

William Pepperell, were the result of a religious crusade by the Rev. Jonathan Edwards and the Rev. George Whitefield, a confrere of John Wesley — though Whitefield was a Calvinist (believer in predestination) where Wesley was an Arminian (believer in free will). In time, most of these early congregationalists in Nova Scotia joined other denominations.

The first Presbyterian congregation to take root in Canada was founded at Truro by Scots-Irish Presbyterians from New Hampshire in 1760. (Two previous settlements by French Presbyterians in the early seventeenth century failed through famine or disease and through a change in French colonial administration prohibiting Protestantism after 1627).

Methodism reached mainland Canada with immigrants from Yorkshire who settled in Nova Scotia, about 1770. Earlier it had been established around Conception Bay, Newfoundland. It received its greatest impetus after the American revolution, when many American Methodists fled to Canada, among them Barbara Heck, acknowledged founder of Methodism in colonial America.

These American Methodists were among the Empire Loyalists who came to Canada and became firmly entrenched in what is now Ontario. Though their patriotic fervour was to the Crown, their religious structure remained for a long time tied to the United States. Early Methodist ministers were sent to Upper Canada from the United States by the famous Bishop Asbury, whose monument stands near the Capitol in Washington. They held services in pioneer shanties and in schoolhouses, linked in circuits, and remained part of the American church until the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada in 1828.

Because the British authorities didn't like the American connection, Canadian Methodist preachers were not allowed to perform marriage ceremonies. After breaking the link with America in 1828, they found they could not go it alone and tried to form a union with the British Wesleyan Methodist Conference. However, there were difficulties and it was not until 1884 that all Canada's Methodists except two small dissident groups were brought under one banner.

## Rival synods

Scottish immigrants, mainly to Nova Scotia, formed rival groupings of Presbyterians which remained at odds with one another from the eighteenth century until 1844-45, when three vigorous and militant Evangelical Free Presbyterian Synods were formed and became the Presbyterian Church of Canada — a union which was only partially successful. Minorities broke away and formed what were known as Kirk Synods outside the main Presbyterian church. Though these eventually disintegrated, a similar minority arose in 1925 to oppose the formation of the United Church of Canada — using arguments often reminiscent of those used against

Presbyterian union 50 years previously. When the decision to join the United Church was taken, about one third of the 279,000 Presbyterian communicant members left the 51st General Assembly in protest.

Almost all the 418,000 communicant members of the Methodist Church went into the United Church, as did all but half a dozen congregations of the 11,000 member Congregationalist Church.

Grace Lane, widow of a United Church minister, has written historical papers to mark the first half-century of its history, recalling that "The new church started with a great wave of enthusiasm and missionary outreach. There was a rather naive opinion that, with church union, the Kingdom of God might now be built in Canada."

In fact, circumstances all but forced union upon its quibbling participants. In the sparsely settled West, flooded with immigration from Europe early in the twentieth century, clergymen were few and churchgoers willy-nilly worshipped where they could. Being the social activists of their day, the non-conformist churches were concerned with the problems faced by the immigrants and more than a little with the possibility that the Roman Catholic church might pick up more than its fair share of immigrants.

Mrs. Lane writes: "As the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) snaked across the West, village after village sprang up. At first the churches were intensely competitive. Ministers were in such short supply that the denominations were forced to co-operate. Methodists and Presbyterians agreed not to plant congregations within six miles of each other and working boundaries were set, based on alternate railway stations. A family leaving the train at Y automatically became Methodists — another at Z, Presbyterian."

## Friendly to Rome

"Local unions were established at such places as Kindersley, Keerobert, Frobisher and North Portal. The Union churches were a mighty impetus towards organic union on two counts: first, they proved that harmonious amalgamation was possible — second, it was clear that unless the parent bodies moved they would become a new denomination."

The United Church of Canada now claims 2.1 million members and adherents, and is Canada's largest Protestant denomination. Now it is seeking union with the Anglican Church in Canada and beginning to make friendly overtures towards Rome. Of the latter, General Secretary Rev. George Morrison says that first responses have been "favourable."

Archbishop Edward W. Scott, primate of the Anglican Church, has commented; "I was sure this was the direction in which they would move. The United Church is both a united church and a church which believes in moving towards union with other groups." ♦

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He insists that he is not making the familiar protest of the representational artist against the abstract, though there is no question where his own commitment lies. Rather, he feels that the art produced in Canada is for the most part unremarkable in its own terms. "My impression on going back while I was teaching at Colchester was that the style, the standard, the experimental thing which was being exhibited in Toronto as developed artists' work was what our students were doing over here. I found this shocking, in a way..."

## Personal vision

Having studied as a young man with one of Canada's great school of landscape painters, he is understandably sad that today Canadian artists seem to have little interest in painting the country. His own paintings of Canadian landscape, mostly done rather quickly on short visits, have a candid nostalgia for the style of the Group of Seven. This is his most derivative work: his painting in Europe reflects a more personal vision, realised in a variety of landscapes: "Sardinia, France, Italy, Malta, Sicily, Majorca..." he says, turning over the canvases stacked in his studio.

Having persisted so long on his own path, philosophically and in his work, Cronyn at 70 finds himself surprisingly close to thought patterns prevailing among much younger people: meditation, the Sufis, a deep interest in Yoga which began when he read Paul Brunton back in 1937.

"It seems to me that it doesn't matter if art is abstract or figurative, as long as it has, not a reason, but a generating power," he reflected. "You can see that coming out in a painting or a piece of sculpture or a drawing. Mine started as a search for truth: I wanted to get back to nature by myself, not to have to play tennis and bridge, because I was looking—I am *still* looking—for something more important than what one is handed out."

"Sometimes it seems impossible. You can't paint truth. But there is a moment that comes when you are able to dislodge all previous running thoughts, conventions, obligations to society, and see exactly what is right and what is wrong. It lasts such a short time that it's terribly difficult to hang on to, but my personal thing is to *try* to hang on to it."

"I have a feeling that art is much more a search than a quality of design. The exhibitions of Canadian art which come to London and Paris are — well, they're boring. They've got no statement. It reflects, probably, the Canadian intellectual, but I don't think it reflects the soil or what I think of as Canada. They have no leading figures to take it away from international leadership. I look to Canada for a painter as great as Francis Bacon, whether he is painting in plastics or blowing up balloons. I'm still looking..." ♦