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The Church in the Canadian Era

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

THE CHURCH IN THE CANADIAN ERA

(Volume Three of a History of the Christian Church in Canada)

JOHN WEBSTER GRANT

Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972

234 Pages.

As an inclusive history of the Canadian Church, the three volume History of the Christian Church in Canada produced by McGraw-Hill Ryerson must be acknowledged as the best on the market. The study has broken Canadian Church history into periods which corresponded to three eras of political reality in Canada, the periods of French, English and Canadian dominance.

The third volume, written by the general editor of the series, should be of particular interest to Lutherans because the period between 1867 - 1967 is the time when Lutherans became more in evidence on the scene of Canadian church history. Unfortunately, although the author acknowledges Lutherans to be "one of Canada's major denominations" (p. 119), the study shows a disappointing awareness of the cultural and ethnic mosaic which is Canadian Lutheranism. Aside from passing references to Icelandic and Baltic Lutherans, the reader is left with the impression that Canadian Lutherans were all of German background.

This probably doesn't matter a great deal. For there is also a low awareness evidenced that Lutherans are on the scene at all. This is accountable, in part, by the fact that Lutherans were frequently reluctant to relate to the Canadian scene. However the main reason may be that the author mistakenly viewed Cronmiller's excellent narrative of the Eastern Canada Synod as a comprehensive history of Canadian Lutheranism. Aside from an article on local history relating to Waterloo County and a brief chapter from a book, "The Churches and the Canadian Experience", this is the author's only source.

Even given these shortcomings, "The Church in the Canadian Era" is an excellent treatment of Canadian church history. It is written in the awareness that the church has a societal context with which it interacts. Furthermore, the author effectively identified and analyses trends and movements without getting too bogged down with details.