, that “makes the present a trying crisis in its history.” The Conference expressed the hope that “the intelligent zeal and liberality of a loyal and united people will not suffer the overthrow of an institution, founded by the wisdom and piety of our fathers...”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: George Sanderson, 1858), 76-7. The Canadian ministers also began to speak in terms of “financial ruin”.

¹⁹² *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1859), 79, 83-4.

¹⁹³ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1860), 73; *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto, 1861), 72, 88; *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1862), 85-6.

¹⁹⁴ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1863), 85; *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto, 1864), 79; *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1865), 81.

¹⁹⁵ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1868), 126.

Utilizing his already well-honed skills as a connexional fund raiser,¹⁹⁶ Punshon threw himself into the effort to save Victoria College from financial ruin.¹⁹⁷ “The scheme,” he declared in December 1868, “is to endow a Denominational University...”.¹⁹⁸ A year later, the Canada Conference was able to report that the public had subscribed \$53,000 to the college and “when all the Districts are canvassed we doubt not the sum of at least \$100,000 will be secured. This will place us in a position of independence.” In addition to touring Canada and the United States raising money for the college through a series of highly popular lectures, Punshon obtained loans that saw Victoria through the worst of its troubles.¹⁹⁹ He also took on its classes in theology in 1871.²⁰⁰ As Punshon prepared to return to Britain in 1873, the Canadian Methodists quite rightly thanked him for “his generous contributions, powerful and successful appeals on behalf of the institutions and financial interests of our Church...”.²⁰¹ At the same time, however, he was aware that Victoria still “wanted a stronger financial position.”²⁰² In 1878 the Canadian minister Richard Jones proved Punshon right, writing to him to ask for help in alleviating the “embarrassment” of yet another large college debt.²⁰³ Even though the British Wesleyans had cut the last connexional links with the

¹⁹⁶ Between 1862 and 1867 Punshon raised £10,000 for the British Wesleyan connexion’s Watering-Places Chapel Fund. See Frederick W. Macdonald and A.H. Reynor, *The Life of William Morley Punshon, LL.D.*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887), 197.

¹⁹⁷ UCA, William Morley Punshon papers, William Morley Punshon to an unknown correspondent, November 20, 1868.

¹⁹⁸ UCA, Hugh Johnston papers, William Morley Punshon to Hugh Johnston, December 24, 1868.

¹⁹⁹ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1869), 125, 128-9.

²⁰⁰ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1871), 50.

²⁰¹ *Minutes of Several Conversations* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1873), 6.

²⁰² *CG*, May 8, 1873.

²⁰³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 12, Fiche #570, Richard Jones to William Morley Punshon, August 23, 1878.

Canada Conference four years earlier, material interests continued to unite both connexions in a larger British Wesleyan world.

In the sixty years after 1814, the financial disputes between the British Conference and the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada moved in harmony with larger cultural developments that were already taking shape. Fiscal disagreements before the mid-1840s tended to increase the rancor of the battles between metropole and periphery about what it meant to be a proper Briton and Wesleyan. Building on a sense of both entitlement and obligation, the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters argued that the WMMS's adoption of the Maximum was tantamount to abandoning a loyal and pious settler population. To counter this threat to their position in a wider connexional world, the missionaries and laity defined their own sense of British and Wesleyan self against the perceived apostasy of their fathers and brethren in the home country, just as they had done in the early 1820s and would do again in the 1840s and early 1850s. The Canadian Methodists followed a similar cultural trajectory during the same period – elaborating a British and Wesleyan identity in order, first, to gain access to the wealthy laity of England in the 1820s and, second, to defend their own financial interests against Buntingite encroachment in the 1830s. From the mid-1840s on, however, the fiscal needs of British and Canada Conferences helped to draw the latter back into the British Wesleyan fold. At the same time, economic depression in the Canadas and the WMMS's growing unwillingness to foot any more colonial bills also made the idea of absorption by Canadian Methodism somewhat more palatable to the

British Wesleyan missionaries and laity, especially in Lower Canada. Despite the achievement of a long-term union between 1847 and 1854, tensions over Britishness and Wesleyanism periodically resurfaced in the 1850s and 1860s as the British connexion, responding to the impact of the *Fly Sheets* agitation, attempted to get out of its financial obligations to the Canadian Methodists and the Canadian Methodists continued to turn to the British connexion to finance its rapid expansion in Lower and Upper Canada and in the West. Even the administrative and fund-raising efforts of William Morley Punshon could not persuade the Canada Conference to make the hard move towards complete self-sufficiency. The Canadian Methodists were Britons and Wesleyans and, where money was concerned, they were not about to let the connexional authorities in the home country forget that fact.

This pattern of cultural development was not unique to the British Conference and the Methodists in the Canadas. It was repeated among other denominations both in those colonies and in other parts of the British empire. When the Clergy Reserves were secularized in 1854, for example, the Church of England in Upper Canada struck out on an ostensibly independent course. Since the state no longer provided financial support for the Church, Bishop John Strachan reasoned, it had also forfeited its right to regulate the activities of colonial Anglicanism. In 1855 Strachan persuaded the Canadian legislature to pass a bill that was effectively a declaration of independence from state interference in the affairs of Canadian Anglicanism. He took up a similar stance towards the British bishops. Strachan and his fellow clergy moved into the second half of the nineteenth century as one among many voluntarist denominations

in British North America. At the same time, however, they continued to look to the Church of England's missionary wing – the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (the SPG) – to aid Anglicanism in Upper Canada into the 1860s, despite the SPG's repeated attempts to transfer its fiscal resources to more needy parts of the 'pagan world.'²⁰⁴ As was the case among the Canadian Methodists, any idea of colonial independence was complicated by ongoing financial need.

The same could be said of the Baptist missions in Jamaica during the mid-nineteenth century. The Baptist missionaries relied on their denominational centre, Birmingham, to support the extension of their church even after they had officially moved away from fiscal dependence in 1842. In 1843 the Baptist leadership in Britain responded with a £6,000 grant that was supposed to be the last of its kind. When, in 1849, the island mission seemed to be on the verge of financial collapse, the ministers stationed there turned to Britain once again, using language that would have been familiar to the British Wesleyan leadership. "Through the munificence of the British nation, they are blest with the inestimable boon of perfect and entire freedom," these Baptists wrote, describing their emancipated charges, "but what will this avail if they be left in the depths of ignorance?"²⁰⁵ The British public, the ministers felt sure, would not abandon this virtual extension of the home country. The missionaries needed funds from the home

²⁰⁴ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 104-5, 112, 114-15; idem, *The Founding Moment: Church, Society and the Construction of Trinity College* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 34-6.

²⁰⁵ *Address to the Friends of Education in Great Britain from a Meeting of Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists* (Falmouth, 1849) quoted in Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 207.

country in order to present a proper example of Britishness and piety to their congregations. If they did not live, act and appear like transplanted Britons and Baptists, their gospel work would be utterly wasted.²⁰⁶

More broadly yet, the fiscal relationship between British Wesleyanism and the various Methodist groups in Canadas paralleled developments at the imperial level. The financial issues that played into the achievement of Confederation in 1867 were analogous to those that shaped the union between the British and Canada connexions during the second half of the nineteenth century. By the 1860s, if not earlier, British statesmen like William Gladstone and William Cardwell were keen on the idea that Britain's North American colonies should pay their own way, either within the empire or outside it, if it came to that.²⁰⁷ These politicians deftly wielded the power of the purse to maneuver the recalcitrant New Brunswick and Nova Scotia into the new Dominion between 1864 and 1867, promising to support colonial economic expansion by guaranteeing a loan for the construction of a transcolonial railway linking the Canadas to the port of Halifax.²⁰⁸ The Canadians, however, saw this as no more than an imperial down payment. When they began the process of annexing the West in 1868, they turned to the British government both to broker the purchase of Rupert's Land from the

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 172, 234-5

²⁰⁷ On Gladstone see H.C.G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-1874* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 188-9; Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: Peel's Inheritor, 1809-1865* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982), 450-1. On Cardwell see P.B. Waite, *The Life and Times of Confederation, 1864-1867: Politics, Newspapers and the Union of British North America* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio Inc., 2001), 20-1.

²⁰⁸ Ged Martin, *Britain and the Origins of Canadian Confederation, 1837-67* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1995), 255-7, 279; Garth Stevenson, *Ex Uno Plures: Federal-Provincial Relations in Canada, 1867-1896* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 10-13.

Hudson's Bay Company and to send troops to Red River to quash the first Riel rebellion.²⁰⁹ Money continued to bind the home country to its colony, just as it bound home connexion to colonial connexion, whether the former liked it or not. In the next chapter we will see how the transatlantic tie between British Wesleyanism and Methodism in the Canadas was further complicated by that most characteristic of Methodist religious practices – revivalism.

²⁰⁹ W.L. Morton, *The Critical Years: The Union of British North America, 1857-1873* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1964), 232-4, 243-4; Stevenson, *Ex Uno Plures*, 13.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Montreal is like Heaven on earth”:

Revivalism, Pastoral Authority and Cultural Formation, 1814-74

Historians dealing with Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada often point to revivalism as one of its distinguishing characteristics. At the same time, however, they tend to locate their studies of this Methodist religious practice almost entirely within North American parameters, overlooking its transatlantic context. Neil Semple and J.I. Little, for example, in examining the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters in the Canadas before 1860, analyze their responses to revivalism primarily in comparison to either the Canadian Methodists in Upper Canada or the Methodist Episcopal and other, more radical sects in the northern United States.¹ As a result, the missionaries, with very few exceptions, come out looking every bit the products of the “conservative London-based” society which originally dispatched them overseas: reactionary and ultimately unchanging in their attachment to the doctrine and discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS).² Even the successes of those missionaries who departed from the Methodistical way decreed by the home connexion and who experimented with American-style worship are portrayed as

¹ Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 129-31; J.I. Little, *Borderland Religion: The Emergence of an English-Canadian Identity, 1792-1852* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 186, 194-207.

² The quotation is from idem, “The Methodistical way: Revivalism and popular resistance to the Wesleyan Church discipline in the Stanstead Circuit, Lower Canada, 1821-52,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 31, no. 2 (2002), 172.

either anomalies or conservative co-options of more radical Yankee ways.³ Similarly, William Westfall discusses the “tempering of revivalism” among the Canadian Methodists almost exclusively from a continental, if not provincial perspective. He quite rightly places this transformation firmly in its social context, but gives less attention to its wider transatlantic context.⁴ How did the Canada Conference’s close, though often turbulent relationship with the British connexion contribute to the tempering of revivalism? And why was it that, during the age of disunity in the 1830s, 1840s and early 1850s, the one issue that never seemed to trouble the various unions between the Canadian Methodists and the British Wesleyans was revivalism?

Marguerite Van Die suggests a very plausible answer to these questions. She argues that revivalism remained central to the Canadian Methodist sense of self during the second third of the nineteenth century, but the leaders of the connexion shied away from “some of its wilder manifestations.” Instead, they “were careful to align themselves with the more staid British expression.”⁵ There is a great deal to be said for this analysis: it quite correctly directs our attention towards the importance of Canadian Methodism’s transatlantic context. It does not, however, take into account how the British Wesleyan missionaries in Lower and Upper Canada influenced and responded to the Canada Conference’s gradual swing towards a more conservative form of revivalism. It also overlooks the fierce battles that took place within British Wesleyanism itself over what

³ Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 131, 139-40; Little, *Borderland Religion*, 178.

⁴ William Westfall, *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 50-81.

⁵ Marguerite Van Die, “‘The Double Vision’: Evangelical Piety as Derivative and Indigenous in Victorian English Canada,” in Mark A. Noll, et al., eds., *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 257-8.

should constitute the proper balance between religious enthusiasm and pastoral authority. As John C. Bowmer, David Hempton and W.R. Ward point out, in the first sixty-odd years of the nineteenth century, the British Conference was divided between ‘high’ and ‘low’ factions which tended to view revivalism as an issue not only of worship, but also of church structure and social class. The ‘high’ Wesleyans wanted to ensure connexional stability by eliminating the wilder forms of revivalism and replacing them with a centralized denominational structure, based on a socially respectable – largely middle class – lay constituency willing to subject itself to the rule of an all-powerful ministry. The ‘low’ Wesleyans, in contrast, were bent on ensuring continuous connexional expansion by giving revivalism free rein within a decentralized denominational structure, based on the loyalty of a wide range of laymen and women, drawn from across the social spectrum, all seeking salvation under the loosest possible ministerial control.⁶ How this debate played out among the Methodists in the Canadas and influenced the home connexion in turn warrants more consideration than it has received.

Viewing the interface between revivalism and pastoral authority from a transatlantic perspective, this chapter aims to demonstrate that, during the first half of the nineteenth century, a cultural hybrid was created among the British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters and the Canadian Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada. By the 1850s the same concerns about the compatibility of revivalism and

⁶ John C. Bowmer, *Pastor and People: A Study of Church and ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley (1791) to the death of Jabez Bunting (1858)* (London: Epworth Press, 1975), 85; David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850* (London: Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1987), 92-3, 96, 197-8; W.R. Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism: The Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1830-1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), xiv-xv.

connexional order existed on both sides of the Atlantic. Ministers, whether stationed in Britain or in the Canadas, recognized the power of religious awakenings, but many of them were also concerned about their disruptive potential, especially among the laity, and their impact on the social composition of Methodism. However, the debate between 'high' and 'low' approaches to revivalism took on an added complexity within the context of the north Atlantic world. The various Methodist groups in Lower and Upper Canada eventually worked out their own accommodation – they would accept revivalism, but they aimed to control it, usually through the retention or adoption of British Wesleyan church structures. This compromise allowed Methodism in the colonies to avoid the disruptions that plagued the home connexion during the second third of the nineteenth century. It also helped lay the groundwork for a lasting union between the British Wesleyans in the Canadas and the Canada Conference in the 1847 and 1854. This new Canadian Methodist connexion might be British in form, but it was thoroughly North American in spirit.

Revivalism lay very near the heart of Methodism from the beginning: it was closely associated with the connexion's expansion and central to its identity in relation to other churches. John Wesley experienced his own conversion during the great transatlantic awakening that swept out of central Europe in the early-eighteenth century, transforming Protestant communities from the Baltic region in the east to the North American frontier in the west.⁷ Travelling across Britain, often preaching out of doors,

⁷ On the wider context of John Wesley's conversion see W.R. Ward, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 296-352, especially 310-14.

Wesley and his fellow ministers aimed to set off further revivals that would convert laymen and women by the thousands, drawing them out of their sinful, worldly ways and into the Methodist connexion where their eternal salvation could be assured. This strategy was a great success: by 1790 there were 71,763 Methodist laity in Britain and Ireland and 57,858 in the United States.⁸ Not surprisingly, perhaps, the first Methodists believed that episodes of mass conversion that produced this kind of breakneck growth were a sign of divine favour, setting their connexion apart from – and above – all other denominations. Taking stock of a series of revivals among his people in England in 1784, Wesley asked “[w]hom has God owned in Great Britain, Ireland and America like them?” “Truly these are the tokens of our mission,” he added, “the proof that God hath sent us.”⁹ This continued to be the Methodist view long after Wesley’s death: in 1868 a popular British Wesleyan preacher, William Arthur, declared that the Lord’s mercy had created the eighteenth-century awakening and “its permanent embodied result” was “the Methodist body throughout the world.”¹⁰ The Methodists were, indeed, God’s peculiar people.

There was, however, a serious debate within nineteenth-century British Wesleyanism over the role that revivalism should be allowed to play in connexional life. Jabez Bunting and his supporters were convinced that popular revivalism posed a serious

⁸ The statistics are drawn from David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 212, 214.

⁹ John Telford, ed., *The Letters of John Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 7:206 quoted in Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 293.

¹⁰ William Arthur, *May We Hope for a Great Revival?* (Toronto: Wesleyan Book Room, 1868), 63. See also John G. Manly, *The Nature, Origin, Progress, State and Character of Wesleyan Methodism* (Kingston: T.H. Breen, 1840), 3-4, 13 which places Methodist growth in the same providentialist framework.

threat to the political, financial, social and disciplinary stability of their connexion. Politically, the mass revivals of the 1790s and early 1800s seemed to fill many a chapel with the worst kinds of miscreants.¹¹ It certainly did not help the connexional leadership's efforts to prove that Methodism was a loyal element in British society when, for instance, six out of seventeen Luddites hanged at York in 1813 turned out to be sons of Wesleyan converts.¹² To Bunting, this was a clear demonstration that Methodism's expansion in the West Riding of Yorkshire had "been more swift than solid; more extensive than deep...".¹³

During the 1810s, the Buntingites were further dismayed to discover that the religious enthusiasm that often accompanied popular revivalism tended to alienate the very people they wanted to draw into Wesleyan Methodism: the mercantile and manufacturing families of London and northwest England. Only such "[g]entlemen of respectability," Bunting and his supporters believed, could keep the connexion afloat in the post-1815 era of financial crisis.¹⁴ Wesleyan Methodism could do quite nicely, on the other hand, without tatterdemalions who loved to clap and shout, but who were not at all keen on contributing to the funds of the church.¹⁵ The Buntingites also thought that the

¹¹ John Munsey Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation: Methodism and Ecumenism in England, 1740-1982* (London: Epworth Press, 1985), 83-4, 119-20.

¹² Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 104-5; W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), 86.

¹³ John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter JRULM), Methodist Archives and Research Centre (hereafter MARC), Jabez Bunting papers, Jabez Bunting to George Marsden, January 28, 1813 quoted in idem, "Jabez Bunting: The Formative Years, 1794-1820," in David Hempton, *The Religion of the People: Methodism and popular religion, c. 1750-1900* (London: Routledge, 1996), 100.

¹⁴ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 82-3. The quotation is from JRULM, MARC, James Buckley papers, MAM PLP 17.5.8, James Buckley to Jabez Bunting, December 5, 1817.

¹⁵ Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 74, 85; D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 22-3, 27, 35.

connexion could get by without laymen and women who, in the grips of religious hysteria, seized control of prayer meetings, flouted ministerial directives and connexional rules, and who labelled any preacher who tried to impose some semblance of order on a revival a “Dead Stick” or a “dead soul.”¹⁶ Faced with just this kind of undisciplined activity while stationed among the popular revivalists of Macclesfield in 1803, Bunting declared that “[r]evivalism as of late professed and practiced was [likely if] not checked to have gradually ruined genuine Methodism.”¹⁷ He and his supporters never wavered from that belief.

The Buntingites responded to this perceived threat with a vigorous and sustained effort to eradicate all traces of popular revivalism within British Wesleyanism. They pushed the disciplinary machinery of the connexion as far as it would go in an effort to force any groups that set too high a stock on emotional worship out of the Wesleyan fold. As Bunting noted in 1803: “Divisions *from* the church, though awful, are perhaps after all less to be dreaded than divisions in the church.”¹⁸ Over the next seventeen years, the Buntingites put that mantra to work, helping to see off John Sigston and the Kirkgate Screamers in 1803; John Broadhurst and the Band Room Methodists in 1806; Hugh Bourne, William Clowes and the Primitive Methodists between 1808 and 1812; William O’ Bryan and the Bible Christians in 1815; and John Pyer, George Pocock and the Tent

¹⁶ JRULM, MARC, George Russell papers, George Russell to Isaac Clayton, July 7, 1815 quoted in Rupert Davies, et al., eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (London: Epworth Press, 1965-88), 4:349.

¹⁷ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, Jabez Bunting to Richard Reece, July 15, 1803 quoted in W.R. Ward, “The Religion of the People and the Problem of Control, 1790-1830,” in idem *Faith and Faction* (London: Epworth Press, 1993), 269.

¹⁸ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, Jabez Bunting to Richard Reece, July 15, 1803 quoted in Hempton, “Jabez Bunting,” 93. Emphasis in original.

Methodists in 1820.¹⁹ The Conference also banned female preaching in 1803 and, four years later, in response to the American evangelist Lorenzo Dow's unauthorized tour through northwest England, ruled against allowing "strangers to preach to our congregations."²⁰ In the future, only fully accredited Methodist ministers or lay preachers would be allowed in British Wesleyan pulpits.²¹ At the same time, the connexional leadership denounced the open-air services, or camp meetings, that Dow introduced to the Methodists of Cheshire as "highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief."²²

In 1820 the Buntingites capped off this phase of their campaign against popular revivalism by fixing their opposition to it in connexional law. That year's Conference met on Merseyside and, under Bunting's presidential oversight, adopted thirty-one resolutions that were likely his own handiwork.²³ These Liverpool *Minutes* were meant to bolster the ministers' pastoral authority and to place every part of the Wesleyan community where the forces of unfettered revivalism might establish a foothold entirely under their control. The Conference made it clear that the Methodist ministry

¹⁹ Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 71-85; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 81-3, 86; Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

²⁰ *Minutes of several conversations between the preachers late in connexion with the Rev. Mr. Wesley* [hereafter *Minutes*] (London, 1807) quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:320-1. See also Edmund Grindrod, *A Compendium of the Laws and Regulations of Wesleyan Methodism*, 8th ed. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1865), 337-8.

²¹ Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 219, n. 57.

²² *Minutes* (London, 1807) quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:320.

²³ Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 94.

existed not only to feed and guide the laity, but also to teach and rule them.²⁴ They were not “merely *Chairmen* of public Meetings, but...the *Pastors* of Christian Societies” ultimately answerable to God alone for their actions. As such, the pastorate had a divinely-ordained responsibility to nominate and to regulate the activities of the lay agents of the church, especially the local preachers and class leaders – the former charged with conducting services whenever the itinerant minister was on another part of the circuit and the latter for monitoring each layman and woman’s weekly progress towards salvation. The itinerant preachers were also instructed to discountenance “the spirit of strife and debate” throughout the connexion and to suppress “all topics of useless or irritating discussion, not legitimately connected” with the advancement of spiritual renewal. They, of course, had the final say on what did or did not constitute a topic of “irritating discussion.” Even so seemingly innocuous a thing as the local cottage prayer meeting was supposed to be “prudently conducted by persons of established piety and competent gifts, and duly supervised by the Preachers...”.²⁵ After 1820 ministerial autocracy was in; popular revivalism was most definitely out.

That is not to say that Bunting and his supporters were against all forms of revivalism; such a stance would have been tantamount to disowning their Wesleyan heritage. The Buntingites made a careful distinction, however, between episodes of mass conversion brought about by popular revivalists and those that grew naturally out of what were called the ‘regular means of grace’: daily prayer, Bible study, periodic fasting,

²⁴ W.R. Ward, “The Legacy of John Wesley: The Pastoral Office in Britain and America,” in *Faith and Faction*, 239; idem, “Religion of the People,” 279.

²⁵ *Minutes* (London, 1820) quoted in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 4:368-71. Emphasis in original.

attention to public preaching, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and regular attendance at love feasts and class meetings, all under strict pastoral oversight.²⁶ Revivals of the latter type, in Bunting's view, were eminently useful. They helped elaborate the structures of the connexion. Popular revivalists, in contrast, often failed to see beyond the merely local scene of their labours. They were "more ambitious to *build chapels* than to *build up Churches*," Bunting remarked at the Conference of 1833.²⁷ In terms of an ideal revival, the members of the Buntingian Dynasty envisioned a religious awakening in which lay emotionalism had its place, but where it also knew its place. In 1826-7 one of Bunting's closest allies, Edmund Grindrod, was involved in a revival in Edinburgh that could have served as an archetype.²⁸ Here was a religious awakening in which, though "many were in deep distress," "[t]here was not the slightest confusion." In other words, the minister remained firmly in control of the entire event; there was no challenge to his authority. It was also notable that the converts included "three students of the University of Edinburgh...an attorney's clerk, two daughters of different ministers...and several other persons of respectability and education."²⁹ These were exactly the upwardly mobile groups that the Buntingian Dynasty wanted to see in the connexion.

Despite the mastery they achieved over the governing machinery of Wesleyan Methodism during the second quarter of the century, the Buntingites'

²⁶ On the regular means of grace see Raymond George, "The People Called Methodists – 4. The Means of Grace," in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 1:259, 1:263, 1:271-3 and Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 19-20.

²⁷ Benjamin Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism during the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century, 1827-1852* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1898), 128. Emphasis in original.

²⁸ JRULM, MARC, Edmund Grindrod papers, MAM PLP 47.16.39, Edmund Grindrod to Thomas Jackson, November 17, 1826.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, MAM PLP 47.16.34, Edmund Grindrod to Joseph Entwisle, January 27, 1827.

distinction between acceptable and unacceptable forms of revivalism failed to sweep all before it. They encountered growing opposition to their various efforts to create an orderly form of worship and a ministry that would not “shock the good taste” of the socially respectable.³⁰ The liberal wing of the Conference and the more radical forces of Wesleyan reform fought against the installation of an organ in Leeds’s Brunswick chapel in the late 1820s and the establishment of a ministerial college in the mid-1830s. Each of these initiatives seemed to prove, to liberal and reformer alike, that the connexion was in danger of becoming less of a sect and more of a church: eminently of this world and so increasingly open to worldly corruption.³¹ The agitators in Leeds believed that organs were merely middle-class status symbols “at variance with, and subversive of spirituality in congregational worship.”³² At the 1834 Conference, an alliance of liberal and reforming ministers supported Dr. Samuel Warren in his charge that a Theological Institution under Buntingite control would inevitably lead to “a liturgical service, a splendid worship...a cassocked race of ecclesiastics, and whatever else may render this new, this improved Methodism imposing and magnificent in the eyes of the world!” “But what,” Warren asked, “will become of our original characteristic simplicity and piety? In vain will you endeavour to supply their place by your showy chapels and your pealing organs!”³³ The whole scheme, he declared, was “anti-Methodistical” at bottom.³⁴ In an attempt to

³⁰ The quotation is from Gregory, *Side Lights*, 185.

³¹ Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 106, 120.

³² Petition of the Leeds local preachers quoted in *London Quarterly Review*, July 1888, 276. See also W.R. Ward, ed., *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-1829* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1972), 8; Watts, *Dissenters*, 414.

³³ Samuel Warren, *Remarks on the Wesleyan Theological Institution* (London, 1834), 25 quoted in *London Quarterly Review*, April 1890, 82-3. See also Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 123-4.

³⁴ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 171.

topple the Buntingian Dynasty, both the Leeds dissidents and the Warrenite seceders demanded “the right of interference, on the part of the members of the Church, in the regulation of its affairs”: in other words, lay representation and circuit independence.³⁵

The Buntingites responded to the Leeds and Warrenite agitations by elaborating on their own conception of the pastoral office and its relation to revivalism.³⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the organ dispute, Bunting was more convinced than ever that the itinerant ministry had to have complete power over ““advising for the promotion of the Gospel,’ as well as [the] expulsion, admissions and appointments of preachers” and all lay officials. “The true and scriptural authority of the Ministry,” he wrote in 1829, “must on no account be blinkered or compromised, in these latitudinarian days.”³⁷ Two of Bunting’s supporters, John Beecham and Richard Watson, published pamphlets supporting this position. Creating what was, in effect, a Methodist version of apostolic succession, they argued that God had granted John Wesley authority over the connexion and Wesley, in turn, had passed that authority directly and in undiminished form to the itinerants who followed him.³⁸ This “great and good principle,” so flattering to the ministerial ego, convinced the majority of the itinerant preachers.³⁹ In 1829 they denounced all “novel interpretations of the laws and usages” of Wesleyan Methodism; in

³⁵ George Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, 3rd. ed. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), 3:279, 3:555. See also John Scott to Jabez Bunting, January 23, 1829 in Ward, ed., *Early Correspondence*, 197; W.R. Ward, “Jabez Bunting,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8:697.

³⁶ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 96; Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, xix.

³⁷ JRULM, MARC, Jabez Bunting papers, MAM PLP 18.13.13, Jabez Bunting to John Beecham, April 7, 1829. See also *ibid.*, MAM PLP 18.13.10, Jabez Bunting to Joseph Gostick, November 12, 1828.

³⁸ Gowland, *Methodist Secessions*, 8; Bowmer, *Pastor and People*, 116.

³⁹ The quotation is from Jabez Bunting to Edmund Grindrod, March 2, 1831 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 8.

1835 they rejected the Warrenites' demands for sweeping connexional reform.⁴⁰ Two years later, the Buntingites explicitly urged the Conference to repudiate any distinction between "a revival-preacher and others." Any genuine "revival of the work of God," Theophilus Lessey declared, "must begin in the minister's own heart, and we should look for converts in all our services."⁴¹ Ministerial control linked to the regular means of grace continued to be the Buntingites' disciplinary and doctrinal lodestar.

Bunting and his supporters worked to ensure that the same mindset existed among the ministers on every mission circuit established under the authority of British Wesleyanism. Dominating the WMMS, the Buntingites attempted to achieve this, in the first instance, through the careful selection of personnel. As Missionary Secretaries they were responsible not only for making certain that "no missionary shall be ordained, or sent out until he has been first examined by the Committee and heard preach by a deputation [of] members appointed by the Committee, and approved by them," but also for superintending "the conduct, studies, and pulpit labours of the missionaries while in London" awaiting dispatch overseas.⁴²

The Secretaries took their job seriously, questioning each of the candidates earmarked for the mission work "as to their experience, views of our doctrine, and their preaching abilities."⁴³ These examinations were calculated to ferret out any signs of

⁴⁰ JRULM, MARC, Wesleyan Methodist Church (hereafter WMC), Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1829, 98; Gowland, *Methodist Secessions*, 14.

⁴¹ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 246.

⁴² United Church Archives (hereafter UCA), Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Correspondence (hereafter WMMS-C), Minutes of the General Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (hereafter WMMS), Reel 1, September 27, 1816; *ibid.*, Reel 1, January 22, 1819.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Reel 1, September 11, 1815; *ibid.*, Reel 1, February 23, 1816; *ibid.*, January 10, 1817. The quotation is from *ibid.*, Reel 1, October 13, 1815.

heterodoxy. The prospective missionaries had to prove that they believed “our doctrines” and approved “our discipline.”⁴⁴ The Secretaries asked each candidate whether he had “faith in Christ,” whether he “observed and enforced our discipline” and ended with detailed questions about the doctrines of justification, Christian perfection, the “difference between Justification and Sanctification” and “the difference between Sanctification and *entire* Sanctification”.⁴⁵ Men called into the gospel work in the colonies did not escape this vetting process. The Missionary Secretaries required them to “send to the Committee an account, in writing, of their experiences and views as to the ministry and our doctrines...”.⁴⁶ The WMMS reserved the right to make the final decision about the suitability of any candidates for the missionary work, whether they were in Britain or overseas.

The members of the Buntingian Dynasty also tried to make sure that their missionary colleagues supported the policies of the connexional centre through direct instruction. In 1828, during the battle with the Leeds dissidents, the WMMS issued a general circular, ordering its agents overseas to strike the same balance between revivalism and pastoral authority that the Buntingites aimed to achieve at home. The WMMS told the missionaries to “use the utmost caution, on the one hand, to prevent extravagance and enthusiasm” during any religious awakening that might take place on their circuits and,

⁴⁴ See for example the results of the examinations of eight of the missionaries sent out to the Canadas between 1831 and 1834: School of Oriental and African Studies (hereafter SOAS), Methodist Missionary Society Archives (hereafter MMSA), WMMS, Special Series, Candidate papers, Fiche #1908, October 21, 1831; *ibid.*, Fiche #1909, November 20, 1833; *ibid.*, Fiche #1909, December 16, 1833; *ibid.*, Fiche #1909, March 18, 1834.

⁴⁵ Grindrod, *Compendium of the Laws*, 79-81, 206-9; UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes (Canada/Lower Canada), Reel 3, May 21, 1825. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, June 7, 1819.

“on the other, to guard against checking the good work of God.” To attain this end, the missionaries should be careful never to allow any prayer or class meeting “to be continued to late and improper hours” and should always “[b]e...present...at such meetings,” or, if they could not be present, they should “place them under the direction of the most pious and prudent” of their class leaders. “Suppress all mimicry, or attempts to produce emotion,” the Missionary Secretaries wrote, “Let God work, and all will then be well; human passions never did, and never can convert a soul.”⁴⁷ Similarly, in 1835, when the Conference, in the wake of the Warrenite secession, revised the connexion’s rules about the expulsion of members and lay petitioning, the WMMS produced another circular explaining the official Buntingite position. These changes were not to “be regarded in the light of concessions to those, who were doing the utmost to agitate and disturb the peace of the Societies for the purpose of revolutionizing Methodism.” “The Conference neither expected nor wished to conciliate them,” the Missionary Secretaries added. The aim was merely to clarify preexisting connexional law and, while ensuring some lay rights, to maintain the power of the ministry.⁴⁸

In terms of supporting the structures of Buntingite connexional government, the British Wesleyan missionaries stationed in Lower and Upper Canada did not disappoint their leaders. They came down solidly on the side of the Buntingian Dynasty in its battle with the Warrenites. At their District Meeting in May 1835, the missionaries in Lower Canada modestly resolved that

having painfully experienced the great disadvantages of
being appointed to the foreign work with a very defective

⁴⁷ SOAS, MMSA, WMMS, Home and General, Circulars, Fiche #1987, August 28, 1828.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Fiche #1988, August 31, 1835.

ministerial and theological training, and believing as they do that a previous course of judicious study, and strict discipline would have greatly contributed to their usefulness as Christian missionaries, [they] were rejoiced to learn that the last Conference had determined to commence a Theological Institution to aid the junior preachers in their studies.

They also hailed “its establishment as a most important and efficient auxiliary in the great work of evangelizing the world” and announced their determination “to afford it all the support in our power.”⁴⁹ A month earlier, in Upper Canada, the General Superintendent of Missions, Joseph Stinson, signified his support for the home authorities in more trenchant terms, informing one of the Missionary Secretaries that all of the British Wesleyan preachers in that colony “deeply sympathize with you in your troubles in the church at home; what a vile fellow that Warren must be, a party headed by such a leader must be contemptible indeed...”. “I do not doubt,” Stinson continued, echoing Bunting’s 1803 distinction between divisions from and within the connexion, “but we as a church shall in the end gain by the loss of all such persons as entertain his opinions and imbibe his spirit.”⁵⁰ A year later, the missionaries in Lower Canada took up the same militant strain, declaring, in their annual report, that, though they were “removed at a great distance from the scene of the ungodly and anxious strife in which our connexion has been involved,” they had “received with delight the intelligence of the noble and successful stand which you have been divinely assisted to make.”⁵¹ The British Wesleyans in the Canadas would remain steadfast in their loyalty to the forms of Buntingite rule.

⁴⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, Reel 3, May 15, 1835. All the support in their power amounted to individual contributions totaling £9 9s.

⁵⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 127, #6, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, April 21, 1835.

⁵¹ UCA, WMMS-C, District Minutes, Canada/Lower Canada, Reel 3, June 16, 1836.

The missionaries were less successful, however, in keeping to the Buntingite straight and narrow where worship was concerned. To be sure, between 1815 and the mid-1820s they made a determined effort to transplant the Buntingite version of the proper relationship between pastoral authority and revivalism in the Canadas. Initially, the presence of a clearly definable ‘other’ helped these British Wesleyans maintain a sense of cultural unity with the home connexion. There was much about the itinerant preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, who began to establish circuits in the Canadas in the early 1790s, calculated to shock missionaries raised in the school of Bunting. In terms of pastoral authority alone, these American Methodists seemed to reject the notion of ministerial supremacy outlined in the Liverpool *Minutes*. According to Richard Reece, one of Bunting’s chief supporters, the Methodist Episcopal preachers treated the people with deference rather than the other way around.⁵² To make matters worse, the American Methodist ministers and laity, in both the United States and the Canadas, fervently embraced what were known as the ‘extraordinary means of grace.’ They believed that the regular means of grace, while beneficial, could easily degenerate into mere religious formalism. In their view, every community needed a periodic jolt of mass evangelism in order to facilitate the spread and consolidation of Christ’s saving work.⁵³

This Methodist Episcopal approach to revivalism found its most characteristic expression in the camp meeting. By the early 1800s, these often rowdy

⁵² JRULM, MARC, Richard Reece papers, MAM PLP 88.21.5, Richard Reece to Jabez Bunting, March 20, 1824. Reece was visiting the United States when he wrote this letter.

⁵³ Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 128.

frontier gatherings had become an accepted feature of American Methodist worship.⁵⁴ In 1807, the same year that the British Conference banned camp meetings in England, Bishop Francis Asbury declared that he was prepared to defy “[a]ll earth and hell,” to “endure fire, imprisonment, and death” sooner than give them up.⁵⁵ They were “[t]he battle ax and weapon of war” that promised to “break down walls of wickedness...”. Between 1805 and 1830, the Methodist Episcopalals in Upper Canada held at least sixty-eight camp meetings and both ministers and laity expected each of them to end in “remarkable showers of saving grace and loud shouts of praise to God.”⁵⁶ They also anticipated similar results from the regular means of grace. Methodist Episcopal ministers like William Case “cried aloud” on the docksides of the Niagara river or in the woods around York, Upper Canada, basing their extempore sermons on texts such as “Why will ye die,” literally hoping to frighten the hell out of their hearers.⁵⁷ They had little use for the more cultivated worship of the British Wesleyans.⁵⁸

The first British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas demonstrated, in turn, that they had nothing but disdain for the Methodist Episcopalals’ methods of

⁵⁴ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 49-56; Russell Richey, *The Methodist Conference in America: A History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 59-61.

⁵⁵ Francis Asbury to Stith Meade, July 30, 1807 in J. Manning Potts, et al., eds., *The Journals and Letters of Francis Asbury* (London: Epworth Press, 1958), 3:370. See also Francis Asbury to Jacob Gruber, August 6, 1809 in *ibid.*, 3:411.

⁵⁶ Arthur E. Kewley, “Camp Meetings in Early Canadian Methodism (Before 1830),” *Papers of the Canadian Methodist Historical Society* 2 (1980), 18-19. The quotation is from Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), James Dougall papers, Andrew Prindle to James Dougall, July 4, 1807.

⁵⁷ UCA, William Case papers, Journal, August 27, 1808. See also Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 40-2

⁵⁸ See for example Emory University, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Archives and Special Collections (hereafter Emory), William M’Kendree papers, Box 1, File 12, Isaac Puffen to William Case, April 2, 1820. Puffen, a Methodist Episcopal minister stationed at Kingston, described the British missionary James Booth as “a smooth easy preacher but not very great.”

spreading scriptural holiness through the land. They regularly denounced the American ministers as uneducated, disorganized enthusiasts.⁵⁹ Near Cornwall in 1817, Henry Pope declared that the “American preachers in this country...are by no means acceptable, partly owing to...their extensive ignorance and uncouth conduct.”⁶⁰ Two years later, John DePutron pointed out that many Methodist Episcopal congregations were being taken care of by “young men...who previous to their conversion had never studied Divinity...”. “The sacred work has suffered from their well-meant endeavours,” he added.⁶¹ Thomas Catterick elaborated on these charges in 1820: the American Methodist preachers were “so ignorant and enthusiastic as to render their discourses ridiculous in the ears of respectable and well informed people.” At Methodist Episcopal meetings, tumbling, clapping, praying aloud and shouting were all common occurrences. The American Methodist ministers smoked in the pulpit and preached from the most outlandish texts, including “‘look not on me because I am black,’ ‘Sit on a large pot,’ ‘Top not come down’...”. “In short,” Catterick concluded, “no one brought up in England could suppose reasonable beings professing to worship God would act as they do.”⁶² The missionaries were also dismayed by what they regarded as the almost complete absence of the regular means of grace among the American Methodists. When, for example, John Hick first visited Stanstead in the Eastern Townships in mid-1821, he found that there were only eight members in the society, none of whom had attended a class meeting for over two

⁵⁹ In this the missionaries were stealing a march on John Strachan, who made very similar charges against the Methodist Episcopalians in Upper Canada in 1825. See Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 24-5.

⁶⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 2, File 27, #5, Henry Pope to James Wood, February 11, 1817.

⁶¹ Ibid., Box 3, File 35, #30, John DePutron to Joseph Taylor, November 15, 1819.

⁶² Ibid., Box 4, File 39, #30, Thomas Catterick to William Temple, September 13, 1820. See also *ibid.*, Box 5, File 44, #37, Thomas Catterick to Joseph Taylor, May 1, 1821.

years, despite the fact that the Methodist Episcopal *Minutes* recorded a society of 200 members.⁶³ Like their revivalist counterparts in Britain, the American Methodists appeared to be more concerned with creating excitement and getting converts than with creating a viable Church.

The missionaries did their best to make up for the perceived failings of their Methodist Episcopal brethren. Stationed in Kingston in 1817, Thomas Catterick planned to introduce some of the key components of the regular means of grace: class meetings, love feasts and the administering of the sacraments once every four months.⁶⁴ The missionaries tried to establish the same pattern of formal worship on every circuit they rode.⁶⁵ It was, after all, the only way to achieve lasting results: in 1822, Henry Pope informed the Missionary Secretaries that the “cause of the Redeemer” was reviving on the Melbourne circuit, “but it has been exclusively in those places where prayer and class meetings have been properly regarded.”⁶⁶

This mode of proceeding was effective on other circuits as well. James Booth wrote from Kingston in 1819, noting that “of late in this town, we have seen...something like British Methodism, the life and power of God without enthusiasm.” A month later, Booth described the class meetings in the town as “lively and well attended...Indeed I can sometimes imagine myself among my praying friends in *Manchester* for a greater resemblance of it I never witnessed in point of life, and power of

⁶³ Ibid., Box 5, File 44, #26, John Hick to Joseph Taylor, June 5, 1821.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Box 2, File 27, #10, Thomas Catterick to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, August 12, 1817.

⁶⁵ See for example *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #17, Robert L. Lusher to Joseph Taylor, July 12, 1819; *ibid.*, Box 4, File 39, #22, Richard Williams to Joseph Taylor, June 16, 1820; *ibid.*, Box 9, File 59, #24, James Knowlan to George Morley, October 15, 1825.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Box 6, File 48, #26, Henry Pope to Richard Watson, August 12, 1822.

God...”.⁶⁷ In 1820, on the Fort Wellington circuit, John DePutron conducted a “happy class meeting...The work appears to be deep without confusion or noise.”⁶⁸ For his part, Richard Pope was glad to report on the “large and well behaved assembly” he encountered on his circuit in 1823.⁶⁹ One of the leading British Wesleyan laymen of Montreal, William Lunn, attended a meeting at Odelltown in 1824 and believed himself “in England” by the time it was over.⁷⁰ Here, it would seem, was the very image and transcript of Buntingite Methodism on the imperial margins: orderly, effective and not at all American.

All of this made excellent copy for a connexional press controlled by Bunting and his supporters, demonstrating the efficacy of their conservative policies no matter what the context.⁷¹ Such generally sunny reports, however, increasingly expressed missionary aspirations as much as actual conditions in Lower or Upper Canada. Other letters, unpublished in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, indicate that, from the late 1810s onwards, several factors began to undermine the unity of opinion that existed between the missionaries and their connexional leaders about the overall utility of the regular means of grace. The missionaries found, for instance, that the back country circuits’ geographic isolation from the urban centres of Lower and Upper Canada often made it very difficult to establish those “means of grace peculiar to the Methodists.”⁷² This was especially a problem when it came to the class meeting. Into the 1830s and

⁶⁷ Ibid., Box 3, File 35, #21, James Booth to Joseph Taylor, October 11, 1819; *ibid.*, Box 3, File 35, #32, James Booth to Joseph Taylor, November 23, 1819. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁸ Ibid., Box 3, File 39, #10, John DePutron to Joseph Taylor, April 10, 1820.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Box 7, File 52, #28, Richard Pope to Jabez Bunting, October 23, 1823 (journal entry for September 30, 1823).

⁷⁰ Ibid., Box 8, File 56, #3, William Lunn to Richard Watson, February 3, 1824.

⁷¹ See, for example, the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, May 1818, 388; *ibid.*, January 1819, 76; *ibid.*, October 1819, 795; *ibid.*, September 1822, 608-9.

⁷² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 4, File 39, #28, Richard Pope to Joseph Taylor, September 9, 1820.

early 1840s, settlers rarely attended classes regularly and, when they did, they related “little of their religious experience, doing little but exhort[ing] others.”⁷³ The task of instituting the regular means of grace could, however, be equally problematic in urban centres like Montreal and Quebec City, where business concerns tended to distract even the most devout of laymen and women from the care of their own souls whenever the St. Lawrence was open to navigation.⁷⁴ The “spirit of migration” among the colonial population also contributed to such worldly declension. It constantly played havoc with the membership of the District. “Many who have been brought to God since I came here,” John Hick wrote while stationed in Quebec City in 1819, “after having continued with us a few months have removed either into the United States or Upper Canada.”⁷⁵ Similar complaints reached the WMMS in the mid-1820s and 1830s.⁷⁶ The regular means of grace simply were not sufficient to keep the flock intact.

The WMMS’s rapidly shifting financial and connexional policies made a difficult situation that much worse. Beginning in 1824, the WMMS began to call on its agents in the Canadas to produce better results in terms of both membership and fundraising.⁷⁷ No matter how often the laity of Montreal or Quebec City requested

“such a minister as is generally appointed to some of the larger towns in England,” the

⁷³ Ibid., Box 17, File 106, #9, William Squire to Robert Alder, December 6, 1833. See also AO, George Pashley papers, Journal, April, 1834, 16; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 23, File 153, #17, Edmund Ingalls to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, March 29, 1839; *ibid.*, Box 15, File 170, #5, Henry Lanton to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, March 29, 1841.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Box 3, File 30, #23, Robert L. Lusher to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 2, 1818; *ibid.*, Box 13, File 82, #23, John Hick to George Morley, July 13, 1829.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Box 3, File 35, #18, John Hick to Joseph Taylor, June 15, 1819.

⁷⁶ Ibid., Box 9, File 59, #19, Henry Pope to John Mason, September 1, 1825; *ibid.*, Box 13, File 82, #23, John Hick to George Morley, July 13, 1829; *ibid.*, Box 20, File 129, #1, William Croscombe to Robert Alder, October 24, 1836.

⁷⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Minutes of the General Committee of the WMMS, Reel 1, November 3, 1824; *ibid.*, Reel 1, October 19, 1825.

Missionary Secretaries rarely complied.⁷⁸ They proved equally recalcitrant when the missionaries themselves begged for reinforcements or for books and other publications that would allow them to disseminate “our principles...here as in England...”.⁷⁹ The necessary funds simply were not available.⁸⁰ The British Conference’s détente with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1820 and its union with the Canada Conference in 1833 only added another layer of complexity to the relationship between connexional centre and periphery. In each instance, the WMMS ordered its agents in Lower and Upper Canada, initially at least, to cooperate with their North American brethren and to honour the spirit of Methodist ‘oneness’ that was supposed to exist among the various churches established by John Wesley. The Missionary Secretaries seemed to overlook the fact, however, that this policy contradicted the more general instructions they issued, such as the circular of 1828, calling on all ministers stationed overseas to suppress outbreaks of popular revivalism: the very type of revivalism embraced by both the American and Canadian Methodists.

The union of 1833 proved to be the major turning point in the missionaries’ approach to popular revivalism. Under pressure to produce better results within their own sphere of influence, they could hardly help noticing that the extraordinary means of grace had one definite advantage over the regular means of grace on the vast, cash-poor frontier circuits of America: overwhelming success. By the 1830s the

⁷⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 8, File 56, #3, William Lunn to Richard Watson, February 3, 1824; *ibid.*, Box 12, File 137, #12, Peter Langlois to Jabez Bunting, June 9, 1837.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 7, File 52, #20, James Knowlan to Joseph Taylor, October 30, 1823. See also *ibid.*, Box 10, File 64, #9, William Burt to George Morley, July 15, 1826.

⁸⁰ J.I. Little pinpoints this as the main reason for the missionaries’ embrace of some aspects of American-style revivalism. See Little, *Borderland Religion*, 219-20.

Methodist Episcopal Church was well on its way to becoming the largest Protestant denomination in the United States; its Canadian offshoot was also expanding rapidly.⁸¹ In the new era of transatlantic unity decreed by the WMMS this must have been a tempting image – far too tempting for many a missionary to resist. Two years after the agreement of 1820, John DePutron became the first British Wesleyan minister in Lower Canada to attend a Methodist Episcopal camp meeting.⁸² Within seven years of the union of 1833, the missionaries went much further, holding at least half a dozen camp meetings of their own, often with American or Canadian Methodist help.⁸³ The financial and membership demands of the WMMS had opened the door to this kind of cooperation and the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas strode through it. At one camp meeting, near Hatley, Lower Canada, in 1838, four Methodist Episcopal preachers from the New Hampshire Conference assisted the resident missionary.⁸⁴ In 1841 and 1842 another British Wesleyan preacher travelled to the United States to attend several camp meetings there and, in the latter year, conducted one at Odelltown with two Methodist Episcopalians in attendance.⁸⁵

⁸¹ David Hempton, “Methodist Growth in Transatlantic Perspective, ca. 1770-1850,” in Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger, eds., *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 53-5, 56-8; Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 75-6.

⁸² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 6, File 48, #38, John DePutron to Richard Watson, September 16, 1822 (journal entry for September 16, 1822).

⁸³ In addition to the examples cited below see *Christian Guardian* (hereafter *CG*), October 21, 1835, 198; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 121, #21, James Booth to Robert Alder, November 26, 1836; UCA, Benjamin Slight papers, Box 1, File 1, Journal, May 23, 1836; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 20, File 135, #2, Benjamin Slight to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, June 1, 1836; UCA, Benjamin Slight papers, Box 1, File 1, Journal, October 2, 1840.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Box 22, File 145, #27, Edmund Botterell to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, October 11, 1838. See also Little, *Borderland Religion*, 187-8.

⁸⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 170, #24, William Martin Harvard to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 24, 1841; *ibid.*, Box 26, File 178, #25, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, October 29, 1842.

The American and later Canadian Methodists were equally helpful when the missionaries began to hold protracted meetings – a form of indoor camp meeting first developed in New England. Large numbers of people, under pastoral supervision, gathered for preaching and prayer in a local chapel every evening for anywhere from a few days to a few months.⁸⁶ When James Knowlan organized one such meeting in Stanstead in 1828 a “Brother Peck” from Vermont was present.⁸⁷ In 1835, when protracted meetings led to a major revival in Montreal and Quebec City, both American and Canadian Methodist ministers played a part. The missionaries were thrilled with the results: “Montreal,” Joseph Stinson wrote, “is like Heaven on earth.”⁸⁸

The missionaries did not, however, entirely abandon that wariness of popular revivalism which Bunting and his fellow Missionary Secretaries had so assiduously hammered into their heads. They attempted to secure the benefits of American-style revivalism without suffering the consequences of its sometimes highly emotional nature. Some missionaries went to great lengths to ensure that the extraordinary means of grace fit as comfortably as possible within the WMMS’s parameters of allowable forms of worship. At a camp meeting near Odelltown in 1834, James Booth called in the militia, had a magistrate on hand, and set the strictest possible rules of conduct.⁸⁹ Other missionaries found that less extreme measures worked equally

⁸⁶ Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 129-31; Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 79.

⁸⁷ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 12, File 76, #18, James Knowlan to George Morley, October 24, 1828.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Box 19, File 121, #7, William Croscombe to Robert Alder, March 18, 1835; *ibid.*, Box 19, File 121, #10, John Tomkins to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, April 7, 1835. The quotation is from *ibid.*, Box 19, File 121, #9, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 4, 1835.

⁸⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 121, #21, James Booth to Robert Alder, November 26, 1834.

well. After a militia-free camp meeting in Amherstburg in 1836, Benjamin Slight assured the Missionary Secretaries that “[t]here was the utmost propriety & order preserved & much fixed attention was paid to the word” among a crowd of “from 800 to 1000 people.”⁹⁰ Similarly, in 1838, Edmund Botterell made sure to note that “[t]he congregation” at the Hatley camp meeting was “very attentive and unexpectedly large...”⁹¹ Protracted meetings were even more of a sure thing. “[T]he desired good is produced,” James Knowlan explained in 1828, “without any of the inconveniences attending Camp Meetings.”⁹² The revival services in Montreal in 1835 were “carried on without any unseemly disorder” and resulted in the conversion of “some of the most respectable persons who have for many years attended our chapel & supported our cause...”⁹³ In other words, among the British Wesleyans in the Canadas, the extraordinary means of grace produced the same result as the regular means of grace: worship amenable to pastoral control and acceptable to the leading laity.

Tentative as the missionaries’ initial embrace of popular revivalism may have been in the context of the enthusiastic sects that flourished in western New York, New England, and in the Eastern Townships, it nonetheless produced a definite sense of unease among the members of the Buntingian Dynasty. As editors of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, Bunting and his supporters were happy to print reports of other

⁹⁰ UCA, Benjamin Slight papers, Box 1, File 1, Journal, August 20, 1836.

⁹¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 22, File 145, #27, Edmund Botterell to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, October 11, 1838; *Wesleyan*, October 1, 1840, 37. See also the missionary William Martin Harvard’s defense of camp meetings in *CG*, July 11, 1838, 42.

⁹² UCA, WMMS-C, Box 12, File 76, #18, James Knowlan to George Morley, October 24, 1828. See also *ibid.*, Box 18, File 112, #19, James Booth to Robert Alder, December 3, 1834.

⁹³ *CG*, November 15, 1837, 6; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 121, #9, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 4, 1835.

revivals in Lower and Upper Canada, especially any that stressed the effectiveness of the regular means of grace, but no account of the missionaries' camp or protracted meetings ever appeared in its pages.⁹⁴ This policy of studied silence was consistent with the connexional leadership's decision in the early 1800s to suppress all accounts of the first camp meetings held in the United States. Wesleyanism in Britain had to be protected from any transatlantic infection.⁹⁵ Even in 1835, when the Missionary Secretaries bowed to the logic of their own call for Methodistical 'oneness' in the Canadas and endorsed the protracted meeting as a means of grace "eminently owned of God," they were careful to qualify their approval by adding "in America."⁹⁶ It had no place on the eastern shores of the Atlantic. Feeling the weight of Buntingite disapproval, in 1839 the chairman of the Lower Canada District, William Martin Harvard, responded with a sermon specifically aimed at defending protracted meetings. While attempting to justify this extraordinary means of grace, however, he had to acknowledge that it formed "no part of the usage of our Connexion, in the Parent Country" and that it was "there regarded, as wholly of transatlantic origin."⁹⁷ When he sent a copy of his sermon to Jabez Bunting, Harvard also noted that he was aware that "the probability is that the idea has already been found unsuitable to the position of our home connexion"; he hoped, nevertheless, that the great

⁹⁴ In 1836 the editor declined to print the missionary William Martin Harvard's account of "our Protracted Meeting" in Montreal. See JRULM, MARC, William Martin Harvard papers, MAM PLP 50.59.35, William Martin Harvard to Thomas Jackson, August 22, 1837; *ibid.*, MAM PLP 50.59.13, William Martin Harvard to Jabez Bunting, November 11, 1839.

⁹⁵ Hatch, *Democratization*, 50.

⁹⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Outgoing correspondence, Robert Alder to the Chairman of the Canada District, March 23, 1835. Cf. Little, *Borderland Religion*, 187 who sees Alder's letter as an uncomplicated approval of protracted meetings.

⁹⁷ William Martin Harvard, *Special Efforts for the Souls of Men, Justified, and Observers of Such Efforts, Admonished, in a Discourse delivered in St. Anne Street Chapel, Quebec* (Quebec: William Neilson, 1839), 16.

man would use his influence to see this mode of worship adopted as “a kind of allowable irregularity among us...”.⁹⁸ That was not going to happen.

Despite their support for the Buntingites during the Warrenite secession in the mid-1830s, a gulf was opening up between the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas and the WMMS. During the 1840s, the latter’s general approach to revivalism and their acceptance of yet another extraordinary means of grace increasingly aligned them with the forces of Wesleyan liberalism and reform within the British connexion. This most radical of transformations was initiated by a new approach to spiritual renewal developed in western New York in the 1830s: professional revivalism. Ministers like the Presbyterian Charles Finney began to travel the burned-over district with the specific purpose of redeeming hundreds and sometimes thousands of the unrepentant. A far cry from the stump preachers of earlier times, they were mostly well-educated men, determined to bring about large-scale conversions in as orderly a manner as possible through a battery of specialized techniques known as the ‘new measures.’⁹⁹

James Caughey became one of the most successful practitioners of these new measures after he joined the Methodist Episcopal ministry in 1832.¹⁰⁰ Before he put in an appearance in any town or city, Caughey instructed the local ministers to “set all *your people a-praying*.”¹⁰¹ Once the ground was well prepared, he delivered sermons that

⁹⁸ JRULM, MARC, William Martin Harvard papers, MAM PLP 50.59.13, William Martin Harvard to Jabez Bunting, November 11, 1839.

⁹⁹ On Finney and the professionalization of revivalism see Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), 151-69.

¹⁰⁰ Carwardine, *Transatlantic*, 110; Peter Bush, “James Caughey” in *DCB*, 11:168-9.

¹⁰¹ JRULM, MARC, James Caughey papers, MAM PLP 23.10.7, James Caughey to an unknown correspondent, April 12, 1847. Emphasis in original.

concentrated on the dread possibility of eternal damnation: “And I hereby notify you,” he told one congregation in a wholly characteristic moment, “that a...failure here, involves the soul in all the horrors of Hell hereafter. The loss of Heaven implies Hell, as sure as the loss of eyesight includes darkness.”¹⁰² After such sermons, Caughey held lengthy and intense prayer meetings, demanding the immediate repentance of all sinners present. If any came forward, he led them to the communion rail, or anxious bench, at the front of the church and, with the entire congregation looking on, exhorted them to find salvation.¹⁰³ After a series of services lasting anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, the results were often spectacular – Methodist membership sometimes as much as doubled by the time Caughey was finished in any particular area.¹⁰⁴

Caughey’s success also derived from a new approach to old Methodist ideas. He was an ardent exponent of the doctrine of holiness. This doctrine played on the distinction John Wesley had made between the two blessings of ‘justification’ and ‘entire sanctification’ (or Christian perfection). Wesley defined the former as that moment at conversion when the sinner felt that God had forgiven all of his or her past sins. The state of entire sanctification implied a further spiritual development: the convert became utterly committed to God and so saved from the power of future sin.¹⁰⁵ Caughey believed that entire sanctification was essential for living a full, Christian life and

¹⁰² James Caughey, *The Triumph of Truth, and Continental Letters and Sketches from the Journals, Letters, and Sermons of the Rev. James Caughey* (Philadelphia: Higgins and Perkinpine, 1857), 70.

¹⁰³ Carwardine, *Transatlantic*, 120.

¹⁰⁴ Bush, “Caughey,” 11:169; Watts, *Dissenters*, 616.

¹⁰⁵ Kenneth J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 91-3, 135; Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), 389-90, 397.

that there was no need for gradual spiritual growth between the two blessings. Both justification and entire sanctification could and should come at once.¹⁰⁶ This latter stipulation, however, ran counter to what Bunting and his supporters chose to see as correct Methodist doctrine.¹⁰⁷ Originally, Wesley may have believed that justification and entire sanctification could occur instantaneously; but, by the 1760s, in response to antinomian excesses among some of his own preachers, he had changed his mind, arguing that there had to be gradual spiritual development between justification and entire sanctification.¹⁰⁸ Even after a sinner had experienced justification, temptation would remain.¹⁰⁹ Wesley also stated that, once achieved, entire sanctification (but not justification) could be lost through human flaws and spiritual laxity. Prayer and striving for holy living had to be maintained.¹¹⁰ It was a doctrine perfectly calculated to uphold the pastoral office within Wesleyan Methodism. If entire sanctification could not be gained in an instant and could be lost once achieved, ministerial oversight would remain an essential part of every Methodist layman and woman's life. Of course, the opposite also held true.

¹⁰⁶ D.W. Bebbington, "Holiness in Nineteenth-Century British Methodism," in W.M. Jacob and Nigel Yates, eds., *Crown and Mitre: Religion and Society in Northern Europe since the Reformation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 168-9; Peter Bush, "The Rev. James Caughey and Wesleyan Methodist Revivalism in Canada West, 1851-1856," *Ontario History* 79, no. 3 (September 1987), 23.

¹⁰⁷ Kent, *Holding the Fort*, 315-16.

¹⁰⁸ Bebbington, "Holiness," 164; Collins, *John Wesley*, 186-9, 193-5; Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 395-401.

¹⁰⁹ Jean Orcibal, "The Theological Originality of John Wesley and Continental Spirituality," in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 1:104. See also John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions* (London: Epworth Press, 1944), 89.

¹¹⁰ Rupert Davies, "The People Called Methodists – 1. 'Our Doctrines,'" in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 1:169-70. See also Wesley, *Sermons*, 462.

The disruptive potential of Caughey's message was troubling to some of the British Wesleyan missionaries in the Canadas. Camp or protracted meetings might be permissible, but professional revivalism seemed to strike at the heart of Methodist spirituality and at the authority of the ministry. In 1835 Edmund Botterell blamed what he perceived to be the poor state of Quebec City Wesleyanism on "a religious apathy" which had followed the "very great excitement" that Caughey created earlier in the year. Repeating Jabez Bunting's denunciation of popular revivalism in early nineteenth-century Yorkshire, Botterell declared that "[t]he gracious work which was then effected" by this professional revivalist "was characterized rather by its extent than its hallowing depth...". In response, he tried to establish the regular means of grace among the new converts in an effort to prevent any further spiritual backsliding.¹¹¹ John Hetherington, stationed in Montreal during the revival of 1840-1, was equally unimpressed with the spiritual impact of Caughey's new measures; they were too mechanical and, he stated, "nowhere is true and fervent and established piety more scarce, than where these proceedings are most frequent."¹¹²

Another missionary, Benjamin Slight, agreed with this criticism. During a revival on his own circuit in early 1841 he wrote that he hoped that it would be "of somewhat better character" than those "generally seen in this country." "There is too much effort to produce excitement," he noted, "They are too often 'got up'. In consequence of this the greater part *fall away*, & a general deadness ensues." It all served

¹¹¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 121, #16, Edmund Botterell to Robert Alder, September 19, 1835.

¹¹² J.C. Leppington to Jabez Bunting, May 25, 1846 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 340-1.

to bring religion into “disrespect.”¹¹³ It did no good for the pastoral office either. During his time in Montreal, Hetherington later claimed, Caughey tried to monopolize the city’s pulpits and, when he did not get his way, attempted to turn the lay officials of the circuit against the missionaries. Hetherington, having returned to Britain in 1845, urged the leaders of the home connexion to write to Caughey’s bishop in America “and to request his immediate recall on the ground that his longer stay in this country was likely to be injurious rather than beneficial....”¹¹⁴ These preachers were keeping the flag of transatlantic doctrinal and disciplinary conservatism flying.

From the mid-1830s onwards, however, such voices of opposition became a distinct minority within the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas. In 1835 Caughey came north along with another minister from the Troy Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in order to take part in the protracted meetings being held at Montreal and Quebec City. Many missionaries and laity were impressed with his message and his ability to generate quick results. At Montreal, according to Joseph Stinson, both Caughey and his companion were “cordially received” by the leading laity and his efforts were “rendered an unspeakable blessing to the church...”. At Quebec City, he preached “very powerful sermons” and produced an “uncommon excitement”: “many were alarmed and led to flee from the wrath to come.” In a matter of weeks approximately 370 were converted.¹¹⁵ Caughey was mainly able to produce such results,

¹¹³ UCA, Benjamin Slight papers, Box 1, File 2, Journal, January 18, 1841. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁴ J.C. Leppington to Jabez Bunting, May 25, 1846 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 339-40.

¹¹⁵ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 19, File 121, #9, Joseph Stinson to Robert Alder, March 4, 1835; *ibid.*, Box 19, File 121, #10, John Tomkins to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, April 7, 1835.

the missionary William Croscombe noted approvingly, “by explaining and applying the great doctrine and privilege of Christian perfection.”¹¹⁶ In 1837 some of “our best friends, and some, too, of great intelligence and respectability” among the Montreal laity urged William Martin Harvard to invite Caughey to conduct another set of revival services in their city.¹¹⁷

By 1840 the leading laymen and women of Montreal were falling all over themselves in the rush to aid Caughey’s progress, praising him as “a great revivalist” and “one who lives near to God.”¹¹⁸ Completely sold on this new extraordinary means of grace, Harvard also trumpeted Caughey’s coming, describing him as “very respectable in his preaching talent – very devoted in his piety – very ardent in his zeal – very brotherly in his spirit – and very successful in his labours,” preaching entire sanctification every afternoon at three o’clock in the Quebec City chapels, while carefully respecting the pastoral authority of the regularly-appointed ministers.¹¹⁹ Over the winter, in Quebec City alone, more than 200 sinners were converted “and a quarter of that number fully sanctified.”¹²⁰ Many of the missionaries were eager to assign most, if not all, of the credit for such gospel successes to Caughey’s professional revivalism.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Box 19, File 121, #10, William Croscombe to Robert Alder, March 18, 1835; *CG*, March 25, 1835, 78.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, November 15, 1837, 6.

¹¹⁸ James Caughey, *Letters on Various Subjects*, 3rd ed. (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1846), 1:19. The quotation is from UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 161, #19, William Lunn to Robert Alder, October 12, 1840.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Box 24, File 161, #23, William Martin Harvard to Elijah Hoole, November 21, 1840.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Box 25, File 170, #4, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, March 25, 1841. See also John Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries; or, the Canadian Itinerants’ Memorial* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1867-77), 4:330.

¹²¹ See for example *Wesleyan*, February 18, 1841, 119; *ibid.*, March 4, 1841, 28.

Some of the British Wesleyans in Lower Canada took their enthusiasm for Caughey even further. They began to see it as their duty to introduce him and his new measures to their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic. They firmly believed that they knew what was best for British Wesleyanism both at home and abroad. As early as 1835, William Lunn and the British-appointed President of the Canada Conference, William Lord, attempted to recruit James Caughey for the WMMS. Lunn also noted that “if we are spared next year...he is to accompany me to England.” Caughey would be “a most useful man in Manchester,” he suggested to Jabez Bunting.¹²² In November 1840, William Martin Harvard proposed that, “should Mr. Caughey come to London,” he should be “encouraged” to hold revival services “in one of our metropolitan chapels.” “*Horseferry Road* I should think a good place to begin,” he added.¹²³

Six months later, Harvard took definite steps to smooth Caughey’s way to England. He wrote to Bunting informing him that “I have taken the liberty to give [Caughey] an introduction to yourself,” so he could have “the advantage of your valuable advice as to how he should proceed” once he arrived on the other side of the Atlantic. He suggested, once again, that Caughey should be invited to hold a protracted meeting at the Horseferry Road chapel in Westminster and gave him another letter of introduction to the minister William Vevers to help him navigate his new surroundings. “[T]hough I had nothing to do with projecting his visit to Europe,” Harvard concluded, “I am not without

¹²² JRULM, MARC, William Lunn papers, MAM PLP 71.15.3, William Lunn to Jabez Bunting, June 17, 1835.

¹²³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 161, #23, William Martin Harvard to Elijah Hoole, November 21, 1840. Emphasis in original. See also *ibid.*, Box 24, File 161, #19, William Lunn to Robert Alder, October 12, 1840.

hope it may be also divinely owned.”¹²⁴ At the end of June 1841, the laymen and women of Quebec City and Montreal demonstrated their continued support for the American revivalist in the most concrete of ways, anticipating Caughey’s material wants “for some time to come.” The leading friends at Quebec City also gave him a cheque for £300 to defray all the expenses of his passage to Liverpool.¹²⁵ Accompanied on the voyage across the Atlantic by the missionaries Matthew Richey and Ephraim Evans,¹²⁶ Caughey came to Britain as much a representative of British Wesleyanism in the Canadas as of American Methodism.

The reception that Caughey received from the connexional leadership in Britain demonstrated just how far many of the missionaries and laity in Lower Canada had drifted from their Buntingite moorings.¹²⁷ As Caughey travelled from circuit to circuit, Bunting and his supporters gave him the coolest of receptions. Like John Hetherington in Montreal, they saw this professional revivalist as a menace to their conception of the pastoral office. At the 1843 Conference, one of Bunting’s allies, George Osborn, complained that Caughey wanted “to preach twice every Sunday, and to have exclusive possession of the pulpit for the rest of the week” in Leeds. He was superseding the authority of the stationed ministry. The next year, Osborn raised this

¹²⁴ JRULM, MARC, William Martin Harvard papers, MAM PLP 50.59.14, William Martin Harvard to Jabez Bunting, June 10, 1841.

¹²⁵ Caughey, *Letters*, 1:76-7; J.C. Leppington to Jabez Bunting, May 25, 1846 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 340.

¹²⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 25, File 170, #16, Thomas Turner to Robert Alder, June 23, 1841. Caughey wrote that Richey and Evans made for “agreeable company” on the voyage. See Caughey, *Letters*, 1:75, 1:78.

¹²⁷ Cf. Bush, “The Rev. James Caughey,” 234 who argues that “Canada was a half-way house for American evangelists who had their eye on Britain” and that “it became a testing ground for American-style revivalism in a semi-British milieu.”

point again and Bunting, serving his third term as President of the Conference, declared that “[t]he brethren who have given up their pulpits to Mr. Caughey have been guilty of a violation of godly discipline.” In response, a majority of the ministers decided that no preacher would be permitted to give up his chapel for more than a month at a time.¹²⁸

This new regulation, however, did nothing to stop Caughey’s progress through the Wesleyan connexion. The Buntingites were not amused. Instead of welcoming Caughey with open arms, William Vevers wrote from Derby early in 1845, stating that “some of the simpletons...who countenance Caughey cannot or will not see the tendency of their own proceedings.”¹²⁹ “I understand Mr. Caughey is still living in this country and occupying our pulpits year after year,” Bunting said at the Conference of 1845, “and yet attending no Meeting where he can be questioned as to his teaching and his conduct. This is a new thing, and a bad thing.”¹³⁰ By 1846 Bunting and his supporters were frantic to bring Caughey to heel. If that did not happen, the Conference’s authority might be a dead letter.

The Buntingites also objected to Caughey’s approach to the doctrine of holiness and to revivalism in general. They feared that Caughey’s view of entire sanctification – that it was necessary for a fully Christian existence – would split the connexion between those who had received that blessing and those who had merely experienced justification. Even more troubling, Caughey’s message suggested that a

¹²⁸ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 344, 368, 369, 390.

¹²⁹ William Vevers to Jabez Bunting, January 25, 1845 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 315. See also JRULM, MARC, Frederick Jobson papers, MAM PLP 61.39.2, Frederick Jobson to Jabez Bunting, June 19, 1845.

¹³⁰ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 390.

layman or woman could possess greater spiritual purity than their pastors.¹³¹ That did not square at all with the Liverpool *Minutes*' description of the itinerant ministers as the teachers and governors of the connexion. Not surprisingly, Bunting summarily dismissed the idea that British Wesleyan ministers might have anything to learn from this professional revivalist. "Are we all to go to America for a year or two to straighten up?" he asked sarcastically at the Conference of 1843. Osborn chimed in, specifically denouncing the new measures as "mechanical" while another minister attacked them as the "machinery of a revival" carried to excess. Two years later Bunting and his son, William Maclardie, claimed that Caughey was destroying the genuine Wesleyan tradition of revivalism with his theatrical performances. The elder Bunting bluntly charged the American Methodist with passing off "as revelation things that are either fancy or fraud." This did not mean, Bunting pointed out at the Conference of 1846, that the Wesleyan ministry was "against revivals of religion. We need one."¹³² From the Buntingite point of view, however, it was Caughey who was preventing a greater increase in connexional membership. As the minister James Kendall put it, the new measures threatened to "bring the *regularly instituted ordinances of God* into utter contempt...". The Conference, he felt, needed to legislate "in reference to the American innovations."¹³³

The preachers who made up the liberal wing of the British Conference thought differently. Like many of the missionaries and laity in the Canadas, they were impressed with Caughey's newfangled evangelism. In Britain, however, this position

¹³¹ Bush, "The Rev. James Caughey," 234-5.

¹³² Gregory, *Side Lights*, 344, 345, 390, 391, 400, 401. See also Gowland, *Methodist Secessions*, 109-10; Watts, *Dissenters*, 616.

¹³³ James Kendall to Jabez Bunting, January 5, 1846 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 338-9. Emphasis in original.

quickly took on factional overtones. The ministerial liberals believed that Caughey's revivalist campaign was the perfect antidote to the shabby gentility and spiritual deadness that, in their view, constituted the chief features of Buntingite worship. Whenever a member of the Buntingian Dynasty attacked Caughey during a meeting of the Conference, Joseph Beaumont, James Dixon or one of their fellow liberals leapt to his defence, declaring that the American revivalist was "a man of God," that he would always be welcome in their pulpits, and that the connexion would be doing itself a terrible harm if it interfered with this "work of God."¹³⁴ When Bunting did interfere – whipping out more than enough votes at the Conference of 1846 to ban Caughey from all Wesleyan chapels in Britain and to initiate his recall to the United States – the liberals fought back.¹³⁵ They argued that Caughey was "a messenger from God to recall us as a Church to the spirit and self devotedness of our Fathers."¹³⁶ They also continued to welcome Caughey in their chapels after he vowed to defy the orders of "the *Old President*" and to remain among the British Wesleyans until "God gives me *scores of sinners as seals to my ministry*."¹³⁷ In Liverpool, the minister Edward Brice invited Caughey to baptize his son and then named him after the revivalist. Even this relatively minor act of rebellion rankled Bunting and his supporters something awful. "This is too bad," William Vevers wrote, "it is time that such men should not be allowed to occupy some of our best pulpits..."¹³⁸ On many

¹³⁴ Gregory, *Side Lights*, 344, 369, 400.

¹³⁵ Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, 128-30; Watts, *Dissenters*, 616.

¹³⁶ John Haswell to Jabez Bunting, August 10, 1846 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 342-3.

¹³⁷ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part I*, 3rd ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black Ltd., 1971), 379. See also JRULM, MARC, James Caughey papers, MAM PLP 23.10.9, James Caughey to an unknown correspondent, April 6, 1847. The quotation is from *ibid.*, MAM PLP 23.10.18, James Caughey to John Wright, April 1, 1847. Emphasis in original.

¹³⁸ William Vevers to Jabez Bunting, March 23, 1847 in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 350. Emphasis in original.

other circuits, however, the agitation was conducted in more deadly earnest. Caughey's supporters split congregation after congregation and attacked any Buntingite minister in their midst. The leading lay officials in Hull threatened to drive three itinerant ministers, including Vevers, out of the city.¹³⁹

The Wesleyan reformers added fuel to an agitation already catching fire across the connexion. James Everett, in particular, saw the new measures as a stick with which to beat in the head of the Buntingian Dynasty. Everett never doubted that Bunting deserved such rough treatment: he was responsible for the loss of the "pristine simplicity and power" that had characterized Methodism in the days of Wesley and the first circuit riders.¹⁴⁰ Those apostolic men, Everett believed, had been replaced by a stationed ministry, fat and complacent, less concerned with saving souls than with filthy lucre or with gorging themselves on honorary doctorates from the Methodist universities and colleges of the United States.¹⁴¹ Convinced that the connexion was going to the devil, Everett met in secret with Dr. Warren and other ministerial dissidents at Leeds in 1834 "to deliberate and mature a plan for the purpose of curtailing the power of the dominant party in Methodism whose arbitrary and crooked policy was becoming more and more apparent...".¹⁴² Thirteen years later, certain that Caughey's services were as close to the evangelicalism of the 1700s as anything he had ever come across, Everett seized on the

¹³⁹ William Vevers to Jabez Bunting, March 11, 1847 in *ibid.*, 348. See also Kent, "Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," in Davies, et al., eds., *History of the Methodist Church*, 2:223.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Chew, *James Everett: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875), 296.

¹⁴¹ Watts, *Dissenters*, 618-20. See also JRULM, MARC, James Everett papers, MAM PLP 38.52.9, James Everett to Samuel Broadbent, April 8, 1840.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, MS Memorandum Book of James Everett, III, May 14, 1834 quoted in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 102, n. 4. See also Gowland, *Methodist Secessions*, 38-9; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 161, 264.

Conference's attempts to drive the professional revivalist back to America as another example of the corruption of Buntingite rule.¹⁴³ In the scurrilous and anonymous *Fly Sheet* of 1847, he charged Bunting with the basest hypocrisy: the great man "moved the recall of Mr. Caughey," Everett wrote, "anxious to be understood, at the same time, that he was a friend of revivals...". Yet, located comfortably in London, Bunting did "little in the way of preaching, meeting the societies, and holding prayer meetings...". "Why talk of the dangers of slighting the ordinary means [of grace]," Everett asked, "when he himself is comparatively a stranger to their use?"¹⁴⁴ Two conclusions seemed inescapable: "there was more need of an importation of such men as Mr. Caughey, than his recall" and, "[i]f the church is to be saved, the pope must fall...".¹⁴⁵

In Lower Canada, the missionaries' response to Everett's call to arms and to the *Fly Sheets* agitation that began after his expulsion from the British connexion in 1849 epitomized the conservative-radical tension which had taken shape within colonial Wesleyanism. As they had in the past, they were quick to side with the Buntingite leadership; they also continued to champion the gospel efforts of James Caughey. While the British Conference of 1849 was still in session, the missionary Matthew Richey urged Bunting and his supporters to clip the wings of *Fly Sheets*, leaving them besmeared "with the serpent's food – fit retribution for doing the serpent's work."¹⁴⁶ As the agitation in

¹⁴³ For Everett's support of Caughey see Chew, *James Everett*, 347-8; JRULM, MARC, James Everett papers, MAM PLP 23.10.11, James Caughey to James Everett, February 20, 1845. See also Kent, "Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," 2:223.

¹⁴⁴ [James Everett,] *All the Numbers of the 'Fly Sheets' Now First Reprinted in One Pamphlet* (Birmingham: William Cornish, 1850), 65.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-6; James Everett, *'Methodism As It Is': With Some of its Antecedents, its Branches and Disruptions* (London: W. Reed, 1863), 1:320.

¹⁴⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 33, File 242, #17, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, July 12, 1849.

Britain gathered steam, other missionaries and laymen wrote home, sympathizing with “our Fathers & Brethren...at this particularly trying time” and praying that God might “support His dear servants and sanctify this painful matter to the good of [H]is Church and the glory of His holy name.”¹⁴⁷ In 1850 Benjamin Slight declared that the Wesleyans of Lower Canada were “firm *constitutional Methodists*,” but, a year later, the leading laity of Montreal invited Caughey to visit the city and to help with what turned out to be “a glorious revival...”.¹⁴⁸ During the winter of 1853-4, “that man of God the Rev. James Caughey” conducted another series of protracted meetings in Quebec City. Once again, he employed the new measures and preached the doctrine of holiness. The method and the message remained as effective as ever. After fourteen weeks Caughey had drawn 222 new converts into the connexion, while fifty-four “old members of the Church” had entered “into the blessing of sanctification...”.¹⁴⁹ In terms of worship, the missionaries and their lay supporters remained British Wesleyan, but not in the way the Buntingites expected: in this respect they had more in common with the ministers and laity who followed Everett out of the British connexion and who invited Caughey to return to the Old Country in 1857 than they did with the leaders of their own church.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Box 33, File 235, #15, Matthew Lang to Elijah Hoole, October 1, 1849. See also *ibid.*, Box 33, File 235, #22, John Jenkins to Robert Alder, December 21, 1849; *ibid.*, Box 35, File 252, #2, James Ferrier to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, February 8, 1851.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Box 34, File 243, #18, Benjamin Slight to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 19, 1850. Emphasis in original. On the Montreal revival see Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries*, 5:80-1; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 38, File 260, #10, John Jenkins to George Osborn, March 19, 1852.

¹⁴⁹ Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries*, 5:167; CG, February 1, 1854, 66; *ibid.*, March 8, 1854, 84.

¹⁵⁰ On Caughey’s second revival campaign in Britain see Kent, *Holding the Fort*, 79; Watts, *Dissenters*, 659-60.

Problematic as this cultural shift turned out to be for Bunting and his supporters, it played out in an altogether different way on the western shores of the Atlantic. The missionaries' continuing support for both Buntingite connexional structures and American-style worship helped smooth the way for the reunion of 1847 between the British and Canada Conferences and the latter's absorption of the Lower Canada District in 1854.

Before those connexional rearrangements could take place, however, Canadian Methodism underwent a different, though equally important transformation. If the British Wesleyans in the Canadas became increasingly open to the extraordinary means of grace during the 1830s and 1840s, the Canada connexion plunged headlong in the opposite direction. By the third quarter of the century, Canadian Methodism was well advanced in the process that William Westfall terms "the tempering of revivalism."¹⁵¹ Much like Bunting and his supporters in the early 1800s, many of the Canadian Methodist ministers began to see the exuberant, often uncontrollable emotionalism that characterized popular revivalism as a hindrance to the continued growth and consolidation of their connexion. Old-style camp and protracted meetings held little appeal for Canadian Methodism's expanding urban and middle-class constituency; where such extraordinary means of grace continued to be used, they became increasingly institutionalized and, by the 1850s, lacked almost all spontaneity.¹⁵² That is exactly what most Canadian Methodist preachers wanted. Through hard and often dispiriting

¹⁵¹ The following paragraph draws heavily on Westfall, *Two Worlds*, especially chapter 3.

¹⁵² Neil Semple, "The Decline of Revival in Nineteenth-Century Central-Canadian Methodism: The Extraordinary Means of Grace," *Papers of the Canadian Methodist Historical Society* 2 (1980), 8, 12-13; Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 63-7.

experience, they had become convinced that many conversions at camp and protracted meetings only lasted as long as the initial excitement. After that wore off, the saved returned to their sinful ways and, of course, forsook the connexion for the world. In response, by the mid-1840s, the *Minutes* of the Canada Conference began to stress “the importance and duty of a vigilant and faithful attention” to the regular means of grace.¹⁵³ The *Christian Guardian* summed up the official Canadian Methodist position in October 1860: “[s]pecial services are often very useful, and sometimes quite necessary, but it is far more important to have a continual revival, to have the work of God always going forward...”¹⁵⁴

As Bunting would have recognized, this was an approach to revivalism calculated to aid in the process of making a relatively freewheeling sect into a stable church. During the second quarter of the century, the Canadian Methodist ministry repeatedly turned to British Wesleyan models to help them make that transition. The Buntingite belief in the absolute supremacy of the itinerant ministry proved particularly attractive to the leadership of the Canada connexion. Months before the Articles of Union between the two conferences were finalized in 1833, rumours began to spread among the Canadian local preachers that Egerton Ryerson had sold them out – that “our whole economy will be changed by arbitrary power...”¹⁵⁵ As soon as the British Wesleyans arrived on the scene they would lord it over the local preachers, the latter

¹⁵³ *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1846 to 1857, inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1863), 48. See also Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 71-3.

¹⁵⁴ *CG*, October 10, 1860, 162.

¹⁵⁵ UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 1, File 9, Egerton Ryerson to Robert Alder, November 21, 1832;

feared, depriving them of the privileges they had enjoyed for years, including the right to be ordained and, afterwards, to marry, bury, baptize and to celebrate the Lord's Supper alongside the itinerant ministers.¹⁵⁶

For once, Methodistical paranoia had a solid basis in fact: the Wesleyans in Britain and in Lower Canada did push the Canada Conference to conform to the norms of the home connexion, making a hard and fast distinction between the travelling and local preachers. And the Canadian itinerants happily complied.¹⁵⁷ Within three months of the union coming into effect, the *Christian Guardian*, under Egerton Ryerson's editorship, began to beat the drum of ministerial supremacy, drawing on arguments that the Buntingites had been developing since the 1820s. In a series of letters to the editor in January and February 1834, an anonymous "Watchman" argued that any assertion that ministerial power derived from "the *people*" was "contrary to fact." The ministry acquired its prerogatives from John Wesley and Wesley had them from an even higher power: "[t]he *origin and authority* of the ministerial office are described and established in the *word of God...*".¹⁵⁸ The itinerant minister was a man set apart from the rest of the connexion; for the sake of souls, he led a life of almost continual sacrifice "not far short of that of the first ministers of the Gospel."¹⁵⁹ The local preacher, in contrast, was still involved in trade on a daily basis; he was a lesser breed, "an occasional teacher,

¹⁵⁶ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 17, File 106, #7, [John Fenton,] Address to the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, February 28, 1833.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Box 17, File 111, #8, George Marsden to Jabez Bunting, John Beecham and Robert Alder, December 31, 1833; *ibid.*, Box 17, File 106, #38, William Lunn to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, November 8, 1833; *ibid.*, Box 17, File 106, #23, Egerton Ryerson to Robert Alder, October 10, 1833.

¹⁵⁸ *CG*, January 8, 1834, 33. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, January 15, 1834, 37

but not a *governor*.” Only the travelling preachers could fill the latter role and all the other members of the connexion had to acknowledge and respect that fact in order to ensure the continued unity and vitality of Canadian Methodism.¹⁶⁰

Over the next two years the leaders of the British and Canada connexions worked together to put the local preachers squarely in their place. At the Canada Conference of 1834, several of the older itinerants, hoping perhaps to calm fears of clerical despotism among their lay brethren, suggested that any local preachers who had been selected for ordination prior to the ratification of the Articles of Union should be granted that privilege. The Buntingite Edmund Grindrod, serving as President, refused to consider such a proposal. He could not, he stated, “conscientiously ordain secular men, as they were not in circumstances to take the ordination vows in ‘laying aside the study of the world’.” Egerton Ryerson’s brother, William, supported Grindrod, declaring “that a conflict with the local preachers was inevitable, and that the sooner it was brought to a crisis the better.” Swayed by Grindrod and William Ryerson’s arguments, the majority of the Conference passed a resolution calling for an end to the ordination of local preachers in the future, “as the altered circumstances in which the connexion is placed render it unnecessary and inexpedient.”¹⁶¹ The Buntingites had promised to make up any shortfall in personnel on the Canadian circuits and the British connexion’s discipline demanded a strict division between the itinerant and local preachers.¹⁶² When a faction of the latter

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, February 19, 1834, 57. Emphasis in original.

¹⁶¹ The above is based on Carroll, *Case and his Cotemporaries*, 3:440-1 and UCA, Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada (hereafter WMC-C), Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 11, 1834.

¹⁶² On the personnel issue in particular see *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1824 to 1845, inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1846), 65.

began to form their own church in 1834 and 1835, the Canadian itinerants immediately equated the schism with the Warrenite agitation then rocking the home connexion.¹⁶³ The *Christian Guardian* pointed to the similarities between “the measures employed there [in Britain] and here by the promoters of strife and division.” Indeed, the Canadian preachers could not “withhold the expression of our deepest sympathy with our brethren in England, who, in defense of the great principles of the Wesleyan economy, have been called, in common with their Canadian brethren, to endure such a fight of affliction.”¹⁶⁴ In terms of church structures, at least, the two connexions had become close allies in a transatlantic battle to uphold Buntingite values.

The Canadian Methodist ministers’ support for British Wesleyan conservatism became all the stronger from 1836 onward. In that year and again in 1849 the Canadian Methodist ministers adopted the British connexion’s *Liverpool Minutes*.¹⁶⁵ By doing so, they vowed to make the absolute authority of the ordained ministry a *sine quo non* of Canadian Methodist existence. They also promised to follow John Wesley’s advice and “not to mend our rules but to keep them for conscience sake.”¹⁶⁶ The Canadian Methodists were quite willing to put the strictest of constructions on that last sentence, even it meant striking out at one of their own. In 1854, for instance, when Egerton Ryerson pushed for the elimination of attendance at class meeting as a requirement of church membership, he encountered such vehement and nearly unanimous

¹⁶³ For the formation of the new Methodist Episcopal Church see Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 88-92.

¹⁶⁴ *CG*, October 28, 1835, 202. See also *ibid.*, March 23, 1836, 78; *Minutes of the Annual Conferences...from 1824 to 1845*, 141.

¹⁶⁵ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 8, 1836; *ibid.*, Reel 1, June 6, 1849.

¹⁶⁶ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1846 to 1857*, 120-25.

opposition from his fellow ministers that he felt obliged to withdraw from the ministry.¹⁶⁷ The British-appointed President of the Canada connexion, Enoch Wood, saw the whole episode as a logical outgrowth of the Ryerson brothers' zeal for "noisy popularity." "Happily for the Wesleyan Church," he added, "they have lost the power to wield the Conference according to their notions."¹⁶⁸

Bunting and his supporters were not so sure. Though they congratulated their Canadian brethren on their "noble firmness in maintaining unimpaired the discipline of our body" in 1854, at the next British Conference they questioned whether, earlier in 1855, the Canada connexion should have allowed Ryerson to resume his place among the itinerants. He may have promised to express his views on class meetings only on appropriate occasions, but he had not abandoned them.¹⁶⁹ Nettled at the suggestion that the colonial ministry could so easily be led into apostasy, Wood replied that the colonial preachers were "as faithful to their trust as any others, not even excepting the Parent Body."¹⁷⁰ The Canadian Methodists, in other words, were every bit as doctrinaire as their fathers and brethren on the other side of the Atlantic on this issue. At the Canada Conference of 1856, the majority of the ministers drove that point home, reaffirming their "deep conviction...of the importance of Class Meetings as a means of grace; and of our

¹⁶⁷ UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 7, 1854; UCA, WMMS-C, Box 38, File 281, #38, Enoch Wood to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, June 18, 1854.

¹⁶⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 38, File 281, #39, Enoch Wood to George Osborn, June 24, 1854.

¹⁶⁹ On Egerton Ryerson's readmission to the Canada Conference see UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 6, 1855. For the Buntingite response see UCA, Egerton Ryerson papers, Box 4, File 104, John G. Hodgins to Egerton Ryerson, September 17, 1855 and C.B. Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters* (Toronto: Oxford University Press / Clarke, Irwin Company Ltd., 1937-47), 2:315-17. The quotation is from *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1845 to 1857*, 318.

¹⁷⁰ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 34, File 282, #28, Enoch Wood to John Beecham, October 5, 1855.

duty to maintain them as a condition of church membership; as thus they have been handed down to us by our venerated father.”¹⁷¹

Like the missionaries in Lower Canada, the Canadian Methodist ministry also launched a vigorous defense of Buntingite rule when the *Fly Sheets* agitation began in 1849. At their Conference in 1851, the itinerant preachers expressed their sympathy with their fathers and brethren on the other side of the Atlantic and begged to assure them that the conflicts wracking the home connexion “only increase our approval of your principles and proceedings.” “The constitution which was received from the Rev. John Wesley,” they added, “and faithfully transmitted to you and to us, is a sacred and an invaluable trust, which...will not be resigned at the bidding of any power, much less at the dictation of a mistaken, unscriptural, and violent confederation.”¹⁷² This statement of unstinting support for the Buntingite view of ministerial authority echoed articles that had been appearing in the *Christian Guardian* since 1849. The editor, George Sanderson, came out swinging against Everett and his supporters. “Sympathy for the offenders,” he declared in one of his first editorials on the *Fly Sheets* agitation, “would prompt us to wish for clemency in their case,” but an even greater sympathy for British and Canadian Methodism compelled him “to demand the punishment of offenders against the peace, the spirit, the usage, and even the written law of Methodism.”¹⁷³ Wesleyans, in both Britain and Upper Canada, did not need or want “successive changes in the system by which

¹⁷¹ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1845 to 1857*, 359. See also *ibid.*, 368.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁷³ *CG*, September 12, 1849, 186. For similar statements of support for the British Conference see *ibid.*, January 9, 1850, 244; *ibid.*, April 10, 1850, 300; *ibid.*, June 26, 1850, 344; *ibid.*, September 11, 1850, 386; *ibid.*, September 18, 1850, 390.

they have been so much blessed.”¹⁷⁴ Responding to Everett’s demand for greater lay rights within the government of the home connexion, Sanderson quoted approvingly from the Buntingian Dynasty’s unofficial organ, the *Watchman*: “in no great Church in Christendom have the people anything like the amount of real power...which they have in our own Church.” The *Fly Sheets*’ attacks on the “exclusive powers in Ministerial hands, like all other absurdities, will set many on seeing what they saw not before, that the popular power among us is really prodigious.”¹⁷⁵ Whether true or not, it was a line well calculated to shore up support for the pastoral office among both ministers and laity on either side of the Atlantic.

The Canadian Methodist ministers needed to protect their own position; the itinerant preachers’ embrace of Buntingite conservatism was not universally accepted. There were traces of opposition within the ministry and among the laity that were strikingly similar to developments in British Wesleyanism during the same period. One minister, Matthew Holtby, wrote to Egerton Ryerson in 1842 about his fear that “primitive, old-fashioned Methodism” was “on the decline in England.” Using language that would have been familiar to James Everett, Holtby lamented that the zeal of the British Wesleyan preachers of old was being “murdered by *Degrees*,” whether “A.M.D. or D.D. or even LL.D. with F.A.S. at the end of it...”. He was afraid that “what *has taken*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, October 31, 1849, 214.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, August 14, 1850, 370. For earlier defences of the “Wesleyan polity” along the same lines see *ibid.*, August 30, 1848, 182 and *ibid.*, October 10, 1849, 201. For Everett’s demands see Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1968), 72-4; Carwardine, *Transatlantic*, 131-3; Watts, *Dissenters*, 622-3.

place in England *may take place* in Canada.”¹⁷⁶ Holtby was not alone: when the *Fly Sheets* agitation broke out, discontented elements in Canadian Methodism attempted to make common cause with the troublers of the connexional waters in the Old Country. In one of several efforts by various journals to “kindle the flame of Wesleyan revolution” in the colony, the Hamilton *Provincialist* printed a letter from “An Old Wesleyan” denouncing the *Christian Guardian* as “a sickening specimen of cant and hypocrisy” for daring to downplay “the present religious commotion” in British Wesleyanism. The “Old Wesleyan” attempted to set the record straight, describing a vast uprising against the Buntingites and their wealthy lay supporters.¹⁷⁷

Writing directly to the WMMS in November 1851, Enoch Wood stated what should have been obvious by then: Upper Canada was “not altogether free from the company of sympathizers” with the agitators in Britain. The pro-Everett *Wesleyan Times* was regularly “sent among our people in different parts of this country” and, as Everett himself later noted, he received letters of support from Toronto and Hamilton.¹⁷⁸ After visiting the latter city in 1851, Wood reported that “[s]ome of us [in the ministry] came in for a good share of abuse by persons who sympathize with Everett & Co.”¹⁷⁹ A month later, he noted that “a Canadian fly-sheet writer” had described the “sympathy said to exist here with the ‘Reformers’...”¹⁸⁰ Wood vigorously denied that such

¹⁷⁶ National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Egerton Ryerson papers, Matthew Holtby to Egerton Ryerson, March 15, 1842. Emphasis in original.

¹⁷⁷ *CG*, April 3, 1850, 296. See also *ibid.*, May 8, 1850, 316.

¹⁷⁸ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 34, File 250, #12, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, November 14, 1850; Everett, *Methodism As It Is*, 2:811.

¹⁷⁹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 36, File 259, #9, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, November 10, 1851.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Box 36, File 259, #11, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, December 10, 1851.

sympathy existed, but the evidence suggests otherwise.

Despite the presence of a faction of Canadian Methodists willing to support Everett's muckraking crusade in Britain, however, there was no schism in Upper Canada during the post-1847 period. The Canada Conference may have adopted Buntingite notions of pastoral authority and sided with Bunting and his allies during the schisms of the mid-1830s and 1850s, but, as was the case with the missionaries in Lower Canada, this transformation was balanced by a continued attachment to the doctrine of holiness and that more respectable and controllable form of revivalism practiced by James Caughey. Unlike the Buntingian Dynasty, then, the Canadian ministry did not make the mistake of alienating both connexional liberals and supporters of popular evangelism at the same time. Five years after the British Conference drove him out of its pulpits, James Caughey began to pay yearly visits to the highly appreciative Canadian Methodists in Upper Canada. He came to Toronto in November 1851, went to Kingston in 1852, Hamilton in 1853, London in 1854, Belleville in 1855 and Brockville in 1856.¹⁸¹

Reporting on Caughey's services in Toronto, the *Christian Guardian* noted that "you might see the skeptic and the infidel bowing at the penitent bench, and crying aloud for mercy...this work is so evidently of God, that we think a dog would scarcely dare to lift its head, or move its tongue against it."¹⁸² At the Conference of 1852 the Canadian ministry put their collective stamp of approval on Caughey's message and methods. During their proceedings, they dwelt at some length on "[t]he promotion of holiness or entire sanctification" and how it could best be accomplished; a few days later,

¹⁸¹ For an overview of Caughey's time among the Canadian Methodists see Bush, "Caughey," 11:169 and *idem*, "The Rev. James Caughey," 236-7.

¹⁸² *CG*, February 18, 1852, 74.

they “affectionately” invited Caughey “to spend as much of his time in labouring in Upper Canada...as he may feel it consistent with his duty and vocation in promoting the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers.”¹⁸³ The professional revivalist had an obvious appeal for the Canadian Methodists.¹⁸⁴ It helped, as John Carroll pointed out, that Caughey’s services were “free from extravagances,” while also being “characterized by the most extraordinary power.”¹⁸⁵ This equilibrium between respectability and spiritual utility fit nicely within Canadian Methodism’s gradual movement towards moderation in all forms of worship.¹⁸⁶ It also, of course, closely paralleled the British Wesleyan missionaries’ approach to the extraordinary means of grace.

When the unions of 1847 and 1854 took place, then, Bunting and his supporters did not have to worry about the colonial Wesleyans opposing either measure on disciplinary or doctrinal grounds. In 1856 the reconstituted Canada Conference vowed to “establish widely the same polity and means, diffuse the same spirit, and exult in the same triumphs” as the British Conference¹⁸⁷ At the same time, both the British missionaries and native-born preachers who now made up the Canada connexion continued to support professional revivalism and other extraordinary means of grace. When James Caughey conducted his first revival services in Toronto in 1851, he came

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, June 9, 1852, 138; UCA, WMC-C, Minutes of the Annual Conference, Reel 1, June 2, 1852. See also *CG*, June 23, 1852, 146.

¹⁸⁴ In 1853 the Conference met in Hamilton and, in an extraordinary departure from the usual practice, did not hold any services during the first week of meetings “in consequence of the interest which prevails in the revival meetings held by Mr. Caughey.” See *ibid.*, June 8, 1853, 138.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, July 20, 1853, 162. See also Bush, “The Rev. James Caughey,” 240.

¹⁸⁶ A point made in *ibid.*, 247; Van Die, *Evangelical Mind*, 64; Westfall, *Two Worlds*, 73.

¹⁸⁷ *Minutes of the Annual Conference...from 1845 to 1857*, 368. See also *ibid.*, 268.

“by personal invitation” of the four preachers stationed in the city; among them was the British Wesleyan preacher John Douse, later described as “a man who, notwithstanding his twenty-eight years residence in Upper Canada, believes...no form of Christianity to be compared to English Methodism.”¹⁸⁸ To Douse, however, there was no necessary contradiction between supporting Caughey and being a good Wesleyan. He joined Egerton Ryerson and other Canadian Methodist ministers and laity, praising Caughey’s efforts, at a farewell breakfast held in his honour in June 1852.¹⁸⁹

In March 1856, the Canadian correspondent of the Buntingite *Watchman* happily reported that “Mr. Caughey likes to winter among us British Wesleyans of Canada, and he is at present doing his Master’s work well at the large town...of Belleville,” then under the superintendence of the Canadian Methodist John Carroll.¹⁹⁰ A year later, Enoch Wood, serving as President of the Canada Conference, gave the WMMS a favourable account of the spread of camp meetings across the connexion.¹⁹¹ They continued to be general in 1858 and even newly-arrived British Wesleyan ministers, such as Henry Flesher Bland and William English, helped to organize or conduct them alongside their Canadian brethren.¹⁹² In August 1859, the new connexional President, Joseph Stinson, informed the Missionary Secretary Elijah Hoole that he had recently had

¹⁸⁸ *CG*, January 14, 1852, 58. The other three ministers were Ephraim Harper, David McDowell and Henry Wilkinson. See George Cornish, *Cyclopaedia of Methodism in Canada* (Toronto: Methodist Book and Publishing House, 1881), 316. The quotation is from UCA, WMMS-C, Box 24, File 311, #15, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, June 25, 1862.

¹⁸⁹ *CG*, July 7, 1852, 154-5.

¹⁹⁰ *Watchman*, March 5, 1856, 78. See also *ibid.*, March 20, 1855, 94 for a favourable account of Caughey’s services in London, Upper Canada.

¹⁹¹ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 40, File 293, #14, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, December 21, 1851.

¹⁹² UCA, Henry Flesher Bland papers, Box 1, File 2, Journal, June 20, 1858; UCA, William English papers, Box 1, File 1, Journal, June 27, 1858.

“the pleasure...of preaching to about five thousand people in a beautiful grove. A more attentive & devout congregation it was never my privilege to witness...”¹⁹³ The British missionaries were and remained at home with the Canadian Methodists’ compromise between Buntingite church governance and a tempered form of American-style revivalism. That should come as no surprise: they had, after all, developed the same approach to life in the Canadas by the early 1840s.

Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada had its version of the dog that did not bark in the night. When the Canadian Methodists, the British Wesleyans and the their missionaries went into the unions of 1833, 1847 and 1854 they came to blows over numerous issues: relations with the established Church of England, the nature of political loyalty, the respective financial obligations of metropole and periphery. The relationship between revivalism and pastoral authority, in contrast, was never a matter of contention. This silence can only be explained by examining the development of the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas and Canadian Methodism in relation to the home connexion. By the early 1800s, Bunting and many of his fellow ministers in Britain were prepared to reject popular revivalism and to replace it with worship directed by an all-powerful pastorate and aimed at socially respectable middle-class laymen and women. During the second third of the century, the British missionaries and laity in Lower and Upper Canada repeatedly demonstrated their attachment to the Buntingite vision of ministerial supremacy, siding with their fathers and brethren against the Warrenites in the mid-1830s and against James Everett and his supporters after 1849.

¹⁹³ UCA, WMMS-C, Box 41, File 300, #17, Joseph Stinson to Elijah Hoole, August 30, 1859.

At the same time, however, the combination of the failure of the regular means of grace to draw in and retain membership, the lack of financial support from home and the WMMS's drive for transatlantic 'oneness' between the British and American Methodist Conferences, created the conditions in which the extraordinary means of grace could take hold and flourish among the missionaries and their lay supporters. The majority of the British Wesleyans in the Canadas moved away from the Buntingian Dynasty's distrust of popular revivalism, embracing such refined and, in theory, controllable modes of spiritual renewal as the professional revivalism of James Caughey. While this compromise between ministerial power and revivalism may have played a part in triggering the *Fly Sheets* agitation in Britain, it also gave the British missionaries and laity something in common with the Canadian Methodists. Beginning in the 1830s, the latter started to move away from the wildly emotional camp and protracted meetings that had been their stock in trade since the early 1790s. In an effort to appeal to their increasingly middle-class constituency, the Canadian Methodists, too, began to see the value of a more controllable form of revivalism like Caughey's new measures. To help them make the transaction from sect to church, the leaders of the Canada connexion also adopted British Wesleyan structures of church governance, especially the Buntingite version of pastoral authority. By doing so, the Canada Conference helped provide a secure basis for the unions of 1847 and 1854.

This process of cultural and structural compromise was not unique to the Methodists of Lower and Upper Canada. It took shape across the nineteenth-century world wherever British colonies were established. These settler societies may have been

marked by what J.G.A. Pocock has termed “the predominance of English political and cultural forms,” but they were also forced to adapt to their surroundings.¹⁹⁴ In doing so, they often created new cultural and political forms which were then exported back across the Atlantic, often with explosive results. As Carl Bridge and Kent Fedorowich point out, it was Canadian politicians who defined responsible government in the 1840s, Australians who first adopted the secret ballot in the 1850s and New Zealanders who gave women the vote in 1893. These developments, possible away from the more constricted social and political context of Britain, gave hope to reformers in the home country.¹⁹⁵ At the same time, however, settler groups in North America and the antipodes did not abandon their identity as members of a larger empire. They were able to hold multiple identities – at once colonial and British. They regularly celebrated the military victories of British troops abroad, whether in the Crimea, India or elsewhere.¹⁹⁶ Nineteenth-century Canadians, in general, prided themselves on having the best of British and American worlds: the traditions and stability of the former and the freedom and expansiveness of the latter.¹⁹⁷

Through examining the changing relationship between revivalism and pastoral authority among the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters in

¹⁹⁴ J.G.A. Pocock, “British History: A Plea for a New Subject,” *Journal of Modern History* 47 (December 1975), 617.

¹⁹⁵ Carl Bridge and Ken Fedorowich, “Mapping the British World,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (May 2003), 5-6. See also Phillip Buckner, “Was there a ‘British’ Empire? The *Oxford History of the British Empire* from a Canadian Perspective,” *Acadiensis* 32, no. 1 (Autumn 2002), 126.

¹⁹⁶ Idem, “Making British North America British, 1815-1860,” in C.C. Eldridge, ed., *Kith and Kin: Canada, Britain and the United States from Revolution to the Cold War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 23, 28.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 27; Allan Smith, “Old Ontario and the Emergence of a National Frame of Mind,” in F.H. Armstrong, et al., eds., *Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Ontario: Essays Presented to James J. Talman* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 206.

the Canadas and the Canadian Methodists, we have seen how a broader, more inclusive connexion was created by the mid-nineteenth century. The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada that was formed in 1854 was able to contain the more explosive forces of revivalism that had first been unleashed in the eighteenth century and to provide a home for ministers and laity alike who continued to support notions such as Caughey's version of the doctrine of holiness. This flexible combination, so different from what emerged in British Wesleyanism, may explain, in part, why Canadian Methodism entered a long period of connexional expansion during after the mid-1850s while the membership of the home connexion never really recovered from the the shock of the *Fly Sheets* agitation. By 1851 the Methodists in Upper Canada outnumbered the Anglicans and, by 1861, they had become the largest religious group in the colony, surpassing the Presbyterians.¹⁹⁸ People who continued to look to camp or protracted meetings for spiritual renewal or who attended the services held by a generation of professional revivalists who followed Caughey into the field, would have found a comfortable home within the Canada connexion. If, by the mid-nineteenth century, Canadian Methodism had become an increasingly British Wesleyan connexion in terms of its church structures, it remained largely North American in its approach to worship and that, ultimately, was one of main reasons for its overwhelming success.

¹⁹⁸ Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 182; Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, 104.

CONCLUSION

“Our old friend, the Canada Conference”

Between 1814 and 1874 Methodism in the Canadas became an increasingly integral part of a larger transatlantic world. At an official level, the leadership of the Wesleyan connexion in Britain attempted, through the policies of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS) and of the British Conference, to shape the development of both the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas and the Canadian Methodists. At times, the various Methodist groups in Lower and Upper Canada gladly embraced their position in a wider British and Wesleyan world, accepting District Chairmen or Presidents of Conference from Britain, or sending their own deputations to the other side of the Atlantic, often, it must be said, with fundraising first and foremost on the agenda. The unofficial connections between the Methodists of Britain and the Canadas were, in some ways, even more important. Methodism in the Canadas was, at the fundamental level of demography, very much an offshoot of British Wesleyanism. The Canada Conference and the British Wesleyan missionaries built up their respective lay followings by actively pursuing recently-arrived Irish, Scottish and English Wesleyan immigrants, as much as through spectacular revivals among the unredeemed multitudes of the backwoods. Thanks to the mass migration of the post-1815 period, the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters, the ministers of the Canada connexion and the leaders of British Wesleyanism came to see the Canadas as an extension of a larger (or greater) British mission field. This perception, largely unnoticed by previous

historians of Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada, was central to the process of cultural formation in those colonies.

Over time, this connection with British Wesleyanism led to the articulation of a British and Wesleyan sense of self among the various Methodist groups in the Canadas: the British Wesleyan missionaries, their lay supporters and the members of the Canada Conference. In other words, the master narrative of Methodist development in nineteenth-century central Canada – that it led almost inevitably towards a uniquely Canadian sense of self, tied, in some way, to a larger cultural and political movement from colony to nation – needs to be rethought. The culture that emerged among the Methodists in Lower and Upper Canada by the mid-1800s was recognizably British and Wesleyan, especially in terms of church structure, mission financing and religious practice. After 1847 the Canada connexion accepted the lead of the British Conference; and the British Wesleyan communities in Upper and Lower Canada went into a union with the Canada Conference in 1847 and 1854, respectively, because they knew that the home connexion would remain the centre of the Canadian Methodist world. As far as fiscal affairs went, the Methodists in the Canadas remained the pensioners of the British connexion long after the latter was thoroughly tired of that aspect of their relationship. The Canadian Methodists – often with the aid of their British-appointed leadership – continually stressed the British and Wesleyan character of their gospel labours in order to make sure that the home connexion would not or could not force them to be free. And, even though the members of the Canada Conference eventually adopted an approach to revivalism that, while calculated to appeal to the socially respectable among the laity, was

still deeply disturbing to Buntingite sensibilities, they also adopted the home connexion's approach to the sometimes problematic relationship between local preachers and the ordained ministry in order to help them navigate the dangerous passage from sect to church. To say that the culture that emerged among the Methodists of Ontario and Quebec by 1874 was a uniquely Canadian phenomenon obscures far more than it reveals.

It would be mistaken, nevertheless, to see this transatlantic relationship in terms of the connexional metropole imposing its views and customs on its colonial periphery. The British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters were constantly engaged in a process of negotiation with their fathers and brethren on the other side of the Atlantic over what exactly it meant to be a Briton and a Wesleyan during the first half of the nineteenth century. Having been trained for the gospel work in the context of Britain's long wars against republican and Napoleonic France, the internal turmoil that gripped the British Wesleyan connexion after Wesley's death in 1791 and the post-1815 resurgence of British radicalism, the missionaries believed that they had a duty to save Lower and Upper Canada from the threat of republican and revolution subversion posed, they thought, by the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, when the British Conference and the WMMS decided that transatlantic cooperation with the American Methodists was a goal worth working towards in 1820, the missionaries and those laymen and women who sided with them felt betrayed. They began to see themselves as the guardians of a pure version of Britishness and Wesleyanism, uncorrupted by the worldly diplomacy of the home connexion. That conservative, but thoroughly subversive sense of self was periodically driven into abeyance by the rapid

and angry response of the WMMS, but it reappeared at times of stress or conflict. The missionaries and their lay supporters elaborated their version of Britishness and Wesleyanism in order to secure stable funding from the metropole until 1854 and they turned it against the Buntingites in 1833, 1847 and 1854 – every time the British Conference negotiated a new union with the Canadian Methodists. And the latter underwent a similar process of cultural formation between 1828 and the mid-1850s. In various attempts to fight off the unwelcome advances of the Buntingian Dynasty, in terms of both church governance and mission finance, Egerton Ryerson and his fellow ministers argued that they were every bit as British and Wesleyan as any members of the British Wesleyan connexion.

These contests over what it meant to be a Briton and a Wesleyan within the north Atlantic world became far less heated during the second half of the nineteenth century. The leadership of the British and the Canada Conferences came to an agreement about how exactly those terms would be defined; they then worked successfully to impose that new sense of self on the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters. This sudden transformation came about due to various structural and cultural changes on both sides of the Atlantic. Faced with the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1834 and the rise of the Oxford Movement in the 1840s, Jabez Bunting and his fellow Wesleyan Tories abandoned their unstinting support for the principle of church establishment, which had been a major bone of contention in their relations with the Canadian Methodists. At about the same time, thanks to the political arts of Governor-General Charles Poulett Thomson, the Canada Conference became part of the very church

establishment that they had fought so tenaciously to bring down since the late 1820s. After the mid-1840s there was no major issue of principle that might keep the two connexions from reuniting. Instead, they could happily combine forces for a grand assault on the Popish heresy of Tractarianism.

Fiscal considerations also played a role in bring about this cessation of hostilities. During the 1840s, the Canada Conference found that it could not maintain its mission work without financial help from the home connexion; and, at the same time, the British Wesleyans were desperate to get hold of the grant that the imperial government had promised to them when they recommenced their missions in Upper Canada in the early 1830s. Similar concerns over money also made the British Wesleyan missionaries and their lay supporters at least somewhat more open to the idea of union with the Canada Conference in 1847 and 1854 – if the WMMS refused to meet the growing obligations of the missionary Districts in the Canadas, perhaps the Canada connexion would. It helped, of course, that the Articles of Union that governed the union of 1847 between the British and Canada Conferences guaranteed that the former would remain at the centre of the north Atlantic Methodism; and that the mounting costs of the Canadian Methodists effort to become the truly national church of the Canadas in the 1850s and 1860s manifested itself in their continued insistence on the thoroughly British and Wesleyan character of their gospel labours.

As the ‘new’ British history would lead us to believe, however, this was not just a story of the development of Methodism in Lower and Upper Canada. The connection with those colonies also helped to shape British Wesleyanism. This

transatlantic influence contributed, time and again, to the home connexion's chronic instability during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1833 and 1834, the British Wesleyan community in the Canadas threatened to set up a rival missionary society in the Old Country. During the early 1840s, the Canadian Methodists gleefully gave ammunition to the Wesleyan liberals in the British Conference for their battles against Jabez Bunting and his supporters. Most spectacularly of all, the missionaries and their lay supporters helped to trigger the *Fly Sheets* agitation in 1849. And, as was so often the case in this transoceanic world, James Everett's last and greatest hell-raising campaign almost immediately found an echo among the Canadian Methodists. At many points, the history of Methodism in Britain and the Canadas cannot be fully understood unless they are viewed as part of a whole.

Adopting the analytical framework first suggested by J.G.A. Pocock and Phillip Buckner also allows us to see how Methodism might be integrated into the mainstream of Canadian historiography. The Methodists' various attempts to negotiate their position within a larger transatlantic world paralleled the long political struggle between Tories and Reformers to determine the shape of nineteenth-century British North American society. When, for instance, the British Wesleyan missionaries and laity in the Canadas began to see the preservation of a pure version of Britishness and Wesleyanism in the face of metropolitan apostasy as their particular errand into the wilderness, they were following the same basic cultural path as the radical movement under Joseph Willcocks and the Orange Order under the leadership of Ogle Gowan. Each of these groups were willing to use their own British sense of self as a weapon against the

powers that be either in the colony or in Britain. Between 1827 and 1854, the Canadian Methodists effectively fought the battle for responsible government in denominational terms and with a similar outcome – a very British community with strong ties to the imperial centre, but with a degree of self government. In financial terms, the efforts of the WMMS, beginning in the 1850s, to end its fiscal obligations to the Canada Conference and the Canadian Methodists' refusal to see that particular tie cut foreshadowed the fiscal give-and-take that both preceded and followed the achievement of Confederation in 1867. In other words, Methodism was very much at the centre of cultural development in Lower and Upper Canada.

In 1874 sixty years of often tumultuous interaction officially came to a close for the British Wesleyans and the Methodists of central Canada. A year earlier, the home connexion agreed to repeal the 1847 Articles of Union, leaving the Canada Conference free to govern its own proceedings and to unite with any other Methodist groups in the new dominion that might be persuaded to join it.¹ Ministers on both sides of the Atlantic realized that they were witnessing the end of an era. William Morley Punshon, the highly-respected President of the Canada connexion between 1868 and 1873, let his fellow British Wesleyan ministers know that “there never was a greater love to the Methodist Conference in England on the part of the Methodist Conference in Canada than at this moment.” At the same time, like the people of Canada in general, the Canadian Methodists had never felt a “deeper or more intense and chivalrous loyalty...to

¹ John Rylands University Library of Manchester (hereafter JRULM), Methodist Archives and Research Centre (hereafter MARC), Wesleyan Methodist Church, Conference Journal, NUG Shelf 364a, 1873, 220-1.

the mother country...". They remained loyal Britons and Wesleyans; the British Conference could, therefore, feel secure in letting them go their own way. "The consolidation and extension of Methodism in Canada was a very great thing," Punshon continued. He felt "quite sure" that, in supporting it, British Wesleyanism was "laying the foundations of a religious empire, a religious commonwealth which...will do mightier work than we or our fathers have ever known."² In June 1874, on the other side of the Atlantic, the Canadian Methodist minister Anson Green recorded the last meeting of his Conference under the old Articles of Union. "The moment was one of much excitement," he wrote, "calling up pleasing reminiscences; but the hour came for us to part, and we committed the executive reins to faithful men...with confidence, trusting that they will fight as bravely, labour as diligently, and bring forth fruit as abundantly" as the Methodists in the Canadas had done in the past. "But," he added, "our old friend, the Canada Conference, which has nobly defended the truth, and multiplied its children by thousands, has done its work, and will disappear from the record."³

² *Watchman*, August 13, 1873, 263.

³ Anson Green, *The Life and Times of Anson Green, D.D.* (Toronto: Methodist Book Room, 1877), 436-7.

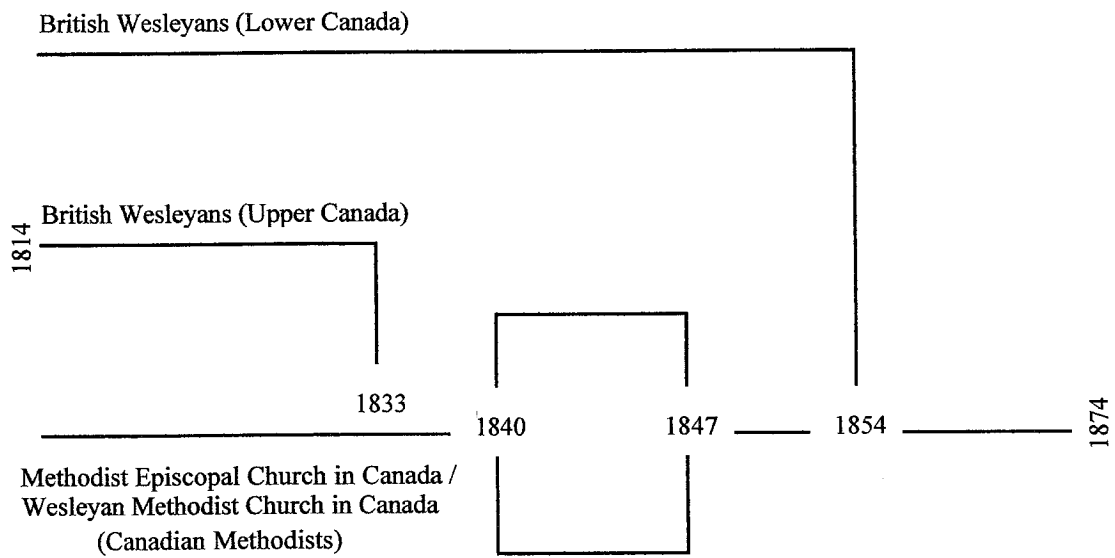
APPENDIX A**Key Dates in the History of Methodism
in Lower and Upper Canada: 1814-74**

- 1814** - The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain dispatches an initial contingent of missionaries to Lower and Upper Canada
- 1818** - The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain creates the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society
- 1820** - The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States divide Lower and Upper Canada between them
- 1824** - The Methodist Episcopalals in Upper Canada form a separate conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States
- 1828** - The Upper Canadian conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States forms an independent conference: the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada
- 1832** - The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society decides to recommence its missionary operations in Upper Canada

- 1833** - The Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada unites with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain, forming the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada
- 1840** - The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain decides to dissolve the union with the former Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada: the latter retains the name 'the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada'
- 1847** - The former Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain reunite, once again under the name 'the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada'
- 1854** - The Lower Canadian missions of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain unite with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada
- 1874** - The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada becomes officially independent of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain

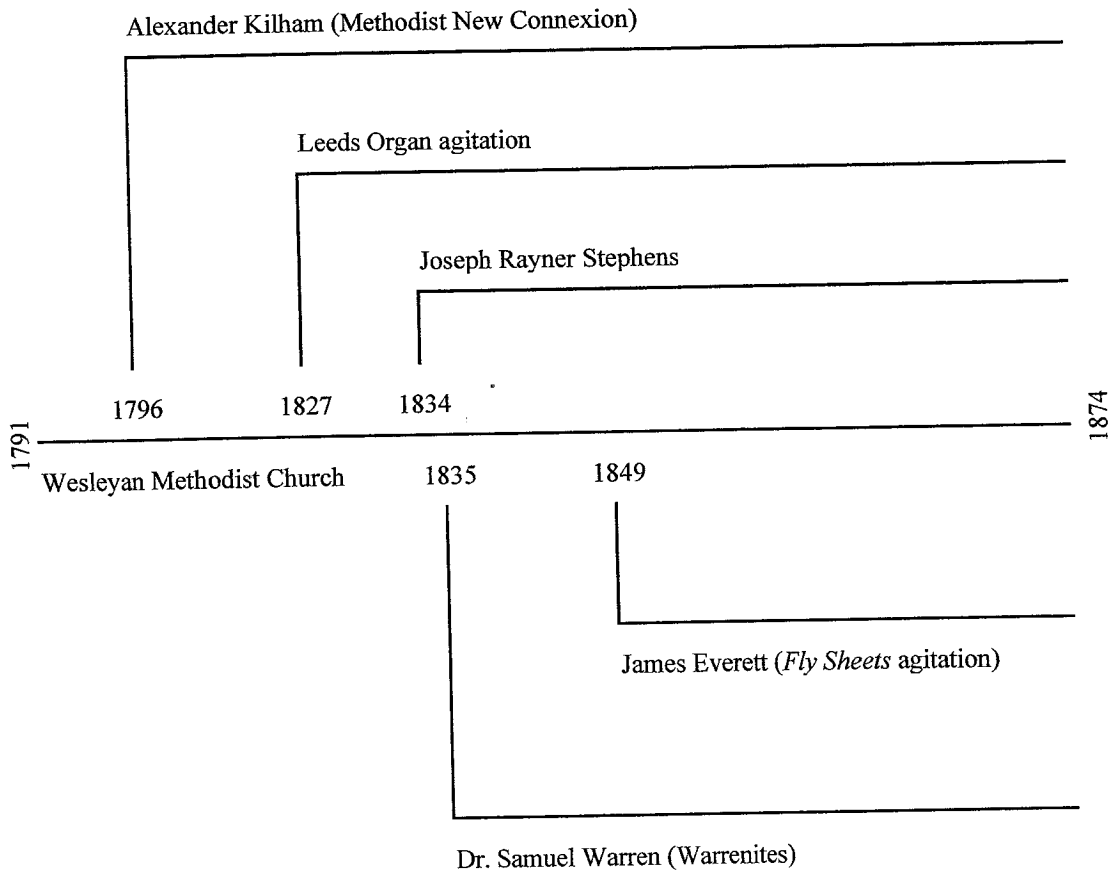
APPENDIX B

Methodist Unions and Schisms in Lower and Upper Canada: 1814-74



APPENDIX C

Major Schisms in British Wesleyanism: 1791-1874



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