Anglican Lutheran Relations in Canada

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Introduction

I readily acknowledge that this paper is written from a Lutheran point of view; it seemed natural for me to approach the subject thus. Hopefully the distortion this viewpoint effects will be compensated for by the power that comes from a more singular and experiential perspective.

We may begin with a seeming curiosity. Canadian Lutherans are fond and proud of the story of Rasmus Jensen. It is easily summarized. In August 1619 a Danish ship under Captain Jens Munck entered Hudson Bay and promptly claimed the land for His Majesty Christian IV. An early winter forced them to stay near present-day Churchill, Manitoba, where on Christmas Day the Lutheran chaplain, the Rev. Rasmus Jensen, conducted “preaching and the Lord’s Supper”. He and all the crew except Munck and two others died that winter and left their bones in that newly claimed land.¹ This story is important to Lutherans in a way that the first recorded Anglican service in Canada (by Martin Frobisher’s chaplain at Frobisher Bay, Baffin Island, in 1576²) is not. The Rev. Rasmus Jensen’s service of Word and Sacrament means, to Lutherans, that (1) Lutheran presence in Canada is early, historically speaking, and (2) Lutherans have been and are “church” and not “sect”. Both these affirmations are of significance to immigrant ethnic communities, which is what Lutherans were.

Anglicans did not bother themselves with such concerns because, as Millman has expressed it, “The character of an establishment was invariably attached to colonial Anglicanism wherever this was possible.”³ This was the case in several American colonies; statutes established Anglicanism in Nova Scotia (1758). New Brunswick (1786). and Prince Edward Island (1803). The Church of England was favored in Quebec
after 1763, and in Upper and Lower Canada "a large landed endowment was set apart for 'a Protestant clergy' " in 1791. In Newfoundland and on the West Coast the Church of England "had a superior status... as the church of the mother country." Millman concludes:

Hence in the Canadian scene Anglicanism first appeared as a religious system closely linked with the state, a virtual part of its working. This tradition was eventually broken and the Church of England emerged a century ago as one body of Christians among many, in no better and in no worse position than others in relation to government. 4

For Lutherans, as for other non-English immigrants, this meant in effect, "We are coming to your land." And Lutherans were eager to add, "But we are church, not sect," that is, we do not legitimate ourselves, we seek to be made legitimate by proper ecclesiastical authorities. That proved to be the major struggle of early Lutherans in Canada; the Church of England was one immediate source of ecclesiastical legitimation to which they turned.

Against this background I wish to explore three geographical areas in which Anglican-Lutheran relations were "troubled," and one in which relations were indifferent yet marked by a subtle "mind-set": 1. Colonial Nova Scotia, 2. Upper Canada: Dundas County, 3. Upper Canada: Vaughan and Markham Townships, 4. The Prairies.

1. Colonial Nova Scotia

Lutherans in sufficient numbers to permit speaking of Anglican-Lutheran relations began arriving in the Maritimes in 1745 (to Louisburg from New England) and, more significantly, in 1749–50. Halifax was established by England in 1749 to mollify resentment created by the return of Cape Breton to the French in 1748, and to counterbalance Louisburg and Roman Catholic Acadia. More than 4,000 settlers, many from Saxony and Wuerttemberg, were brought in during 1749–50. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent in two priests, William Tutty and William Anwy, with the promise of more to come, since "it remained the fixed policy of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations to win all these diverse elements to the obedience of the Church of England." 5 Lurking behind this
evangelistic front was the political hope that "foreign Protestants" would permeate the Acadian settlers with Protestant doctrine and so win them away from the Romish church!

In 1758 the first Nova Scotian assembly passed a law establishing the Church of England as the state religion, though it promised "free liberty of conscience" to "dissenters," and exempted them from taxes to support the Church of England.6

The growing community of Lutherans may have begun worship services as early as 1749, for in the next year three lots for a church and cemetery were granted to them by the Halifax authorities, and by 1752 there is record of an existing congregation.7

The problem, of course, was obtaining legitimate pastors. "Although the British government provided for a salary of a Lutheran minister for the German settlers, no clergyman was obtained...."8 A man by the name of Peter Christian Burger arrived in 1750, who introduced himself "as the minister of German Swiss foreigners" but whom Society for the Propagation of the Gospel records list as a Lutheran. He translated the Anglican service into German and taught Mr. Tutty the pronunciation of it: thus he either lacked ordination or, given the English dominance in Nova Scotia, felt his ordination to be inadequate. In any event, he departed for England seeking episcopal ordination, started back with German Bibles and worship books... and disappeared.9

An unhappy experience with a "candidate for theology" who was unordained moved the congregation to appeal to Lutheran ministers in London who, among other efforts, launched a successful appeal to British authorities to provide passage and stipend for a Lutheran minister. But all efforts to find one were unsuccessful or thwarted.10

In 1753 a large part of the congregation moved to Lunenburg, and the depleted congregation had to be content with lay services. Three or four times a year the Anglican rector was paid to conduct a communion service, in English. A number of schoolmasters and elders served capably and faithfully, and it was during these years that the "Little Dutch church," more formally called St. George's Lutheran Church, was erected, and dedicated in 1761 (the Anglican rector officiating). and silver communion vessels were purchased in 1779.
Relations with the Anglicans were thus cordial. Nevertheless, an insistent concern to be Lutheran also manifested itself. Upon the occasion of an Easter Monday communion conducted by the rector of St. Paul's, the elders resolved that expositions of the Gospel had to conform with "Evangelical Lutheran Confession," and had to be in German. Language was to be a major protector of identity.

In 1783 St. George's finally got its German Lutheran pastor. Bernard Michael Houseal came from a pastorate in New York city. A Loyalist, he had lost his possessions and library. The arrival of Houseal and of further Lutheran Loyalists, even though destitute, seemed a sign of hope for the congregation. Houseal set to work at once, and in 1784 appealed for help to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on the basis that the congregation was in communion with the Church of England. The Anglican rector supported the appeal "as a means of fixing the foreigners in the Established Church." On condition of episcopal ordination the S.P.G. agreed to accept Houseal as "their missionary to the Germans in Halifax and adjacent parts." When he died in 1799 he was succeeded by an Anglican clergyman. A last effort to gain a German pastor was defused by a grant of money from the King for the building of a new church. At its dedication, 1801, and at services for some years following, German hymns were sung.

Almost the same sequence of events threatened to occur in Lunenberg. The story is too long to be told here except to say that again a Lutheran minister (P. Bryzelius) sought Anglican ordination and the congregation teetered on the brink. Pastors finally acquired from the U.S.A. retained Zion, Lunenberg in the Lutheran fold. In the Annapolis Valley, Loyalists with a Lutheran pastor, John Christian Wagner, arrived in 1783 and requested of the governor a missionary stipend for him, which was granted on condition he receive episcopal ordination: he left for England on that mission, but while there supplied a Lutheran parish and eventually, by mutual agreement, was released by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. We may conveniently note here the similar experience of a settlement of Danes in New Brunswick, who arrived in 1872 and called their home "New Denmark." The Anglican church in Frederickton served them until in 1875 a missionary, N.M. Hansen, was sent to them by the Danish Missionary Society.
Unable to collect his promised stipend, Hansen was packing to leave when a Frederickton clergyman suggested he “should apply for membership in the Anglican church.” Hansen sent to Denmark for counsel:

The reply came quickly and was in the affirmative. Hansen then applied to Bishop John Medley of Christ Church Cathedral for acceptance into the Anglican clergy. This was granted on the condition that he write and pass a 2 day examination for ordination. This accomplished Hansen was ordained as an Anglican clergyman in 1876, and assigned to the New Denmark parish. He was granted permission to use the Danish language, liturgy, ritual and hymnbook, and Luther’s catechism for confirmation instruction.16

These Lutheran experiences in colonial Nova Scotia and New Brunswick reveal three realities in early Anglican-Lutheran relations:

(1) The Church of England was perceived to be the established or “state” church. This was true in Nova Scotia not only by law but by the fact of colonial status; furthermore, deference to the Church of England was part and parcel of the loyalty to the crown expressed by the “Loyalists.” Lutherans, accustomed to the concept of a “state church,” and, concerned as always with “good order” civilly and religiously, did not find it difficult to make the change to Anglicanism, especially when Lutheran pastors were not available.

(2) Nevertheless, a change to Anglicanism was not automatic. One may say that from the English point of view entrance of “foreigners” into the Church of England was expected because (a) it was the established church and (b) such entry would further bind the “foreigners” to the crown and prevent any other outbreak of “abominable republicanism.” However, when Lutherans had a choice they maintained their Lutheran identity. England had been very hospitable to displaced German Lutherans, and the presence of distinct Lutheran congregations in London provided a model of cordial coexistence with the Church of England. When pastors and sufficient funds were available, this latter became the desired option.

(3) The concern to be—and to be perceived to be—a church and not a sect remained an abiding one. Ordination by a legitimate authority was crucial. Thus appeals were made to the British colonial authorities, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, to the London Lutheran congregations.
and to the Pennsylvania Ministerium organized by Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg. Except in the latter instance the ties to the Church of England were abundantly apparent. And it was, finally, the appeal to emerging Lutheran bodies in the U.S.A.—made easier by the presence of Lutheran Loyalists—that “saved” the Lutheran congregations from absorption into the Church of England while yet maintaining close and cordial relations.

2. Upper Canada: Dundas County

While the American War of Independence ended in 1781, Loyalists were already departing northward as early as 1776. Eventually some 30,000 or 40,000 came to “Canada” between 1776 and 1784, eschewing both sectarianism and republicanism.

For those who came to Quebec, land was set aside on the banks of the St. Lawrence and in the Bay of Quinte area. Among them were Lutherans, and, in fact, the township of Williamsburg was assigned to German Lutheran Loyalists. The history of these people is a sad one. Evicted from their homes in the Palatinate they fled, in 1708 and 1709, to England: some 15,000 destitute refugees. The Queen and her government tried valiantly to resettle them. Large numbers were transported to America. The governor of New York received some 3,000 and settled them along the Hudson River. Exploited and ill-used there, they eventually resettled in Pennsylvania and on the Schoharrie and Mohawk rivers in the 1720s. These latter settlements were plundered in the 1770s; many joined Loyalist regiments and these regiments were settled on Loyalist lands opened on the St. Lawrence and the Bay of Quinte.

Relations with the Church of England repeated the pattern we have already seen in Nova Scotia. The Lutheran settlements in Missiquoi County, bordering New York state, were unable to obtain a pastor, though attempts were made. The people attended the periodic services conducted by Anglican missionaries, and, especially under the persuasion of the Rev. Charles Stewart (later Bishop of Quebec), drifted into that church as well as into the Methodist congregations.

The Lutherans in other townships, obtaining pastors from the U.S.A., fared differently. The first Protestant church building in Upper Canada was erected 1789-90 by these Palatines
about three miles below the present village of Morrisburg.\textsuperscript{21} Nevertheless, some German Lutheran settlements were too remote to receive pastoral attention; those in the township of Cornwall "joined the Anglican Church with the encouragement of the Anglican rector in Cornwall who happened to be the brother of Bishop Mountain."\textsuperscript{22} This seemingly hospitable encouragement did not, however, always come from a warm evangelism. Cronmiller notes:

The missionary of the Church of England in Fredericksburg and Ernestown did not have much love for the Lutherans, as is evidenced by two letters which he sent to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The quotation follows:

Ernestown, May 7, 1807.

The Lutheran preacher here last winter was going to leave his people; but they raised his salary, and he stays with them again. I do not like the German Lutherans.

Ernestown, April 18, 1811.

Last winter I hired the Town Clerk of Ernestown for four dollars to give me an account of the present state of religion in that township. He reckoned up no person under seventeen years of age—Church of England 37, Methodist 170, Presbyterians 96, Lutherans 56, Baptists 15, Romans 10, Universalists 16, Quakers 4. I always look upon the township of Fredericksburg as much better affected to the Church of England than Ernestown, but I have not just the same confidence in their Town Clerk, and he is a Lutheran.\textsuperscript{23}

It was in Dundas County that a rather severe falling out occurred between Lutherans and Anglicans. The central figure in the piece was the Lutheran pastor, J.G. Weigandt (Weagant, Wigandt, Weigant), of the Williamsburg parish. Ordained in 1800 "in the U.S.A. by three Lutheran clergymen," he states he had doubts "whether the Ordination was in due form as I was not bound to a conforming with the Symbolical Books." With seven children, his salary was inadequate and in 1796 the elders and deacons appealed to Governor Simcoe "to grant to the said J. Wigandt the annual pay of same salary which the ministers of the Church of England receive" or, in lieu of that, a grant of land "for an encouragement to stay with us."\textsuperscript{24} Failing in that, and failing also in raising more salary from his parishioners, he persuaded the parish to send a petition to the Bishop of Quebec requesting salary aid for their pastor. What else Weigandt stated in the petition was not known to the German-speaking parishioners. "On July 10, 1812 the Bishop
of Quebec reported to the S.P.G. that he had an application for admission to Anglican orders from a Lutheran minister by the name of Weagant ‘who had long used our Catechism, admires our liturgy and unequivocally approved our Articles.’ 25 No doubt Weigandt discovered that eligibility for salary assistance required Anglican ordination. Considering Anglican-Lutheran differences to be minimal; attracted by a salary of 200 pounds sterling per year; influenced by the Anglican rector of Cornwall, John Strachan; reasoning that as a native of Hanover (the King's place of origin) he was “a subject of his majesty;” and aware that his predecessors had used the Anglican catechism to instruct children not in command of the German language, he was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Mountain in 1812.

The majority of his parishioners seemed to tolerate him, perhaps in no small measure because of the salary he now received! He was ordained a Priest in 1814, and the congregation became Anglican. Then a former pastor of the congregation, Heinrich Meyer, came to visit in 1815, was appalled at what he found, and organized the resistance, demanding the return of the church and the parsonage. A “padlock war” ensued, which ended when Weigandt and his Anglican members agreed to share the church building with the Lutheran remnant whom Meyer agreed to serve again. Ironically, Meyer found it impossible to exist on the meagre salary his faithful Lutherans could gather, and was himself re-ordained by the Church of England. He took charge of a Lutheran congregation at Iroquois which then passed into the Anglican church.

Not until the arrival of the Rev. Herman Hayunga in 1827 did the Lutherans in Dundas County begin to recover. In 1830 Hayunga appealed to “The Right Honourable and Right Reverend Charles, Lord Bishop of Quebec” for return of the property.26 Carter comments, “The disputed church property long continued a bone of contention until by act of parliament a division of the land was made, the Episcopals retaining the south half with all the improvements, while to the Lutherans remained the unimproved portion to the rear.” 27 In 1846 the government sought to rectify the matter by granting the Lutherans $2,000 and in 1848 thirty seven and one-half acres of land. “At this time the silver chalice and communion plates which had been retained by the Church of England congregation were restored to the Lutherans.” 28
The factors affecting Anglican-Lutheran relations in Dun-
das County were the same as those already noted with respect
to Nova Scotia. For all intents and purposes the Lutherans
perceived the Church of England to be the established church,
and as such gravitated toward it whenever lack of pastors or
funds were experienced. It is noteworthy that while some mem-
bers and eventually a church building or two went over to the
Methodists,\(^29\) the nearly exclusive alternative was the Church
of England.

It is true that the Constitutional Act of 1791, which di-
vided Quebec into Lower and Upper Canada, did not design-
nate the Church of England as the established religion (the
Roman Catholic church was allowed semi-official status, and
the Church of Scotland by virtue of the Act of Union between
England and Scotland, 1706, claimed equality with the Church
of England); nevertheless it authorized—in addition to the in-
famous Clergy Reserves—the establishment by the governors
of “one or more Parsonage or Rectory” in every township “ac-
cording to the Establishment of the Church of England,” to-
gether with an “expedient” endowment of land. The inform-
ing assumptions behind these provisions, as Moir points out,
certainly were those of church establishment, namely, “that re-
ligion was a useful support for civil government and that the
state religion was the faith of a majority of the population.”\(^30\)
Especially European Lutherans would have found this fact
compelling. Perhaps even more compelling was the civil fact
of British institutions. “The Constitutional Act of 1791 ac-
nowledged the Loyalist fact in Upper Canada by endowing
the province with English institutions. Upper Canada would,
as far as humanly possible, become another England beyond
the Atlantic, with the image and transcript of the English con-
stitution, civil and religious.”\(^31\) Small wonder that Lutherans,
when in need of pastoral care or funds for pastoral care, rather
automatically turned to the Church of England. Thus when
funds became available to the Church of England after 1815,
and a travelling superintendent of missions was appointed in
Bishop Mountain’s diocese. “many persons of mature age who
before were Lutheran” were received by Confirmation into that
church.\(^32\)

Quite beyond that, Lutherans theologically and liturgically
found a degree of affinity with Anglicans as over against the
evangelical sects which surged out of the American “Awakenings” and frontier “revivals.” They would likely have agreed with Bishop Mountain, who, having got as far as Niagara during his 1794 visitation, “approved of the few Presbyterian and Lutheran clergy but... formed a very low opinion of the Methodist preachers—‘a set of ignorant Enthusiasts whose preaching is calculated only to perplex the understanding and corrupt the morals, to relax the nerves of industry, and dissolve the bands of Society.’ ”

33 It was, of course, also partly this attitude that prevented the Church of England and subsequently the Lutheran churches (that is, Lutheran churches in the East34) from moving rapidly and flexibly into the frontier situations created by massive immigration: “Upper Canada’s 1791 population of 14,000 increased to 90,000 by 1812”35, and between 1812 and 1840 over half a million immigrants came to the Canadas.36

3. Upper Canada: Vaughan and Markham Townships
The great influx of people into Upper Canada from the St. Lawrence to Niagara after 1815 challenged the churches to Canadianize. In a sense both Anglicans and Lutherans passed a milestone in events in Markham and Vaughan townships.

As early as 1794 German Lutheran families arrived in what was to be Markham township north of York (Toronto). There is a tradition among Markham Lutherans that a church was built within a year or two on a lot provided by the land company for that purpose; no definite proof exists.37 More came in 1806 from Pennsylvania to Vaughan township. Lay readers conducted services and catechized children, but “for pastoral acts such as baptisms and marriages the German Lutherans travelled to York to be served by the Anglican rector of St. James Church.”38

In 1827 John Strachan was made Archdeacon of York. A leader of the “Family Compact,” Strachan believed “in an aristocratically dominated society,” and to him and to much of the Anglican church and the established population the immigrants were a foreign intrusion. Strachan was aggressively convinced that, as he expressed it in 1825, “a Christian nation without a religious establishment is a contradiction,” setting off a furious controversy with Methodist Egerton Ryerson and eventually with all Protestants.39
It may have been Strachan, then rector at York, who, when the Lutherans began to yearn for a pastor, directed them to the Bishop of Quebec. When the Bishop was not able to get them a German-speaking Anglican minister, they successfully turned to Pennsylvania in 1819. In spite of the ministrations of the pastor thus obtained, J.D. Peterson, membership declined and in 1823 he petitioned the Legislative Council for support. Strachan's view prevailed in the Council: it is not "expedient for Government to countenance or assist any denomination of Christians beyond the established church."*^ Peterson retired in 1829, and the congregations once more turned to the Anglicans for help in acquiring a pastor. The Bishop sent them Vincent Philip Mayerhoffer.

Mayerhoffer had been a Franciscan in France; he came to the U.S.A. about 1820, disputed with the Jesuits, joined the German Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, and in 1829 was received into the Church of England and sent to Vaughan and Markham. "He reported to the S.P.G. that his first sermon 'alarmed the people and penetrated their hearts with the utmost sorrow of their neglect,' whereupon the German Lutherans unanimously resolved to request him to serve them and agreed 'with heart and voice' to become members of the Church of England."^41

However, this decision was not, apparently, unanimous, in part because there were some Lutherans who determined to remain so, and in part, perhaps, because property was involved: an agreement made in 1828 provided that if Mayerhoffer could "keep the confidence of the people and serve the churches for the period of ten years, the property should be handed over to the Church of England."^42 Yet beyond these, other, and less calculable, factors were at work.

The 1830s were a turbulent decade in Upper Canada and especially in the Toronto (York became Toronto in 1834) area. The issues had a political face and a religious face. Politically, William Lyon Mackenzie was carrying a crusade against the Family Compact, and the crusade exploded into the Upper Canada Rebellion in 1837. Religiously, the Methodists and other denominations protested the contentious Clergy Reserves (one-seventh of the land endowed to the Church of England), contending they should be sold off and the monies used for public education or to support the churches equally.
Both issues, to Archdeacon (and soon Bishop) Strachan, smacked of abominable American republicanism and frontier democracy, and he wanted none of either. A leader in the Family Compact, Strachan embodied the notion that the whole of English social structure, including the church's connection to the state, could be and should be transplanted to the new world.

Mayerhoffer sided with Strachan, and thus with the ruling Family Compact. Threinen sums up the action:

Noting that his two townships had a "continuous and close chain of acquaintance with the arch-rebel Mackenzie," Mayerhoffer gave "Christian warnings" to his people and reminded them of "their duty to God and the Government." However his attempts at "recalling" them were met with stubborn resistance and finally "open war." Mackenzie declared Mayerhoffer "the greatest Tory in Markham" and Mayerhoffer believed that if the rebels won, his life would be forfeited, his house burned and his family slaughtered.\(^\text{43}\)

Many of the rural people, among them Lutherans, supported Mackenzie who articulated their grievances and resentments, including the resentment of the privileged position of the Church of England. The upshot was that the staunch Lutherans now encouraged by the presence of clergy sent from the U.S.A., seized the churches and locked Mayerhoffer out. Mayerhoffer broke the locks; the Lutherans installed a heavy double door and engaged an armed guard to prevent Mayerhoffer's entry. When the latter still managed to get in, he was taken prisoner as he was about to begin the service of worship. Thereafter he conducted services in private homes until after the rebellion was squelched. Following the rebellion, Gottlieb Eckardt, a member of one of the politically active prominent families of the Lutheran Church in Unionville and a friend of Mackenzie, was imprisoned and sentenced to death for his part in the rebellion, though, after spending a miserable winter in a damp jail, he was reprieved.\(^\text{44}\)

Mayerhoffer was permitted to return to the churches after the rebellion, but legal action sustained the Lutheran title and Mayerhoffer was denied use of the church buildings. He proceeded then to build and serve Anglican churches in the townships.

We may note that a similar pro-rebellion voice sounded among the Lutherans on the St. Lawrence. The pastor of the Williamsburg congregation, an American, in 1837 charged "the
Anglican Church with sacrificing 'with indifferent feelings the interest of religion and the welfare of the country upon the altars of her selfishness, her pride and lust.'” His congregation, although somewhat sympathetic to his views, was offended and when his two-year call expired requested another pastor from the New York Ministerium “but one who was not ‘meddlesome with... party politics.’”

Altogether, the stirring events in Markham and Vaughan townships and York-Toronto proved a watershed. For the Anglican Church it was the end of the notion of preferred status. In 1840 the concept of a division of the Clergy Reserves was acknowledged (Church of Scotland; 38 in the 1850’s (64 Catholic Church). For the Lutherans it was likewise an indigenizing experience, and one that underlined the need for legitimating church structures. In 1852 at Zion Lutheran Church, Maple (just North of Toronto) the first step was taken toward the formation of a “Canada Conference” and application was made to and approved by the Pittsburgh Synod in 1853. Among its first actions was that of ministerial discipline: the deposing of a pastor who “had embraced the system of E. Swedenborg.”

It is undoubtedly correct to say that from this time on Anglicans and Lutherans went their own ways, the Anglicans slowly adjusting to a non-privileged status but immeasurably assisted by a vision of a whole church in a whole country; the Lutherans concerned almost solely to minister to Lutheran immigrants, and only gradually realizing a national vision and a national place.

4. The Prairies

Anglican missionaries came early to the prairies. In the 1840s they had a mission not only at the Red River Settlement but on the North Saskatchewan River and at The Pas, work among the the Native peoples drawing them North and Northwest into the vast hinterlands. This was the era, writes Carrington, “when the whole English Church was waking up to the great vision of world-wide expansion. In 1840 and 1841 the energetic Bishop Blomfield of London had launched the appeal for the Colonial Bishoprics Fund, under the auspices of the S.P.G.. to provide endowments for new overseas dioceses.”
In 1849 David Anderson was consecrated Bishop of Rupertsland, and now the base was set not only for work in the North and Northwest but for work on the prairies proper, that is, that belt of arable land (though at that time it was still dismissed as desert) which would within a few decades receive thousands of settlers. Already in 1851 a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionary, W.H. Taylor, arrived “for the ‘District of Assiniboia’ and began establishing a church three miles up the Assiniboine River, west of the Red River settlement.”

Bishop Anderson was succeeded by Robert Machray in 1865. who, when Manitoba was created a province in 1870, saw the need “for a prairie diocese, following the course of the two Saskatchewan Rivers,” and in fact the Diocese of Saskatchewan was created in 1874.

The new Diocese of Saskatchewan began north of Winnipeg in the old Cumberland Archdeaconry, and spread out westward along the Saskatchewan River into prairie lands, where herds of buffalo and bands of Indians were giving way now before the influx of white settlers of mixed racial origins with the covered wagon and the Red River cart: as Bishop McLean himself put it, it was bounded by “the territory of Montana, U.S., on the South, the Diocese of Athabasca on the North, the Rocky Mountains on the West, and the Diocese of Rupertsland on the East.” But since it followed the curve of the Saskatchewan River, it left Bishop Machray with a very considerable westward extension into the prairies, called Assiniboia; it was bounded on the south by the State of North Dakota.

At least structurally, the Anglican Church in Canada was ready for the waves of settlers to come.

German Lutherans may have come to Western Canada by way of the Red River as early as 1872 from Ontario and the U.S.A., but “they made no permanent impression.” Icelandic came to the Winnipeg environs in 1875. It was the completed railroad, however, that brought enormous numbers of settlers from all over Europe and the U.S.A., and the churches were hard put to provide ministry to them. “All churches undertook pastoral work in immigrant communities. A number of them did so in the normal course of seeking to provide for their own members. Lutheran work came almost entirely within this category.” German Lutherans began establishing congregations in Manitoba in 1888, in Saskatchewan in 1889, in Alberta in 1891. In 1897 the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of
Manitoba and the Northwest Territories was founded as a district of the (U.S.A. based) General Council. Danish Lutherans established congregations in Manitoba and Alberta in 1910 and 1911, connected with the (U.S.A. based) United Evangelical Lutheran Church and organized into the Western Canada District of that body in 1927. Swedes arrived early on the prairies, and mission work began among them in 1883 by the (U.S.A. based) Augustana Lutheran Church, and in 1913 they founded the Canada Conference of that body. The Hauge Synod began mission work to Norwegians in Alberta in 1895, and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church began work in Saskatchewan in 1903, while the Norwegian Synod began work in Manitoba in 1904. The Icelanders formed their first congregations in Manitoba in 1877, establishing the Icelandic Synod in 1885.

These brief notations vividly depict the ethnic nature of Lutheranism on the prairies (and, of course, elsewhere in North America) and the U.S.A. connections; they also reflect the community nature of immigrant settlement. What is apparent, however, is that, while financial and clergy resources were often severely limited, pastors and congregations were at once linked to parent bodies South of the border which, in most cases, accepted mission responsibilities toward “their people” in the Canadian West. Furthermore, the very denominational diversity of immigrant settlement, abetted by the ecumenical nature of the struggle for survival, generated a climate of tolerance and equality.

With two exceptions.

The first was what we may call the “immigrant status.” It is at once a self-perception and something of a psychosis! The Lutheran immigrants to the prairies, whether from Europe or from the U.S.A., came to an English land. The monarch in England was also monarch here, and the determining institutions from the Royal Bank to the Royal North West Mounted Police impressed the immigrants that they had chosen to become British subjects. The ethnic communal life in which worship in the ethnic languages remained viable into the 1940s was in a sense a bulwark against this British fact and a grudging acceptance of it.

The second, and related, exception to a climate of tolerance and equality was the public school system. I attended
a one-room country school in Saskatchewan, some 50 miles North of Saskatoon, in the late 1930s and 1940s. The school was “Hamburg School,” revealing the Germanic origin of its founding families: German Lutherans from Ontario and Nebraska, and Mennonites from Manitoba and Russia. Except for the singing of a few German carols during the annual school “Christmas Program” all instruction and all activities were conducted in English even though all the children spoke German at home; the songs we learned were principally songs of the British Isles. In short, the school system was designed to transform non-English immigrants into British subjects.

John Webster Grant has pointed out that “the first set of religious assumptions to be tried out on Canadian soil were those of the old folk churches of Christendom,” and thus both an established church and established institutions were transplanted: Bishop John Strachan was an active proponent of these assumptions. On the prairies these assumptions were largely replaced by a second set, namely, that Canada could and must be made a Christian nation. This set of assumptions, fired by a missionary spirit, was already present in New France in the 1600s, and “a striking expression of it was the foundation of Montreal as a holy outpost of the faith”; in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these assumptions were taken up by the major Anglo-Saxon denominations.

But what did it mean to make Canada a Christian nation? What needed to be done to make it “His Dominion”? As the major Protestant denominations defined it, writes M.K. Clifford, “the vision of Canada as ‘His Dominion’ implied a homogeneous population which shared a heritage of political democracy and evangelical Protestant Christianity.” The hordes of foreign immigrants, including “Orientals... Slavs... Mormons, Jews, Mennonites, Hutterites, and Doukhobors” threatened this vision. Attacks were mounted against these groups, and some voices advocated a halt to their entrance into the country—a few even called for deportations. A more charitable voice called for the necessary assimilation of the foreigners “into conformity with the values and standards of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism” since they constituted a moral, an intellectual, and a political threat. Clifford continues:

C.J. Cameron, the assistant superintendent of the Baptist Home Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec, stated the problem clearly in his book Foreigners or Canadians?... His solution was as follows:
We must endeavor to assimilate the foreigner. If the mixing process fails we must strictly prohibit from entering our country all elements that are non-assimilable. It is contrary to the Creator’s law for white, black or yellow races to mix together. If the Canadian civilization fails to assimilate the great mass of foreigners admitted to our country the result will be destruction to the ideals of a free and nominally Christian nation which will be supplanted by a lower order of habits, customs and institutions.

The basic threat of the immigrant for Cameron, however, was political. “The millions of aliens admitted to Canada,” he argued, “have transported to our soil political notions which we cannot tolerate. The continental ideas of the Sabbath, the nihilist’s ideas of government, the communist’s ideas of property and the pagan’s ideas of religion.” Therefore assimilation was the greatest problem, and, as far as Cameron was concerned, “there is but one all-sufficient method by which this goal is reached: we shall Canadianize the foreigner by Christianizing him. Here is our greatest opportunity and our gravest responsibility, for if we do not Christianize him he will paganize us, and if we do not instill into him the highest ideals, the saloon-keeper and the ward politician will fill him with the lowest ideals.”

The school system became the effective way of civilizing and assimilating the foreigners and rendering them loyal to British institutions and making them capable of self-government. So in Hamburg School we flew the Union Jack, sang “Rule Britannia” and “God Save the King,” and learned English folk songs. And when we went to our German church services we ran counter to the prevailing assumptions that “the church (is) the institution responsible for the maintenance and transmission of the nation’s most sacred ideals and values.”

The perceptive reader will begin to sense that, while Lutheran-Anglican relations in the Prairie Provinces were unremarkable on one level—each denomination going its own way in an atmosphere of toleration and equality, on another level a significant (and all the more significant for its subtlety) psychological barrier was raised: “Lutherans perceived Anglicans—along with the United Church—as being part of a quasi-establishment. They viewed them with feelings of envy and inferiority because Anglicans were associated with power, were concentrated in the urban centres and were at home in
their country. Lutherans saw themselves as powerless, rural, and of minority status.”

In the 1930s the stress on civilizing or Canadianizing the foreigners waned, though its destructive element of bigotry surfaced in the suspicions directed toward German Canadians in the 1940s and in the cruel displacement of Japanese Canadians. By that time ethnic Lutherans were moving rapidly toward assimilation, and, at the same time, the fact of Canadian multiculturalism was beginning to be perceived and with it came the recognition that the vision of Canada as “His Dominion” was fading.

It was time for Lutherans to develop a vision of the Nation (the Canadian Lutheran Council was formed in 1952). It was time for the “Church of England in Canada” to become the “Anglican Church of Canada” (1955) It was time for Anglicans and Lutherans to see each other with fresh eyes.

Postscript

It seems unnecessary and redundant to write a Conclusion to this paper. There is a sense of inevitability to the nature and shape and tenor of our relations, given the assumptions and the convictions our respective forebears brought with them, and given the daunting might of the land to which they came. There is also an ambience of sadness about the tale of our relations: viewing ourselves and one another as either possessors of or foreigners in this land is rather absurd posturing when set against the millenia of occupancy by the aboriginal peoples, not even to mention the first article of our common credo.

Something happened in the colonial era that may have been prophetic. In 1629 a Lutheran chaplain accompanied an English expedition which captured the French fortress at Quebec, taking Champlain prisoner. “Quebec was returned to the French in 1632 but in the intervening three years the Lutheran chaplain was the only religious functioning in the colony. Not only Protestants but also the remaining Roman Catholic population were served by him.” Emergencies call for actions that, though irregular, are nonetheless valid. There is something profoundly reassuring in that event as well as in our subsequent relational story. We have, together and separately, found our home in this land and, perhaps and God willing, we have again found each other in a way not possible until now.
Notes


9 Cronmiller, 38f.; Threinen, 5.

10 Threinen, 6.

11 Cronmiller, 42.

12 Threinen, 8.

13 Cronmiller, 44.

14 See Threinen, 9ff.; Cronmiller, 46ff.

15 Threinen, 14f.


17 Walsh, 102.

18 Threinen, 18.


20 Threinen, 19; Cronmiller, 82.

21 Carter, 36.

22 Threinen, 20.

23 Cronmiller, 84f.


25 Threinen, 21.

26 Cronmiller, 96.

27 Carter, 164.

28 Cronmiller, 99.

29 See *ibid.*, 83.

On the Prairies Lutherans utilized "field missionaries" who, like the Methodist "circuit riders," established strings of "preaching places" (as in the Meadow Lake area of Saskatchewan), thus serving tiny clusters of settlers in the hope that eventually at least some of these would grow into regular parishes (see Ernst George Goos. *Pioneering for Christ in Western Canada: The Story of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Manitoba and Other Provinces*, The Jubilee Committee of the Synod, 1947).


See Clifford, 30f.


