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Proscribed Piety: Woman's Missionary Societies in Alberta, 1918-1939

by

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Abstract

Examining the woman's missionary societies of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches in Alberta during the interwar years provides a unique context for understanding the expression of women's piety in a rapidly secularizing society. In this period of unequalled growth, immigration, and urbanization, opportunities for home mission work and social reform were rampant.

In order to pursue their own mission interests independently, women created associations which paralleled existing church organizations. Motivated by 'evangelical feminism,' and frustrated by the subordinate role placed upon them by the patriarchal church, women elevated their status by becoming the 'handmaidens of God.' Empowered by direct communication with God through prayer, these groups of religiously committed women directed their energies towards social reforms which would help prepare the way for the kingdom of God on earth. This study will examine how the activities of the woman's missionary societies facilitated their quest for spiritual fulfillment and to what extent conventional constructs of gender were challenged by them.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On Wednesday morning, the first of June in 1927, sixty delegates to the Alberta Conference Branch of the United Church Woman's Missionary Society enjoyed the fragrant scent of spring blossoms which filled Central Church in Calgary. At 9:30 a.m., their president, Mrs. A. M. Scott opened the proceedings with a devotional service including a hymn, Bible lesson and prayer. The discipline of prayer as a central component of society fellowship was a major theme of the three-day conference. Mrs. McKillop, president of Lethbridge Presbyterial, stated that the greatest need in the world was to pray. She expressed a desire for definite and intelligent prayer by individuals and groups. Reminding her audience to rely on their spiritual relationship with God, McKillop initiated a period of silent supplication followed by the hymn, "Sweet Hour of Prayer."¹ This instance illustrates the significance of prayer as an inspirational tool to articulate and activate the society's objectives. Believing that members supplied the spiritual power of the church, leaders asserted that "[p]rayer is the line of communication down which the energy of God is poured into our lives. Behind you are your prayers, and behind your prayers is God."²

During the years 1918-1939, the Woman's Missionary Societies (WMS) of the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Churches enabled Protestant churchwomen in Alberta to widen the scope of their moral authority beyond the family to the public sphere under the auspices of the church. Their home mission endeavours in Alberta encompassed medical missions, school homes and evangelizing efforts primarily directed towards the Ukrainian or 'Ruthenian' immigrants in the northeast portion of the province.³

¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 327, Box 11. (assume this accession designation for UCA, PAA materials unless indicated otherwise), Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 137.

² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923. 15.

³ 'Ruthenian' is the term most frequently used in Presbyterian, Methodist and United Church publications to refer to Central Europeans, primarily of Ukrainian origin, who had migrated to Canada to pursue employment in the agricultural, industrial, and resource sectors of the economy during this period. Since many Ukrainians were from the Austrian province of Galicia, they were also known as 'Galicians.'

The religious heritage reflected within the large block settlements, including the Uniate, Greek Orthodox, Ukrainian Baptist and Independent Greek churches, threatened a "nationalistic religious vision" of a homogeneous Protestant Anglo-Saxon province.⁴ Influenced by the colonial context of their foreign mission experience, church workers employed misleading and inaccurate terms such as 'pagan' and 'heathen' to justify their evangelizing and assimilating efforts among the Ruthenians.⁵ An examination of the societies' organization, ideals, strategies, and accomplishments reveals their intent to preserve Protestant religious and cultural conformity in a province with an increasingly high level of ethnic diversification. Consequently, this research amplifies the work of historians such as Howard Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice: History of Nativism in Alberta (1982) regarding majority-minority relations in interwar Alberta.⁶ Furthermore, although much has been written about the interwar years as a period of emancipation for women, this study focuses on women who sought to maintain the traditional ideology of family and Anglo-Protestant moral values.⁷

As evangelical feminists, members of the Alberta WMS (AWMS) confined their social activism to issues which were based on their belief in the ideology of family and protecting women's reproductive and nurturing role in society. Their efforts were informed by the Victorian concept of ideal womanhood which embodied a belief in the innate spiritual and moral superiority of women. This moral superiority empowered evangelical women to question male or clerical authority which might abrogate the sanctity of home and family. By meeting regularly for prayer, mission study, and

⁴ Donald Avery, "Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 45. And Howard Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice: History of Nativism in Alberta (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 42.

⁵ Avery, 14. The present study employs terms such as 'Ruthenian', 'pagan', and 'heathen' solely as a means of representing the contextual "lexicon of the [Protestant Anglo-Saxon] majority." 'Christian' refers to Anglo-Protestant religious and moral values.

⁶ Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice, 6 & 10. Palmer defines nativism as "an amalgamation of ethnic prejudice and nationalism" characterized by "a distrust of difference, a sense that minority groups which attempted to maintain separate identities diminished the national sense of identity and posed a challenge to prevailing ideals and assumptions."

⁷ James G. Snell, In The Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 28. Snell quotes a definition of ideology of familism from Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh The Anti-Social Family (London, 1982), as "the propagation of politically pro-family ideas and the strengthening of families themselves."

"systematic, self-sacrificial givings," members believed that their spiritual lives and commitment to the church would be deepened.⁸ The societies appealed to middle-aged, middle-class women, wives of ministers or businessmen, who accepted the adage of "the more given us the more required."⁹ They believed Christianity endowed them with a privileged status as women, and they were bound to share this with women of other races and cultures through conversion.

This thesis argues that while denied a voice within their churches, AWMS members incorporated their own spiritual space which functioned as a parallel church, providing "a context in which women could speak, pray, and creatively give expression to their own understanding of the biblical message."¹⁰ They honed and adapted an evangelical organization founded on the basis of spiritual fellowship to accommodate reform work in the public sphere, asserting that "women of prayer are women of power."¹¹ They bypassed the exclusionary patriarchy of the church to ally themselves directly with God through prayer. However, through the 1920s and 1930s there were significant repercussions for the Woman's Missionary Societies who had marshalled their energies towards evangelizing and the amelioration of social problems. With increasing professionalization in the field of social work, the AWMS found it necessary to focus on developing expertise in the educational and medical areas of their mission work in Alberta. Thus, the religious objective of Christianization was eclipsed by a more secular goal of inculcating values which would Canadianize immigrant children through education, not conversion. Moreover, the spiritual foundation which had empowered evangelical feminism no longer validated the moral authority and regulation of the AWMS over the communities they wished to influence.

⁸ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, "The Missionary Creed," printed in the agenda of the 11th annual meeting of the MWMS, June 8-11, 1920, includes a reference to "the reflex influence of missionary activity in the lives of those who engage in it." Also, Patricia R. Hill, The World Their Household, The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1985). 66. Hill provides an explanation of reflex influence in missionary work.

⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Grande Prairie. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1033, Box 31. Minutes of 6th annual meeting, May 10, 1932. n. p.

¹⁰ Gloria Neufeld Redekop, The Work of Their Hands: Mennonite Women's Societies in Canada (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 1.

For many years, scholarly works in Canadian historiography failed to recognize the substantial accomplishments of women's voluntary associations in the work of the church. The historical church landscape was overwhelmingly populated by a male intellectual elite. Such works as The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-28 (1971) by Richard Allen, in its analysis of the rise and waning of the social gospel fails to take significant note of the breadth and depth of women's participation in the movement's social reforms. Subsequent debate in the field of Canadian religious history over secularization and the evolution of Protestant religious culture including Ramsay Cook's The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada (1985) and William Westfall's Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (1989) do not consider the ramifications of separate spheres of influence upon the institutional life of the church. Even much later works such as David B. Marshall's Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940 (1992) and A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900-1940 (1996) written by Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau fail to acknowledge women as shareholders in the church. The cultural ideal of women's enhanced spirituality combined with their exclusion from full membership in the church indicates that women's experience of faith differed substantially from their male cohorts. Consequently, to ensure a thorough analysis of Protestant religious culture, women's participation in church activities needs to be fully examined.

As the study of women's history gained legitimacy through the 1970s, the nature and diversity of their experience within a patriarchal society was discovered. Studies investigated the degree of agency or self-determination that women were able to exercise within a repressive environment. Several works explored regional and ethnic differences in women's experience, the nature of early feminist activism, and maternal ideology as a means of subordination. However, while religion was recognized as an integral component of woman's sphere through the turn of the twentieth century, feminist historiography during the interwar years has yet to consider the continuing influence of

¹¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Grande Prairie, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1033, Box 31. Minutes of 10th

religion in the lives of Canadian women. Veronica Strong-Boag's article about prairie women, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie" (1986) recognized the unique demands and heavy workloads carried by women in the most recently settled region of the country. Strong-Boag describes the shift in the western feminist agenda towards ameliorating punishing conditions for women in the rural domestic sphere. She notes how "the insight of prairie women into the nature of their sex's oppression contributed to the persistence of ... the feminist voice in Canadian history."¹² Her subsequent effort based on a national perspective, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (1988) studied the gender-determined variables in the life-cycles of these middle-class women through the optimistic twenties and the unfulfilled promise of economic equality for women in the 'dirty thirties'. An edited collection, Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics (1989) explores the politicization of women and their limited appeal as candidates for public office. The conclusion reached is that women, regardless of class or ethnicity, were excluded from the male-dominated territory of party politics due to the prevailing restrictive ideology of marriage and motherhood. James G. Snell's examination of women, marriage and divorce from 1900 to 1939 determines that women found it advisable to appeal to state sanction to improve their legally subordinate status.¹³ Snell claims that while Canadian society exhibited an extremely repressive attitude towards divorce which was buttressed by the state, community and church, there were women who were able to exercise agency or autonomy in their attempts to shape their own marital destinies. Cynthia R. Comacchio deals with the theme of biological destiny in her analysis of the consequences of increased medical intervention in the lives of women through the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁴ She notes that women were able to act in their own interests by

annual meeting, Feb. 26, 1936. n. p.

¹² Veronica Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie," Journal of Canadian Studies Vol. 21, No. 3 (Fall 1986), 32-52.

¹³ Snell, 3-17.

¹⁴ Cynthia R. Comacchio, "Nations Are Built of Babies": Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

resisting the dictates of the emerging medical professionals regarding issues such as abortion or scientific motherhood.

More recently historians have reconsidered the oppositional paradigm of men and women in society and begun to examine the fluidity of gender constructs or ideals as well as the ebb and flow of gender relationships. Suzanne Morton describes the influence of gender ideals which help to determine appropriate modes of behavior which will serve to reinforce the existent power relationships within society. She maintains, however, that there is an adaptive aspect of the gender ideal which tolerates "an alternative perspective of society."¹⁵ In this way, for example, she is able to reconcile the apparent anomaly of working-class adherence to middle-class ideals of domesticity while accommodating the economic necessity of a wife's supplementary wage to support a family. Interpreting the gender ideal as an adaptive configuration of behaviours may be helpful in understanding the strategies developed by women attempting to cope with their ambiguous social status through the on-again, off-again economy of the interwar years. In the confusion of rapidly changing expectations, one dimension of womanhood remained constant and socially-approved; spiritually-based enterprises were the ticket which gained women access to the wider world beyond the front doors of their middle-class homes.

Two recent scholarly works, A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925 (1992) by Rosemary R. Gagan and New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914 (1990) by Ruth Compton Brouwer provide detailed analyses of the national and international aspects of these missionary endeavours. However they do not explore the motivations of the rank and file supporters of the organizations; the women of faith and vision in the local congregations. Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada (1995) edited by Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley presents a kaleidoscope of women's activities in religion, cross-denominationally, regionally, and chronologically. But again, it does not engage in a discussion of this aspect of women's piety in Alberta, a catalyst point for feminist activism. Firing the

Heather: The Life and Times of Nellie McClung (1994) by Mary Hallett and Marilyn Davis, provides an informative but brief chapter on the ordination controversy which drew McClung's avid interest. The article, "No Women Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church, 1918-65" by Valerie J. Korinek relates the debates over women's ordination including the recurring theme of "fear of feminization of the ministry or emasculation of the church and clergy."¹⁶ The suggestion of a competitive rivalry between women and disempowered or feminized clergy over the field of religion was first discussed by Ann Douglas in an analysis of nineteenth-century American religion and culture.¹⁷

Women worked in different capacities for the church, some as voluntary workers, others as professional paid employees. The development of deaconess work has been competently dealt with in articles by Nancy Hall and John D. Thomas and will only be used for comparative purposes in this thesis.¹⁸ Sunday School teaching did not fall under the auspices of the women's associations, and is rarely mentioned in the records under study. For further information in this area, Lucille Marr has written two articles on religious educators in the Presbyterian, Methodist and United Churches.¹⁹ As yet there has only been a piecemeal approach to women's employments in the church leaving room for a synthesis of the current research into a broader holistic interpretation of what their overall status was within the church hierarchy.

Members of the WMS often held executive positions with quasi-religious affiliate groups such as the Women's Institutes (WI), Local Councils of Women (LCW), the

¹⁵ Suzanne Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 153.

¹⁶ Valerie J. Korinek, "No Women Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church, 1918-65," Canadian Historical Review LXXIV, No. 4, 1993. 473-509.

¹⁷ Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (Toronto: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1988 © 1977).

¹⁸ Nancy Hall, "The Professionalisation of Women Workers in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches of Canada," 120-133 and John D. Thomas, "Servants of the Church: Canadian Methodist Deaconess Work, 1890-1926," Canadian Historical Review Vol. LXV No. 3, 1984. 371-395.

¹⁹ Lucille Marr, "Hierarchy, gender and the goals of the religious educators in the Canadian Presbyterian, Methodist and United Churches, 1919-39," Studies in Religion Vol. 20, No. 1 (Winter 1991), 65-74. Also, "Sunday School Teaching: A Women's Enterprise: A Case Study from the Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church Tradition, 1919-1939," Histoire sociale-Social History Vol. XXVI, No. 52 (November 1993), 329-344.

Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) or the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Sharon Cook, describes the close links between the WCTU and church interests, noting that historians too often focus narrowly on the secular aspects of social reforms.²⁰ The network of affiliated women's associations provided them with a powerful tool for lobbying provincial and federal governments for social reforms which they deemed necessary to build a stronger Christian community, both locally and nationally. Resolutions for international disarmament and support of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) also appear in meeting minutes.

Recent studies of Mennonite and Quaker women have provided a basis for framing comparative work between religious groups. Gloria Redekop's book on Mennonite women's associations reveals strong parallels with the groups examined here. Generally viewed as living in a more repressive society, Mennonite women were eventually able to administer their own sacraments in their associational gatherings without ministerial supervision. This step was never taken by United Church women. Quaker women traditionally had a more equal voice in spiritual matters, particularly in rural areas, according to the work of Cecilia Morgan.²¹ While there are many differences between the religious environment in the United States and Canada, there are some areas where common ground exists. Women's missionary associations were in existence in the United States and England before they were seeded in Canada. Rosemary R. Gagan comments, "[i]n Canada, then, as in the United States, during the nineteenth century the church became the primary agency whereby women seeking some form of public involvement, social diversion, or domestic liberation could unleash their energies with a minimum of public protest."²² In her analysis of the woman's foreign mission movement in the United States, Patricia R. Hill explores the spiritual and practical motivations of

²⁰ Cook, "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930.

²¹ Cecilia Morgan, "Gender, Religion, and Rural Society: Quaker Women in Norwich, Ontario, 1820-1880," Ontario History Vol. LXXXII, No. 4 (December 1990), 273-287.

²² Rosemary R. Gagan, A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 13.

supporters of the mission enterprise.²³ Some of her ideas can be applied within the parameters of the activities of women's associations of the Methodist, Presbyterian and United churches in Alberta.

Primary sources for this research project include the meeting minutes and related documents of the women's associations of the Methodist, Presbyterian and United churches. These were examined at congregational, presbyterial and conference level in both rural and urban areas. Church publications and yearbooks provided both a national and provincial perspective of women's associations through reports submitted to the editors. The personal papers and publications of feminist leaders such as Nellie McClung, Louise C. McKinney, Emily Murphy and Emily Spencer Kerby were helpful in exploring the rhetorical debates surrounding the struggle for spiritual as well as secular equality. One difficulty found in the research was the scarcity of information from the Congregational denomination, the third and smallest constituent of the United Church. Their yearbooks have provided a glimpse of their women's missionary work through their national association reports permitting general parallels to be drawn with the two other founding denominations. However, the primary emphasis of the study will lie with the Presbyterian, Methodist and United churches in Alberta.

Chapter Two establishes the context of women's mission work in Alberta in the pre-1918 context. As local congregations within the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches became established across the Northwest in the 1880s, women's missionary societies flourished in the fertile soil of the new frontier, working to convert and assimilate members of the Native and French communities. Their mandate broadened when federal immigration policy brought a flood of Ruthenian immigrants from Central Europe. Members of the AWMS were determined to preserve traditional Anglo-Protestant values of faith and family in spite of the overwhelming number of 'pagans' who inhabited the province. The convergence of these influences provided a unique setting for evangelical feminists to develop a thriving home mission field in Alberta.

²³ Patricia R. Hill, The World Their Household. The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920.

They re-defined the traditional sphere of women's influence as they sought to expand their moral governance beyond the family to exert moral control throughout the broader community.

Chapter Three provides an analysis of the organizational structure of the woman's missionary societies in terms of their composite membership and fundraising objectives. Changes and continuities in the operations of the AWMS are noted in view of amalgamation which occurred in 1925, creating the United Church of Canada. The experience of members of isolated rural Auxiliaries is contrasted to that of their sisters who resided in the more populous urban centres.

Chapter Four examines the assumptions and objectives of the woman's missionary societies. Their reliance upon prayer both as a means to communicate with God and focus their mission efforts is explored. An analysis of the ideology of family which permeated the philosophy and policies of the societies provides insights into the gender ideals perpetuated by evangelical feminists. Their attitudes towards gender are also explored through the relationships which existed between the clergy and the AWMS as well as their perception of the status of women within the church.

Chapter Five encompasses the development of home mission work throughout the province, tracing the growth of missions at Bonnyville, Vegreville, Wainwright, Kolokreeka, Radway and Edmonton. It notes how prevailing attitudes towards mission work changed and the consequent effect on the moral authority of the AWMS. Increasingly regulated processes of education and certification for leaders and workers in the AWMS demonstrate the attempts of the society to validate its activities through secular means.

Chapter Six examines the constellation of social ills which concerned the AWMS in their defense of family life and Christian values in Alberta. The society affiliated with several women's organizations such as Ladies' Aids and Women's Associations, the YWCA and CGIT, the Local Council of Women and others to lobby for provincial legislation supporting temperance, peace, and moral purity. Their actions created a significant impact on both public opinion and provincial legislative reforms during the

interwar period. First and foremost, however, members of the AWMS resolutely pursued their spiritually-inspired task of extending God's kingdom throughout Alberta.

Chapter 2
'The Divine Task' - Extending God's Kingdom:
Events to 1918

Members of the Presbyterian and Methodist Woman's Missionary Societies in Alberta manifested a millennial belief in building Christ's Kingdom on earth with a nationalism which exhibited little tolerance for racial or ideological diversity.¹ Empowered by the "emancipating theology" of evangelical feminism, they did not hesitate to take progressive action to preserve the sanctity of the home and family in a Christian society.² This chapter argues that these conservative women, appropriating conversion strategies acquired in the distant mission fields of Japan and China, found an opportunity to pursue God's plan on their own doorstep where a 'pagan' immigrant population was fast encroaching upon the predominantly Anglo-Saxon Protestant society of Alberta. The province was in the midst of a social transformation driven by the cumulative effects of immigration, urbanization, the devastation of World War I and the influenza epidemic of 1918-19. Traditional values associated with family and moral life, usually sustained through institutions such as the church seemed to be in a state of decline. Alarmed by these trends, the Presbyterian and Methodist WMS escalated their home mission programmes to enforce social controls against these influences in Alberta. An analysis of their efforts in the pre-World War I years, discloses themes signifying the spiritual motivation of women's church work and their status both within and beyond the church. The chapter begins with a brief explanation of the gendered division of labour in the church resulting in the formation of voluntary associations exclusively for women.

Churches were quite stringent in their regulation of women's participation in religious events. Assumptions about gender roles were instrumental in justifying the continuity of a patriarchal hierarchy within the church; different expectations of gender

¹ N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: a vision in crisis." Studies in Religion Vol. II, No. 4 (1973): 315-326.

² Sharon Anne Cook, "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930, 7.

behavior were fundamental in the view of the church. These were shaped and sustained in part by conservative church influences. Canadian historian, Peter Ward, providing an assessment of the influence of the nineteenth century Protestant church in English Canada, notes that "[c]hurch law on marriage and religious ideals about sexual conduct have disciplined sexuality in the interests of the social system."³ Three scriptural proscriptions formed the basis for negative stereotypes of women which justified their exclusion from church affairs including a ban on their ordination to the ministry. The most often quoted argument was derived from a story of creation in Genesis 2:4-3:4 where women bore responsibility for mankind's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Secondly, a quotation from the Pauline scriptures in the New Testament, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak" 1 Cor. 14:34-35, supported restrictive injunctions against women's participation. A third argument related the historical precedent of Jesus selecting male disciples. In many churchmen's view, this was final proof of the unsuitability of women to hold any authority over men either within or beyond the church. Nonetheless, there was a prevalent belief in the "spiritual equality of men and women" thus permitting women to seek salvation through auxiliary church work.⁴ This activity was encouraged so long as it did not become a threat to the sanctity and serenity of the home and the consecrated role of motherhood. The task of the WMS was to support the church's foreign and home mission work to evangelize the world for Christ, particularly with regard to alleviating the "degradation and misery of the women [and children] in ... heathen countries."⁵ In eastern cultures, male missionaries were forbidden access to women's residences, therefore, female missionaries were recruited and sent to work in India, China and Japan.

³ Peter Ward, Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Canada (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 15. Also, John C. Fout, "Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia," Journal of the History of Sexuality, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1992): 262. Fout describes the Protestant church in Europe as an "upholder of the gender order" as it attempted to "maintain a monopoly on the regulation of heterosexual marriage and family life."

⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 114.

⁵ Jean Gordon Forbes, Wide Windows: The Story of the Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada (Toronto: Literature Department, The Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada, 1951), 3.

By the turn of the twentieth century, enthusiasm formerly reserved for foreign mission work was supplanted by a concern over domestic issues within Alberta.⁶ Home mission work, previously devoted to the conversion of French and Native Canadians at Morley and Red Deer, shifted to focus on the assimilation of a new immigrant population settling in the West, especially the Ruthenians. Presbyterian and Methodist missions were established to help the newcomers who were settling in the area northeast of Edmonton along the North Saskatchewan River. High levels of immigration caused the province's population to rise from 73,000 to 374,000 between 1901 and 1911.⁷ Unable to bring their married priests into the country by Vatican decree, the Ukrainian Catholic settlements depended upon lay worship with the occasional intercession of Christian clergy for burials, baptisms and marriages.⁸ In response, church missions aggressively implemented programs for assimilation specifically targeted at the mothers and children of immigrant families. This in turn, required the employment of more female missionaries through the Presbyterian and Methodist woman's missionary societies for the home missions in Alberta.

In Calgary, Knox Presbyterian Church organized a home mission association in February 1904, to provide assistance to the needs of the 'foreign' population which was becoming more highly visible in the city.⁹ Society projects ranged from the collection of

⁶ Elizabeth S. Strachan. The Story of The Years. A History of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1906-1916. Vol. III (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society Methodist Church, 1917), 309. The perceived need for domestic home mission work is reflected in the number of Methodist missionaries in Canada which increased from 21 in 1906 to 64 ten years later. In comparison, Japan and China experienced a combined increase of 32 in 1906 to 56 during the same span of time. See also Ruth Compton Brouwer. New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 44-51. Brouwer delivers an analysis of the pressure exerted on the Presbyterian Woman's Foreign Missionary Society to include home missions in their work. The merger between the WFMS and WHMS took place in 1914 but the Methodist work in the west had gained a solid foothold in the meantime.

⁷ Howard Palmer with Tamara Palmer. Alberta: A New History (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990), 78.

⁸ Stella Hryniuk. "Pioneer Bishop, Pioneer Times: Nykyta Budka in Canada." In Prophets, Priests, and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to Present edited by Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1992), 148-166.

⁹ Charles W. Ross. Calgary Knox, 1883-1983. (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1983). 216. A WFMS had been founded previously at Knox Church, Calgary in 1897. 208-9. The History of the Woman's Missionary Society in Alberta (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1952), 12-13. The first Presbyterian WFMS meeting in Alberta was held in Lethbridge in 1892. The WHMS and WFMS

books and magazines for missionaries to providing supplies to the Vegreville hospital. The WCTU was active in Alberta through these years and the Women's Home Missionary Society (WHMS) endorsed the temperance movement. A report on Moral and Social Reform at the sixth annual meeting of the Edmonton Presbyterian, contained praise for Miss Cowan, a deaconess, who was recognized for her temperance initiatives with the city's Ruthenian immigrants. Alcohol was considered an obstacle to the uplift of the immigrant groups as it interfered with their ability to support and care for their families. The potential for vote buying with alcohol in elections was also a prevalent fear among Anglo-Saxons who feared a loss of political power in the province. The report stated that four Ruthenian men working for temperance within the colony believed that eighty per cent of the immigrants would support the abolition of bars. The report observed that, "[s]ince intemperance is the greatest curse to the Ruthenian men, and trial to the women, the removal of this evil will do much towards the Christianizing and Canadianizing of this people."¹⁰ By 1906, Lethbridge had its own branch of the WHMS concentrating on the rural Ruthenian settlements where "these people number upwards of sixty thousand and ... where Vegreville is situated, they outnumber the English speaking people two to one."¹¹ According to The Presbyterian Record, "[t]he home life of these people and their conceptions of their obligations to the State, fall far short of Canadian ideals."¹² Writing in the Home Mission Pioneer, Charles W. Gordon, prominent Presbyterian clergyman and noted author, commented, "[o]ur young men surrounding these colonies are even now marrying the daughters of these foreigners, and unless these girls are educated and toned up in their moral standards, they will certainly tone down our national life."¹³ As a

amalgamated in 1914, the same year that the Alberta Provincial Society was formed. The first president of the Alberta Presbyterian WMS was Mrs. Charles McKillop of Lethbridge.

¹⁰ "Presbyterial Notes." The Home Mission Pioneer, Vol. VIII, No. 12 (February 1913): 172. See also Nancy M. Sheehan. "'Women Helping Women': The WCTU and the Foreign Population in the West, 1905-1930," International Journal of Women's Studies, Vol. 6, No. 5 (1985): 401. In 1909, the WCTU had launched a literature campaign arranging for the printing and distribution of pamphlets printed in several languages specifically designed to appeal to the immigrant settlements.

¹¹ "Women's Missionary Society. And its Education Work in Canada," The Presbyterian Record Vol. XL, No. 11 (November 1915): 499.

¹² *Ibid.*, 498.

¹³ UCA, PAA. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 141. "A Suggestion for New Work." The Home Mission Pioneer, (April 1910): 21.

solution he suggested the WHMS consider training young immigrant girls in domestic economy. The WHMS medical clinic at Vegreville had boarded Ruthenian children since 1904 facilitating their attendance at a public school. Dr. George Arthur, a medical missionary at Vegreville, approached the WHMS about establishing a school-home in 1910. Missionaries described Ruthenian homes as "dirty, poorly aired and unhygienic" and believed that the school-home would teach "proper English, morality, cleanliness, and the need for pure air in their homes and hygiene in general."¹⁴ Workers' experiences at the medical clinics provided irrefutable evidence justifying the need for missionary intervention in the colony.¹⁵ Rev. G. R. Lang at Vegreville Hospital recounted a story about a newborn Ruthenian baby he delivered in perfect health, taken home twelve days later,

well clothed. He was brought back again in a few days wrapped in a sugar sack and almost dead with pneumonia ... but under careful treatment he has recovered and the mother has taken charge of him again, having been carefully instructed as to how to take care of him ... it is thought the babe was not very welcome and was neglected.¹⁶

Mission workers' sympathy for Ruthenian children did not often extend to their parents where harsh condemnation of their ignorance and superstition was more often the rule in the early years of outreach.¹⁷

Missionaries' apprehension of the deleterious influences of the colony on their students reduced opportunities for the children to visit their families. Michael Owen observes, "[a]pparently, the work of the school-home could be undone if the children were not carefully governed and prevented from participating in the traditional patterns of

¹⁴ Michael Owen. "Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 184-201. In Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West, ed. by Dennis L. Butcher et al. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 194.

¹⁵ Cynthia R. Commachio. "Nations Are Built of Babies:" Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children 1900-1940. Commachio examines the role of emergent medical authority in relation to the changing social order and the ideology of motherhood.

¹⁶ "Renovated and Re-opened: An Account of the Improvements at the Vegreville Hospital and Nurses' Home," The Missionary Messenger Vol. 4, No. 3 (March 1917): 77-9.

¹⁷ Frances Swyripa. "The Ukrainians in Alberta." 214-242. In Peoples of Alberta: Portraits of Cultural Diversity, edited by Howard and Tamara Palmer (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985).

Ruthenian life."¹⁸ By 1915, four residential homes provided accommodation for forty-five children who attended the government school at Vegreville. The Presbyterian WMS (PWMS) took great pride in this work, where the pupils benefited from,

the care of cultured Christian matrons, who supervise their studies, instruct them in the Bible, and surround them with the influence of a Christian home. They all attend the regular church services on the Sabbath and special religious instruction [is] given in the homes on Sabbath evenings.¹⁹

Domestic skills were imparted to the boys and girls living at the school-homes at Vegreville. Boys were "being trained in all the work necessary about the house; [to] do all the bedmaking, sweeping, dishwashing, washing of floors They also take care of the cows and the poultry."²⁰ The girls were "taken into the kitchen and laundry of the hospital and trained cleanly and orderly habits of living, and in right and proper methods of housekeeping."²¹ Different motives were at work for the PWMS who provided the school-homes and the Ruthenian families who encouraged their children to attend. While the PWMS hoped to evangelize and inculcate Canadian cultural values in the future leaders of the Ruthenian community, the parents realized that acquisition of English and knowledge of Canadian ways would equip their children for upward economic and social mobility in the predominantly Anglo-Saxon culture. Michael Owen concludes that the fear of Protestant evangelizing did not outweigh the benefits to be accrued from the educational opportunities provided.²² In 1910, Presbyterian missionaries working with Galician girls noted "[t]hese girls are as bright and lovable as any class of child, and some of them can hold their own with any child of the same age of any nationality."²³

¹⁸ Owen, "'Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 196.

¹⁹ "Women's Missionary Society. And its Educational Work in Canada," The Presbyterian Record Vol. XL, No. 11 (November 1915): 499.

²⁰ Owen, "'Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 198.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

²² Owen, "'Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 200.

²³ Rev. W. S. MacTavish, B.D., Ph.D., Harvests In Many Lands: Fruitage of Canadian Presbyterianism (Toronto: William Briggs, 1908), 26.

Grande Prairie in the Peace River district was the site of a PWMS medical mission under the direction of Rev. Alexander Forbes and his wife, Agnes begun in 1911.²⁴ The Katherine H. Prittie Memorial Hospital, a larger structure built in 1914, replaced the former clinic, a log cabin with fifteen beds. The local newspaper expressed the community's appreciation of the efforts of Rev. and Mrs. Forbes and Miss Agnes Baird, the missionaries and nurse who had convinced the PWMS for the need of the hospital. In its laudatory remarks to the PWMS, the Grande Prairie Herald noted that "[t]hrough your workers, timely help and nourishment have been brought to many a new and discouraged settler."²⁵ The PWMS had also initiated a temporary hospital at Bonnyville in 1917 to support its evangelizing efforts towards the French-speaking settlement there under the administration of Dr. J. E. Duclos and his wife. The Missionary Messenger contained a description of the work at Bonnyville, concluding when, "the nearest doctor is forty miles away and ... his fee from St. Paul to Bonnyville is \$45 cash or \$50 time payment, we can better understand just what the little building will mean to those isolated settlers"²⁶

At its first annual meeting in 1915, the Alberta PWMS reported raising \$2400 in the previous twelve months from between eight and nine hundred members.²⁷ The third annual meeting of the eight Presbyteries held in 1917, reported a membership of fourteen hundred in seventy-one Auxiliaries and twenty Associate Societies. The funds raised amounted to \$4,842.88 for the year.²⁸ Recognizing the potential value of the society, Dr. John G. Shearer, Dominion Social Service Secretary of the Presbyterian Church and guest speaker at the 1917 annual meeting of the Alberta PWMS, "dwelt on the

²⁴ History of WMS in Alberta, 71. Mr. & Mrs. R. W. Prittie, Toronto, provided a \$5,000 donation to begun mission work in the Peace River district. The hospital built there was named the Katherine H. Prittie Hospital in memory of a deceased daughter. The mission was started from a log cabin, a combination of home and hospital in 1911. See also, Rev. A. Forbes, M.A., B.D., "Grande Prairie Hospital," The Missionary Messenger Vol. 4, No. 11 (December 1917): 329-333.

²⁵ Quoted in The History of the Woman's Missionary Society in Alberta, 71.

²⁶ "Editorial Notes," The Missionary Messenger Vol. 4, No. 10 (November 1917): 295.

²⁷ "Alberta Provincial Society: Annual Meeting," The Missionary Messenger Jul/Aug (1915): 223-225.

²⁸ "Alberta Provincial Society: Annual Meeting," The Missionary Messenger Vol. 4, No. 7 (Jul/Aug 1917): 215-217. The eight Presbyteries were Calgary, Edmonton, High River, Lacombe,

relationship of social service work to missionary work", urging the PWMS to direct their efforts to this end wherever possible.²⁹ While the Presbyterian women were the first to organize in the province, the Methodist WMS (MWMS) expeditiously established its own mission outreach in the Ruthenian colonies.

Misses Reta Edmonds and Jessie Munro were accompanied by Dr. Charles H. Lawford and Dr. T. C. Buchanan of the Board of Home Missions to establish a mission at Wahstao, northeast of Edmonton, in 1904.³⁰ In the following year, Kolokreeka was established twenty miles west of Wahstao. A home and school were started there in 1908 under the direction of Miss Weeks and Miss Chace. They taught, visited the settlers and administered the residence. The home "was not a pretentious one. It had a basement, a kitchen, a dining room, a pantry, three small bedrooms and two dormitories with room for eight students in each. As soon as it was opened, they held Church, Sunday School and English classes."³¹ Miss Stone, a missionary, observed that the Home was largely a "distributing centre and dispensary. The people on the whole are not very anxious for the Gospel Story. But the desire for this is gradually developing."³² If encouraging results were not immediately forthcoming from evangelizing work, then at least, educational and medical facilities were kept busy in the isolated portions of the province. As the scope of activities expanded for both the PWMS and MWMS, provincial organizations were established to co-ordinate the efforts of local districts.

The Alberta Branch of the MWMS, held its first meeting in Red Deer in 1910. Annual conferences typically lasted three days, with delegates billeting at the homes of

McLeod, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and Vermilion. Further, the PWMS had 24 Mission Bands with 647 members, as well as 32 Life members and 200 Home Helpers.

²⁹ "Closing Sessions Presbyterian W.M.S. Source of Inspiration," Edmonton Journal, 27 April 1917, p. 12.

³⁰ Mae Laycock, Bridges of Friendship (n.p. 1974), 9. See also, G. N. Emery. "Methodist Missions among the Ukrainians," Alberta Historical Review. Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring 1971): 8-19. Dr. Charles H. Lawford was the first Methodist missionary to contact the Ukrainians in Alberta. His training enabled him to establish a medical mission at Pakan on the North Saskatchewan River, seventy-five miles northeast of Edmonton in 1900. Through his efforts, the George McDougall Hospital was built by 1907, and moved in 1921 to Smoky Lake, closer to the railway. He retired in 1925.

³¹ Laycock, 17.

³² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 334, Box. 11. Minutes of 8th annual meeting, June 6-8, 1917, 239.

the host delegates. In 1912, forty-one delegates and officers were in attendance.³³ By 1917, the Calgary conference hosted the largest meeting to that date, with seventy-six officers and eight missionaries present.³⁴ The PWMS coordinated their annual meetings, lasting a day and a half, in conjunction with the Presbyterian Synod of Alberta.³⁵ Programmes of the PWMS and MWMS were very similar, following the established format of men's meetings. They included addresses by members of the executive, invited speakers, visiting missionaries; a sacramental service; reports on the status of mission work, funds and membership; a banquet and entertainments such as skits or musical performances by children's groups.

Speakers at provincial and district meetings interspersed their home and foreign reports with prescriptive advice on the nature of Christian womanhood. In 1910, Mrs. W. W. Chown, president, evaluated the progress of MWMS work in Canada, Japan and China. Reiterating the Victorian ideology of ideal womanhood, she asserted that continuing support was still needed for the task of world-wide evangelization since,

'[n]o race can rise above the condition of its women' - Hence the need of Christian women - working for women in all lands. Millions of women are depending upon protestant [sic] women of America for the Gospel story, and their efforts will be amply rewarded by the shining faces of bands of Indian and Chinese, and Japanese girls on the heavenly shore.³⁶

Members of the MWMS emphasized spiritual rewards as compensation for evangelizing efforts in the temporal world. In a farewell address, Miss Stone, a home missionary at Kolokreeka, recalled that Mrs. Ross, the Board President, had once advised her, "[t]hat your work is not preaching, it is not teaching, it is not housework but it is to save souls."³⁷ Fortified by their religious faith, women were able to endure remarkable acts of self-sacrifice. Miss McLean, a MWMS missionary employed at Kolokreeka in 1908, was

³³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, June 5, 1912, 54.

³⁴ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, June 6-8, 1917, 222.

³⁵ "Calgary Women Form a Presbyterial," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 4 June 1914, p. 14. No estimated number of delegates is reported for the Alberta PWMS in its formative years. The meetings were usually described as well attended.

³⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 1st annual meeting, May 25-26, 1910, 14-15.

³⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, June 6-8, 1917, 239.

remembered for her commitment in the face of physical hardship when she "had walked eight miles to keep her Sunday School appointment. She had [also] been out looking after her duties driving when the thermometer registered 50 degrees below zero."³⁸ The PWMS published accounts of the experiences of Mrs. Forbes, wife of Rev. A. Forbes, and Miss Agnes Baird who were helping to establish a medical outpost in Grande Prairie in 1910. The report described the hardships of medical mission work for women,

[t]ents had to be used and the little 'tent kitchen' had now to be turned into an isolation ward from which was carried our first fatal case, a young girl from Ponce Coupee who died of tuberculosis and who was the first to be buried in our local cemetery. For three long years the work was carried on in this way continuously. It taxed the energies and patience and skill of Miss Baird and Mrs. Forbes to the utmost.³⁹

It was not unusual for MWMS missionaries in the west to marry local settlers or ministers. Miss Edith Weeks left her position to wed in 1910, Miss McLean in 1913, and Miss Adele Young in 1914.⁴⁰ These romantic images of missionary heroines could be a powerful enticement for the young, impressionable daughters of MWMS members who were heartily encouraged to consecrate their lives to God since "as missionary advocates we must be willing to send our own children if we expect others to"⁴¹ Furthering the stereotype, members who had passed away during the year were memorialized as having performed "wonderful sacrifices" or celebrated for their "unconscious beauty and force of ... character."⁴² Upon her death in 1917, Mrs. Forbes was eulogized by the PWMS as "one who lived and served and was faithful unto death, in order that Canada's foundation might be laid in righteousness. Such heroism as hers is rare."⁴³ From its inception the women's missionary movement had justified its existence through an acceptance of the traditional values and expectations of ideal womanhood with its accompanying philosophy of women's superior spirituality and forbearance. This conviction was

³⁸ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th annual meeting, June 3-5, 1914, 127.

³⁹ Rev. A. Forbes, M.A., B.D. "Grande Prairie Hospital," The Missionary Messenger Vol. 4, No. 11 (December 1917): 329-333.

⁴⁰ Laycock, 17-18.

⁴¹ "Alberta Branch," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXVII, No. 8 (August, 1917): 187-8.

⁴² UCA, PAA. MWMS, Alberta, Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, June 5, 1912. 59.

⁴³ "Editorial Notes," The Missionary Messenger, Vol. 4, No. 9 (October 1917). 259-260.

strengthened by the belief that women could attain a privileged relationship with God through prayer. They believed that once they had surmounted the barriers of ignorance and materialism, world evangelization was not only possible, it was inevitable.

As part of the outreach programme to rural communities, rudimentary hospitals were built to provide medical aid to outlying settlements. The Lamont Hospital was established in 1912 at a cost of \$13,500 with a capacity for twenty patients. In a twelve-month period, three hundred and forty cases ranging from childbirth to major surgery were treated. The yearly budget in 1915 amounted to \$8,000 to which the MWMS donated \$500.⁴⁴ Doctors could seek financial support from the MWMS in order to upgrade their hospitals. In 1917, Dr. Lawford requested \$500.00 to partially cover the cost of a new \$700.00 X-ray machine for the Pakan hospital. He noted "[o]ur Womens Missionary Society has always taken an earnest interest in our work at Pakan and we have at times been able to continue our work solely through the loyal support of our W.M.S. Ladies."⁴⁵ The MWMS also put forward a resolution to support the building of a nurse's residence at the Lamont Hospital.⁴⁶ During the influenza epidemic of 1918-19, the Wahstao School Home became a hospital for families stricken with the deadly infection. Twenty-three patients were under care at the Home, and sixty-five home visits were made during the epidemic.⁴⁷ The staff provided for children who were orphaned until either alternate arrangements could be made or they had finished their education.⁴⁸ While the home missions of the MWMS had originally focussed on the difficulties of poverty and isolation of immigrants in the rural areas of the province, problems soon emerged in the urban centres.

As immigrant enclaves in the province's cities proliferated, the MWMS had to cope with a variety of social ills. In 1911, discussions began regarding the need for a Ruthenian Home in Edmonton, modelled on the YWCA, where immigrant girls could

⁴⁴ "The Lamont Hospital," *The Missionary Outlook* Vol. XXXV, No. 10 (October, 1915), 228.

⁴⁵ Letter from C. N. Lawford, Jan 9, 1918 to MWMS Executive Committee, Calgary. MWMS Corresponding Secretary, indexed Letterbox, 1907-1918. PAA, UCA, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 334, Box 11.

⁴⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, June 6-8, 1917, 253-4.

⁴⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 326.

⁴⁸ Laycock, 10.

live until they were able to acquire suitable employment and function independently in an urban environment. White slavery or the temptation of higher wages through prostitution was an ever-present threat to the moral purity and health of the young female immigrant. Girls newly-arrived in the city could search out the Home on their own, be apprehended by the police or sent over from the YWCA.⁴⁹ Shelter had been made available to German and Ruthenian girls in a room and subsequently a rented house since 1908. Sewing classes and Sunday School were conducted in a tent named "Rundle Mission" first in Norwood in 1909 and later in Strathcona in 1914. Attempting to accommodate thirty-four girls, the Edmonton Home and School for Ruthenian Girls was strained beyond its capacity. A three-storey brick building replaced it at a cost of \$29,250.⁵⁰ The girls were taught English and trained in domestic work. The Home found them employment in respectable homes when possible. While room and board was free for new arrivals, employed girls were asked to pay a nominal fee of ten cents per night for "snowy white cots" in the Home.⁵¹ The Home contained a hospital ward, a detention room, and a children's playroom. To promote the use of the Home as a social centre, parties were held where Ruthenian men were welcome. The Missionary Outlook described one party with ninety-eight guests, noting that "five of these were girls who attended the school during its initial stages. This fact demonstrates better than anything else the lasting influence of the work."⁵² The Home took in homeless children who could be placed under the combined guardianship of the Superintendent of the Department of Neglected Children and the Home until they became adults at age eighteen. In 1913, there were eight of these cases. The efforts of the MWMS continued to move outward into the community as needs arose and workers were available.

In 1915, the MWMS became concerned about the poor living conditions of 'foreigners' in the Bridgeland area of Calgary. While they realized that their evening

⁴⁹ "The Second Annual Convention of Our Workers Among the Ruthenians," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXIII, No. 10 (October 1913): 225.

⁵⁰ The History of the Woman's Missionary Society in Alberta, 62.

⁵¹ "The Ruthenian Home, Edmonton, Alta," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXIII, No. 1 (September 1913): 207.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 208.

language classes had reached men in the community and were pleased that sixty-six children were attending the Sunday School, they were less confident about their efforts to uplift the wives and mothers of the neighbourhood. The MWMS was concerned that these women were too isolated within their community where they were learning no English. The assimilation of mothers was fundamental to easing the Canadianization of children. Miss Code, a home mission worker, conducted visits to each house to determine the severity of the problem. When the results were considered, a request was sent to Toronto for a grant of \$300.00 per year towards the salary of a Deaconess, to concentrate on dealing with the "foreign women and children in Calgary."⁵³ Miss Cobber was subsequently employed to serve this need.⁵⁴

With the outbreak of World War I, both the PWMS and the MWMS agendas expanded to encompass patriotic pursuits such as Red Cross work and a renewed attack against liquor interests. Churchwomen had supported temperance since its beginnings, and temperance education was an underlying assumption within the associations. In 1914, the young people of the Pincher Creek Mission Band held a Temperance programme during which "rousing choruses, and enthusiasm [was] generated by the prohibition yells [they] adopted, one of which [ran] ... Alberta! Alberta! Here we come, /To help drive out tobacco and rum; /Our heads are clear, our hearts are true, /We'll stand for the right the wide world through."⁵⁵ MWMS members expressed concern about the deleterious effects of military life on the moral purity of young men. There is an innocence and naiveté in their attitude towards the boys who were leaving for overseas service in the earlier years of the conflict,

[o]ur missionary program must include the interests of our boys in the training camps by holding banquets, socials ... we must include the boys in the hospitals, ... we must include the boys in the trenches. These may be remembered by letters, papers, Christian literature - candy - home-cooking. It should be our endeavor to offset the efforts of those who consider tobacco & cigarettes indispensable to the soldiers⁵⁶

⁵³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, June 9, 1915, 192. See also executive meeting minutes, March 3, 1916, 182.

⁵⁴ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, June 7-9, 1916, 208.

⁵⁵ "Alberta Branch," *The Missionary Outlook* Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, (January 1914): 17.

⁵⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, June 7-9, 1916, 204-205.

One project planned by them was to "prepare a bookmark which could be placed in the pocket testament and presented to our boys who enlist - with the inscription, 'We are praying for you.'"⁵⁷ At the seventh annual meeting of the Alberta MWMS in 1916, it was observed that "altho [sic] the members of the W.M.S. had done Red Cross work, visited soldiers wives, given their own loved ones, worked hard and prayed earnestly for the success of the Prohibition Campaign, ... Mission work was not neglected."⁵⁸ In the midst of war, the MWMS remained confident in its belief that "[t]his work of missions is the biggest, the most far reaching, most divine task that confronts the twentieth century."⁵⁹ After two further years of conflict, the full impact of the war and its lessons of self-sacrifice were revealed in WMS addresses and literature. Describing war as a "ghastly burden" the PWMS noted in 1919 that "[a]lthough this is our fifth annual meeting it is our first without that added burden of the war."⁶⁰ Haunted by the cost in human lives, Mrs. McQueen, president of the Alberta PWMS, "urged upon her audience the necessity for renewed efforts, if they were to perpetuate the ideals for which their sons had suffered and died."⁶¹ Realizing that in the post-war years, their Christian goals were "not quite such popular work" they defended their ideals, explaining "that holding, in our humble way, the trenches for Him as good soldiers of the Cross who will not lay their armor down, is meeting with God's approval."⁶² Nellie McClung declared that the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 205.

⁵⁸ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, June 7-9, 1916. 199.

⁵⁹ Quoted from printed programme, 7th annual meeting, June, 1916. UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 334, Box 11. See David Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). 159. Marshall concurs, the "[c]ommitment to the war effort, ... did not sidetrack the cause of social Christianity. ... Emphasis on social salvation persisted throughout the war on the home front."

⁶⁰ "President of the W.M.S. Urges Members to Renewed Activity," Edmonton Journal, 1 May 1919, p. 10.

⁶¹ "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 8 (September 1919): 249. See Jonathan F. Vance, Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 40. Vance argues that in symbolic terms, "Canada's fallen soldiers were not simply labourers, clerks, and farmers who had died in battle; they were saviours whose suffering and sacrifice were one and the same with Christ's."

⁶² "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. V, No.2 (February 1918): 59-60. See David Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940, 157. Their work was not so popular because "[i]ndifference to religion and rebellion against

church needed "a moral substitute for war" where the MWMS would comprise part of the church's army.⁶³ Impressed with the collective response to the mobilization for World War I, churchwomen dreamed of a similar unification for the cause of Christ, asking, "[a]re we not justified in hoping that much of the organized talent and effort so long devoted to war work, will be transferred to service for the 'King of kings'?"⁶⁴

Foreign mission work had sensitized WMS members to the socio-economic complexities of women's issues in other cultures as well as their own. In 1917, at the eighth annual Alberta Branch meeting, Miss Hurd, a missionary on furlough from Japan, displayed pictures of idol worship in that country and gave a talk on the "industrial slavery of so many of its women, who work from 12 to 17 hours per day."⁶⁵ Concern over needs for social reforms to improve the welfare of women and children in foreign countries was accompanied by a growing awareness of similar problems existing in Alberta. As MWMS members sought to uplift women both in foreign and home missions, they were inadvertently drawn into the feminist struggle in Alberta. Mrs. Mary Dever, appointed matron of the Ruthenian Home in Edmonton in 1916 gave an "earnest appeal for sympathy and interest to be accorded the foreign-born girls in our midst, as they are to be the future women and mothers of our land and will exercise the franchise the same as other women."⁶⁶ An awareness of the incipient power of woman's enfranchisement is evident in this statement, revealing a gender association which moved beyond ethnic boundaries.

As women in Alberta were increasingly regarded as capable and responsible members of society, new legislation reflected their change of status. The Act Respecting

religious institutions became more widespread as the war dragged on. Attitudes became hardened, increasingly sceptical, and embittered."

⁶³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 298.

⁶⁴ "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 8 (September 1919), 249. See David Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940, 182. As doubts had arisen during the war concerning the beneficence of a God who could countenance such wanton destruction, Marshall concludes, "[i]t was hoped that the spiritual and moral resources the churches had dedicated to the war effort would be rededicated to the purposes of the Kingdom of God in Canada. There was a pressing need for spiritual regeneration; Christianity had to regain its lost initiative."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁶⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, June 6-8, 1917, 225.

Infants passed in 1913, permitted mothers to petition for custody of their children whereas previously men had been designated as the sole guardian. Prohibition became law in Alberta in 1916. This added to the credibility and prestige of women who had supported the movement while improving the quality of life for women and children who had been victims of the liquor trade. Additionally, their acquired skills in social reform and organization combined with a shortage of men during WWI provided unique opportunities for women. In Alberta, Mrs. Alice Jamieson was appointed the first female Canadian judge in 1914. Emily Murphy became a judge of the Juvenile Court and a police magistrate in Edmonton in 1916. Louise McKinney and Roberta McAdams were the first women elected to the Alberta Legislature in 1917, the same year the Dower Act was passed. The Act protected a wife's homestead interests by ensuring the property could not be sold without her consent. In 1918, women obtained the Dominion franchise. With the growing acceptance of respectable women into public life through the turn of the twentieth century, challenges to their subordinate status within their traditional domain of the church were mounting. While there were still many men and women who were comfortable with the traditional gender segregation of responsibilities within the churches, increasingly self-confident MWMS members found the anti-reformist attitude of their church brotherhood degrading and humiliating. They remembered their public embarrassment at the Fourth Ecumenical conference in Toronto in 1911, when British and American women were granted delegate status, while Canadian women "could do no more than listen from the galleries and convene luncheons for the visitors."⁶⁷ Evangelical feminists believed that the call of the Alberta mission fields came directly to them from God. For many of them, the realization of that call could only be accomplished by eradicating "the old gray, moss-covered boulder of prejudice, which still st[ood] in the way of women's advancement in the church."⁶⁸ Combined with a new attitude towards scriptural interpretation and a revised perspective on the inerrancy of the Bible, reliance on the Word as a means to subordinate women could no longer be sustained.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Ruth Compton Brouwer, "The Canadian Methodist Church and Ecclesiastical Suffrage for Women, 1902-1914," *Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers* 2, 1977. 1-27.

⁶⁸ Nellie McClung, "Alberta News," *Woman's Century* Vol. VI, No. 10 (October 1918): 33.

In comparison, members of the PWMS were more conservative in their approach to women's rights before the war. They believed that Christianity uplifted the status of women, especially when compared to the state of women in heathen countries. Miss E. J. G. MacGregor, Field Secretary for the national PWMS, asked,

[a]re you seeking to improve the condition of women along social or political lines? Are you interested in the 'equal rights' movement for women? That is well! But it must be *for all* women! Think of our sisters - bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh - in India, in China, in Korea, and then say what you think of 'equal rights'!⁶⁹

Concluding that women planning careers should consider missionary outreach, she declared, "[h]ow can we even *think* of our own disabilities in view of their great need!"⁷⁰ Ironically, the Canadian church which evangelized the foreign churches sometimes lagged behind in the issue of women's participation in church life.⁷¹

As one of the most outspoken Protestant church activists, Nellie McClung was often scathing in her denunciation of Methodist church policy regarding the status of women. She threatened that "when all is over, the battle fought and won, and women are regarded everywhere as human beings and citizens, many women will remember with bitterness that in the day of our struggle, the church stood off, aloof and dignified, and let us fight alone."⁷² She placed responsibility for the predicament of women on clergymen, not God. She refused to accept the admonition of Pauline doctrine against females preaching. She related, "[m]any of the brightest women grew impatient and indignant and went out of the church figuratively slamming the door. Slamming an innocent door has always seemed to me a misdirection of energy. It is better to linger after the sermon and interview the minister."⁷³ However, even as outspoken a feminist as McClung felt the

⁶⁹ Miss E. J. G. MacGregor, "New Era In Woman's Work," The Missionary Messenger Jul/Aug (1914): 10-11.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

⁷¹ Miss Caroline Macdonald, "Canadian Woman Ordained an Elder in The Japanese Presbyterian Church," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 10 (October 1921): 234. The Japanese Presbyterian Church had passed a ruling permitting women to be elected as elders at its General Assembly in 1920. Presbyterian women in Canada were not eligible for ordination as elders at this time.

⁷² Mary Hallett and Marilyn Davis, Firing the Heather: The Life and Times of Nellie McClung, (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1993), 190-1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 194.

need to reassure her listeners and clarify the objectives of reform. She spoke as an advocate for "the humanization of civilization, which had been suffering from too much masculinity. The proper civilisation was made up of both men and women"⁷⁴ A committed member of the MWMS and a popular fund-raising speaker for the association, McClung managed to skilfully incorporate her beliefs regarding women's rights into her MWMS presentations. In 1915, organizers of the sixth annual meeting of the Alberta Branch requested that she repeat an address entitled, "The Spiritual Relation of Women's Suffrage to the Missionary Movement", originally presented in 1914 to the Manitoba Conference MWMS. McClung,

dealt with the status of women in heathen lands and proved that the status of women in our own land was very low indeed. The majority of married women are both homeless and childless in the eyes of the law. ... Pamphlets showing the unfairness of the criminal code and the small value placed upon womanhood was provided for each delegate. Mrs. McClung stated that our laws should be made for men and women by men and women, and appeal[ed] to the Branch to place itself on record as being in favor of political equality.⁷⁵

As a result of this tactical strategy whereby the "cause had been rationalized on morally acceptable grounds" a resolution supporting unequivocal approval of political equality was passed by a majority of the members of the Alberta MWMS.⁷⁶

At the 1918 General Conference, the debate over women's status in the church continued. Methodist women had been requesting full ecclesiastical rights entitling them "to participate as lay members in all areas of Church government and administration" for almost forty years.⁷⁷ A report by the National Council of Women of Canada observed that the "[a]rguments fluctuated through all the well-known phases, physiological, Pauline and 'place in the home,' so well known in every debate on advance for women."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ "Higher Canadian Citizenship Is Appeal of Mrs. McClung in Strong Addresses Sunday," Lethbridge Herald, 12 March 1917, p. 1 & 6.

⁷⁵ Reported in The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXV, No. 8 (August 1915): 188.

⁷⁶ Brouwer, "The Canadian Methodist Church and Ecclesiastical Suffrage for Women, 1902-1914," 19.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1-27.

⁷⁸ "Women and the Ministry" editorial. Woman's Century Vol. VI, No. 11 (November 1918): 1.

This time, however, the proponents of equality benefited from a post-war reform movement based on a desire to redeem the nation from the excesses of materialism and war through the creation of an ideal society.⁷⁹ Subject to this influence, the Methodist Church, in a progressive mood of social egalitarianism, permitted the passage of this measure.⁸⁰ Women were finally granted equal rights with men in all privileges of church membership except ordination in 1918, a few months after they had received the Dominion franchise.⁸¹ Evidently, the Methodist church preferred to act as a recipient of the societal gender construct rather than a creator of it.

The years between the 1890s and 1918 were a period of rapid expansion for foreign and especially home missions for both Presbyterian and Methodist WMS in Alberta. Home mission work established in both rural and urban areas ensured the development of medical and educational facilities for immigrants before the government administered these matters. The WMS believed that such measures would not only improve the quality of life of the newcomers, but would eventually pave the way for their Christianization and Canadianization. Through their care and uplift of women and children of other cultures, members of the WMS were forced to consider the comparative status of women in many societies, including their own. Consequently, to realize social reforms they deemed necessary to implement their vision of God's divine task, they needed a stable and efficient organization to represent their interests. An analysis of the specialized associational structure of the Alberta Presbyterian, Methodist, and United Church WMS in the following chapter will help to determine how this was accomplished during the years 1918-1939.

⁷⁹ John Herd Thompson, "War and Social Reform". 95-114. In The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992 © 1978).

⁸⁰ Michael Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," Canadian Historical Review Vol. XLIX (1968): 213-233.

⁸¹ Valerie J. Korinek, "No Women Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church, 1918-65," Canadian Historical Review Vol. LXXIV No. 4 (1993): 473-509. Women were not eligible for ordination in the United Church of Canada until 1936.

Chapter 3
'With God As Our Leader':
Infrastructure of the Alberta Organizations, 1918-1939

To mitigate their subordinate status within the church hierarchy, the AWMS needed to secure a consistent and reliable source of income on which to base their short-term expenses and long-term objectives in mission work. This chapter argues that the structure of the AWMS secured two basic necessities for the organization: to recruit and educate a skilled pool of volunteer labour to operate the mission programme and to maintain monetary self-sufficiency for the society. The churches had made it clear that the women's missionary societies were to find their own sources of revenue and "avoid interference" with church financial affairs.¹ By combining the hierarchical tradition of church organizations with the recruitment strategies of other women's associations such as the WCTU, the AWMS hoped to achieve an escalating membership which would gain them financial credibility and influence within the church while fulfilling their mandate of evangelism. Consequently, the aim of the amalgamated WMS was "[a]n Auxiliary in every congregation and every woman a member."² The chapter includes an examination of the hierarchical nature of the AWMS, its meeting format, categories of membership, and financial processes. The dilemma of extending support and resources to remote rural Auxiliaries is investigated. While the organizational structures and policies of the woman's missionary societies of the Methodist, Presbyterian and United churches are very similar, pertinent differences are noted as required for clarification.

The Presbyterian WMS (PWMS) was organized in a four level hierarchy comprised of local Auxiliaries, Presbyterials, Provincial Societies, and a General Council in Toronto.³ The Methodist WMS (MWMS) was identical in structure except that instead of Presbyterials, Provincial Societies and General Council, it had Districts, Branches and

¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 32.

² The Manual of The United Church of Canada: Constitution and Government. (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1929 © 1928), 144.

³ "Constitution and By-Laws of W.M.S.," The Missionary Messenger Jul/Aug (1914): 26-8.

a Dominion Board. In either case, the WMS national executive developed matters of policy and financial strategies in conjunction with the Mission Boards of the churches. The estimated budget for foreign and home missions was set by the national executive, and allocations or quotas were assigned to each province. The provincial target was shared among the Presbyteries or Districts, where it was further distributed among the Auxiliaries. In 1918, the PWMS had divided Alberta into eight Presbyteries: Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Lacombe, Macleod, High River and Vermilion which constituted sixty-five Auxiliaries with 1,143 members.⁴ Similarly, the MWMS organized the province into eight Districts: Calgary; Edmonton and Wetaskiwin; High River and Youngstown; Lamont, Vermilion and Peace River; Lethbridge; McLeod; Medicine Hat; Red Deer, Lacombe, Castor and Stettler. The Districts comprised 1,409 members in forty-eight Auxiliaries.⁵ In 1926, after Union and a re-organization to twelve Presbyteries within the province, Alberta Conference Branch comprised one hundred and twenty-five Auxiliaries with a membership of 3,338.⁶

After amalgamation there were few outward changes to reporting procedures of the United Church Woman's Missionary Society. It continued to define its activities jointly with the Mission Boards of the Church, seeking the Boards' approval for the employment of its missionaries and fields of endeavour. It retained representation on the Mission Boards of the Church.⁷ The UCWMS comprised a Dominion Board, Conference Branches, Presbyterial Societies, Auxiliaries, the Young Women's Auxiliary, Mission Circles, Mission Bands, Baby Bands, Associate Societies and affiliated CGITs. An Associate Society was defined as any association of women in a congregation other than those previously named, who contributed annually to the funds of the WMS, for example,

⁴ "Alberta Provincial Society: Annual Meeting," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 8 (September 1919): 249.

⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Treasurer's and Corresponding Secretaries of Auxiliaries Statements, 1919.

⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 327, Box 11. Minutes of annual meeting, May 26-28, 1926, 93. The United Church Presbyteries were designated as Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, High River, Lacombe, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, St. Paul's, Stettler, Vermilion and Wainwright. See also United Church of Canada Yearbook, 1927 for statistics.

⁷ The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 144.

the Ladies' Aid or Woman's Association.⁸ Delegates travelled from across the country to attend annual meetings of the United Church Dominion Board when elections were held to select a President, executive officers and two representatives from each Conference Branch. The Dominion Board decided general policy, received reports from the Executive Committee, gave instructions for the ensuing year, and received reports from the Branches. It was responsible for providing estimates of work taking into consideration the interests and requirements of the whole Society. Each Branch and Presbyterial could amend its by-laws so long as they remained in harmony with the general aims of the WMS but they were not permitted to initiate work on their own. Branches were able to submit recommendations about the mission work in their province to the Dominion Board. The Presbyterial was comprised of Auxiliaries, YWA's, Mission Circles and Bands, Baby Bands, affiliated CGIT groups and any associated societies within its bounds. Its meetings were held annually, with representatives sent from each Auxiliary and its associated groups.⁹ Although working in conjunction with the church, the UCWMS was a self-regulating lay society and had the power to amend or alter its constitution with two weeks notice and a two-thirds vote of attending members at the annual meeting of the Dominion Board.¹⁰ Under the new constitution of the United Church, UCWMS participation in church courts was expanded to include two representatives each on the Board of Evangelization and Social Service and the Board of Home Missions as well as three members on the Board of Foreign Missions, in recognition of its considerable contributions to these pursuits.¹¹ The aspirations and motivations of the members of the AWMS, particularly in comparison with the national agenda, are revealed through an exploration of the dynamics at work within this formal hierarchical organization.

Communication was vital not only at the Alberta level, where the population was sparsely-settled throughout much of the province, but in maintaining links to the

⁸ Ibid., 144.

⁹ Ibid., 144-151.

¹⁰ Ibid., 151.

¹¹ Ibid., 177.

Dominion Board as well. Each Auxiliary ensured that its departmental secretaries submitted up-to-date progress reports to the Presbyterian executive who, in turn, conveyed that information to Branch level. Resolutions or memorials, were formulated and voted upon by members at local Auxiliary and provincial meetings. These were forwarded to the Dominion Boards for their consideration. Officers of the Dominion Board valued this input, commenting that "[t]hey like[d] to get a number of these each year suggesting changes that could be made for the advancement of our work."¹² Conversely, Dominion Board sent proposals to Branch asking its opinion on policy matters. Elected delegates enthusiastically reported 'gleanings' from the annual Dominion conferences reporting the benefits of personal contact with other workers and WMS leaders.¹³ Until 1932, Dominion Board meetings were always held in Toronto, when it was suggested "that they go East & West in order that the inspiration of a Dom. Bd. meeting may come to a greater number of women."¹⁴ The following year, Alberta Conference Branch continued to voice a concern about western alienation, expressing the "real need of someone to stand between the Dominion Board and the Branch to give information from close up view of our Missions."¹⁵ Subsequently, an Advisory Board was formed, including the President, Candidate Secretary and three members appointed by the Board or recommended by Branch.

The format and procedures of provincial WMS meetings closely paralleled those of the church Mission Boards. Officers of the WMS opened each meeting with scripture reading, hymns and prayer. District or Presbyterian presidents gave a two or three minute report on the progress of their society providing more minute detail of quarterly increases or decreases. Addresses by the President and guest speakers were interspersed with devotional services led by prominent members. Both home and foreign missionaries attended meetings to inform WMS members about their work through means of lantern

¹² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28, Minutes of sub-executive meeting, June 22, 1939, 242.

¹³ "Provincial Presbyterian W.M.S. Annual Shows Splendid Record," Edmonton Journal, 26 April 1917, p. 12.

¹⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of sub-executive meeting, Jan. 4, 1932, 341.

¹⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, May 2-4, 1933, 19.

slides, costumes and cultural artifacts. A memorial service to commemorate the contributions of recently deceased WMS members was followed by a sacramental service performed by a clergyman. A banquet provided an opportunity to network with clergy as well as representatives of affiliate associations such as the WCTU, Social Services, or 'sister societies' from other churches. Entertainment was provided through missionary pageants performed by members or recitations and choral performances by children from the school homes or Mission Bands, showcasing their progress. At the concluding session of each annual meeting, an election was held to select the following year's executive.

The mission goals of the WMS were ambitious and required extensive labour by its volunteer staff as well as substantial financial resources to be realized. Strong leadership skills combined with knowledge of the administrative processes of the WMS were required from its executive officers. The WMS closely identified its evangelization success with the funds raised and members acquired each year. Money kept the wheels of mission turning and in the words of Nellie McClung "[g]etting members & more members [is the] best method of increasing funds."¹⁶ The Presbyterian, Methodist and United WMS adopted two specific recruitment strategies to broaden their appeal to potential members. First, they recognized their membership levels indicated there was substantial room for growth within the congregations. Alberta Conference Branch president, Mrs. A. D. Miller, while addressing the seventh annual meeting of the UCWMS held in 1932, noted that only one-third of the pastoral charges had WMS work.¹⁷ Their recruitment efforts were complicated by the success of the very popular Ladies' Aid groups.¹⁸ They questioned how they might increase their appeal to their fellow churchwomen. From national figures, the PWMS estimated their membership at 20% of eligible women in the congregations.¹⁹ The MWMS estimated their numbers at

¹⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 159.

¹⁷ "Educational Work of Church Stressed as Policy Keynote," Edmonton Journal, 27 May 1932, p. 13.

¹⁸ Appendix 1 provides a basis for a statistical comparison of membership levels and monies raised by the Ladies' Aid and the WMS within the United Church in Alberta from 1925-1939.

¹⁹ "Alberta Provincial Society," Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. VIII (Sept. 1919): 249.

38% while remarking on the remaining "210,000 slackers" among their sisters.²⁰ In comparison, the UCWMS comprised approximately 38% of the female congregants in 1926.²¹ The WMS defined three categories of adult membership to encourage women to join: annual members who paid a fifty cent yearly fee plus contributions at monthly meetings; life members who paid a one-time twenty-five dollar fee; associate members who gave of their time and money as they were able.²² The third category, Associate members, also known as Home Helpers in the PWMS, was of key importance. They were described as those who were "debarred from attending Auxiliary meetings, such as the busy mother of little children, the business women, the old and feeble, and those in delicate health ..." but who were able to pray for the missions or correspond with a missionary.²³ A report from Camrose included a suggestion that "much could be done in assoc. Helpers' Dept. among busy farm women" to gain their participation through part-time membership.²⁴ Their contributions were welcomed and they were encouraged to subscribe to the missionary periodicals. When a national survey in 1922 revealed that over 15,000 Home Helpers had contributed \$18,739.50 to the PWMS treasury, interest in this department grew.²⁵ The PWMS declared 1923 "Home Helpers' Year" and set a goal of doubling the membership.²⁶ After union, the department was retained and continued to increase. While 783 associate members were reported in 1927, the Associate Helper secretary reported 953 Associate Helpers at the sixth annual Branch meeting in 1931.²⁷ To encourage more work in this area among the sixty delegates attending, she emphasized the point that "76 Associate Helpers joined auxiliaries during the year,

²⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 12th annual meeting, June 7-10, 1921, 367. Remark describing "slackers" taken from Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 39.

²¹ Compiled from UCC Yearbook statistics of 1927 by dividing the total membership in half, and taking percentage of the given WMS members versus the female half of congregation.

²² The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 146.

²³ Home Helpers, " The Missionary Messenger Vol. X, No. 1 (January 1923): 13.

²⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, May 24, 1932, 363.

²⁵ "Home Helpers," The Missionary Messenger Vol. X, No. 1 (January 1923): 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 137. Also, UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29, 1931, 323.

showing plainly that this Dept. is a feeder to the Auxiliary. Over 70 auxiliaries have no Associate Helpers Dept."²⁸

A second strategy for increasing membership was to recruit from the domestic sphere. The Methodists led the way by enrolling infants to four-year olds in the Little Light Bearers, or Baby Bands. There was a one-time membership fee of \$1.00.²⁹ Upon joining, the child received a subscription to the periodical "The Palm Branch" while the mother received "The Missionary Monthly." There were two home visits as well as two meetings a year. One suggested meeting activity was an outdoor picnic in June for the mothers and babies, while the second meeting was usually a graduation service for those children moving to the next age category.³⁰ Leaders for the Baby Bands were reminded that, "the child is enabled to breathe the missionary atmosphere from the time of birth, and the interest of the mother is secured. The leader must be tactful, happy-looking and loving and must always aim to make her visit interesting for the mother."³¹ In 1931, five of fifteen Alberta Presbyterials reported Baby Band work, totaling thirteen Bands with three hundred and seventy-seven members.³² While PWMS did not have Baby Bands, some of their members felt that they should adopt a system of graded mission bands beginning at age four.³³ Although numbers would indicate that its appeal was limited, the UCWMS valued the contribution of the Baby Bands and continued the programme after amalgamation.

Mission Bands were co-educational groups for the seven to twelve year age group and were established in all three denominations. Fees were ten cents a year, or a junior life membership which cost \$5.00.³⁴ The purpose of the bands, beyond linking the young child to the church, was to teach them cooperation, leadership training, and teaching them to give. Believing that "Bands are the hope of Alberta," the WMS anticipated many

²⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29, 1931, 323.

²⁹ Perry, J. Fraser, ed. They Gathered at the River (Calgary: Northwest Printing and Lithographing Ltd., 1975), 261.

³⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 17.

³¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 17.

³² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29, 1931, 323.

³³ UCA, PAA. PWMS Edmonton Presbyterial, Meeting minutes of March 17, 1919, 79.

³⁴ The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 146.

future Circle and Auxiliary members would be drawn from their ranks.³⁵ Saturday afternoon activities were centred around a study-plan which thematically linked games, pageants and crafts.³⁶

Mission Circles founded in the Methodist and United churches provided fellowship for teen-age girls, providing an appropriate outlet for their "gang-instinct, hero worship, and hunger for reading."³⁷ Activities included study and role-playing through skits, and donating to bales of clothing and toys for the school homes. WMS members firmly believed that by winning young girls to the service of Christ, "other lesser interests will be expelled."³⁸ Many of them agreed that "these younger divisions are vital to the existence of the society."³⁹

All three denominations established Young Woman's Auxiliaries (YWA), enrolling young women with an average age of eighteen. The membership and fee structure was identical to the Auxiliary.⁴⁰ The YWAs were challenging to organize since so many young women left home for university or hospital training at this age. The recruitment of young women was very important since they were needed to fill the "vacancies in the missionaries' ranks, caused by age, ill-health and death."⁴¹ Ideally, they would choose to consecrate their lives to mission work. In 1927, Mrs. A. M. Scott, president of Alberta Branch Conference, estimated that one thousand new candidates a year were needed to continue the extensive mission programme; Alberta's share of these would be five candidates.⁴²

There were several methods for collecting funds from members. One approach employed with both adults and children was the mite-box, used to collect small coins. Its visible presence in the home "teaches unselfishness by bringing to [the] child's mind

³⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 153.

³⁶ Fraser, *They Gathered at the River*, 261.

³⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 39.

³⁸ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 40.

³⁹ Mrs. W. T. Ash, former President of Methodist WMS Alberta Branch (1919), quoted in "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer At W.M.S. Session," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 6 June 1924, 16.

⁴⁰ *The Manual of The United Church of Canada*: 146.

⁴¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 15.

⁴² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 161.

thoughts of heathen children and their need ... [it] may lead to decisions for life-service."⁴³ One Presbyterian member noted "Hardly anyone will refuse to take a mite box. ... It was a common thing for a box to contain \$10.00 or \$15.00, and the record was broken when one box yielded \$26.00."⁴⁴ Systematic giving, where a member committed to giving a specific amount regularly to the society was encouraged. With the emergence of professional women with independent incomes, the question of the suitability of tithing for women arose both at MWMS meetings as well as in church periodicals.⁴⁵ Neither the church nor the WMS found any fault with the concept. The WMS reminded its members to contribute regularly, "[u]pon the first day of the week - *periodically*- / let every one of you lay by him in store - *personally* - / as God hath prospered him - *proportionately*."⁴⁶ An afternote concluded, "The question is not, How much of my money will I give to the God? but, how much of God's money will I keep for myself?"⁴⁷ Special opportunities for supporting the mission work occurred on Thank-Offering Sundays, WMS Sundays as well as Rally Days which were held annually by the congregations. Bequests and special donations in the memory of loved ones were accepted and noted in the Treasurer's report published each year. Revenues from the sale of literature such as missionary periodicals, study books, annual reports and Blue Books helped to contribute to WMS income. Special events were also held to raise money for particular projects.

Nellie McClung, woman's rights activist, MLA and Honorary President of the MWMS from 1921 to 1925, was a popular fundraising speaker for the missionary cause.⁴⁸ In 1919, McDougall Methodist Church in Edmonton provided a free venue for

⁴³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, *Minutes of 12th annual meeting*, June 7-10, 1921, 351.

⁴⁴ "Definite Work in Auxiliaries," *The Missionary Messenger* Vol. VII, No. 2 (February 1920): 47.

⁴⁵ "How A Woman Can Tithe," *The United Church Record and Missionary Review* Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 1927): 15, "Can Women Tithe?" *The United Church Record and Missionary Review* Vol. 5, No. 8 (August 1929): 23. UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, *Minutes of 10th annual meeting*, June 10-12, 1919, 302.

⁴⁶ "Systematic Giving," *The Missionary Messenger* April (1916): 104.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Calgary Presbyterial, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 991. Executive minutes of April 21, 1939, n.p. It was estimated that Nellie McClung had raised approximately \$12,000 for the WMS treasury between 1925 and 1939.

an event to support the Radway Centre Home Fund for Ruthenian work. Tickets charging twenty-five cents for the evening, which included McClung's address as well as a musical entertainment were printed and sold.⁴⁹ The event raised \$84.50, which the society committed to furnishing a guest room at the Home in her name.⁵⁰ Between 1925 and 1939, the WMS executive estimated that McClung had raised approximately \$12,000 for the support of mission work.⁵¹

While the church did not want the woman's missionary societies to 'interfere' with their budget, they welcomed WMS help when deficits arose. The costs of establishing and maintaining congregations on the frontier, with its sparse population scattered across vast distances, contributed to deficits in both the Presbyterian and Methodist churches.⁵² In addition, three years of drought 1917-1919, in southern Alberta resulted in crop failures in the areas surrounding Lethbridge and Medicine Hat necessitating increased church assistance to the hardest hit communities in the face of diminished givings. The PWMS helped to pay off a sizeable debt acquired by the Western Division of the Presbyterian Church during these years.⁵³ While the PWMS fulfilled its obligation to the church it reminded its members, "to be loyal to our W.M.S. Treasury If the W.M.S. diverts any of its funds to the general work of the church it will mean another deficit or the closing of work and recalling of workers."⁵⁴ With the Methodist church facing debts as well, Mrs. Miller, president of the Alberta MWMS reassured members that, "[w]e are being just as devout when we are trying to raise money for our church work as when we are on our knees praying. Money is a necessity ... to carry on the work."⁵⁵ To avoid

⁴⁹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 316.

⁵⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Treasurer's and Corresponding Secretaries of Auxiliaries Statements, 1920. Pamphlet. Also, MWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, March 2, 1920.

⁵¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Calgary Presbyterial, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 991. Executive minutes of April 21, 1939, n.p.

⁵² "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer At W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16.

⁵³ "Financial Policy for 1922," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 3 (March 1922): 392. See also "Western Section of Presbyterian Church Has Quite A Deficit," Calgary Daily Herald, 15 April 1922, p. 7. The deficit reported as of the end of 1921 was \$264,786. This had accumulated over a two-year period, 1920-21.

⁵⁴ "Lest We Forget," The Missionary Messenger Vol. X, No. 7 (Jul/Aug 1923): 204.

⁵⁵ "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer At W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16.

sudden cutbacks to its programmes, the MWMS established its own policy of collecting the funds a year ahead of when they were to be spent.⁵⁶ The funds were banked in preparation for the following year, enabling the society to support twelve additional workers in the field with the accrued interest.⁵⁷ The UCWMS retained the Methodist policy. Money was a sensitive issue in the women's societies due to the range of incomes within the membership. Mrs. W. T. Ash, past president of the Alberta MWMS questioned the one dollar membership fee, "[t]here are women in the organization who could easily give \$1,000 and others who cannot afford 10 cents yet the same amount is asked from each. Is it fair?"⁵⁸ This was one example of the financial inequities that hindered the work of the AWMS. Although church union was initiated, in part, to reduce the costs of church mission in the west, it was not long before the UCWMS experienced monetary pressures that were concomitant with ambitious national programmes of evangelization. Would the spiritual enterprise of the women's missionary society be able to withstand escalating allocations from Dominion Board combined with the bleak economic years of the thirties?

In the years after Union, allocations became more problematic for the Alberta Conference Branch as the costs of mission work conflicted with harsh economic realities which emerged in the prairie region. Allocations or quotas of funds and supplies to be raised by Alberta were established by Dominion Boards of the women's missionary societies based in Toronto. The money raised in Alberta was sent to Toronto to be pooled for use across the country. The provincial executive divided their allocation among the Presbyterials or Districts, where they were then distributed among the Auxiliaries in each congregation according to their ability to raise it. This system worked best in the more affluent and economically-diverse urban Auxiliaries such as Calgary than in the rural areas where the economy was agriculturally-based and vulnerable to serious fluctuations

⁵⁶ "Women's Missionary Society: Meeting of the Full Executive Board," The Presbyterian Witness Vol. LXXIV, No. 28 (June 9, 1921): 24.

⁵⁷ "Need of Workers Felt in India," Calgary Daily Herald, 12 June 1919, p. 14.

⁵⁸ "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer At W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16. While the UCWMS constitution states that membership fees were 50 cents, Methodist WMS levied \$1.00 fee before 1925, and some United Church WMS continued to do so after union.

from year to year. For example, the Wetaskiwin PWMS reported that due to the poor conditions in that area their membership had dropped by sixty-seven, from one hundred and ninety-five in 1921 to one hundred and twenty-eight two years later thus eroding its potential for fundraising through fees and voluntary contributions.⁵⁹

In 1926, the United Church WMS had targeted \$1,000,000 as its national goal to support the work of its four hundred home and foreign missionaries. Alberta was assigned and successfully raised its allocation of \$32,040, described as the second smallest in the Dominion.⁶⁰ However, as the new organizational regime of the United Church emerged, Alberta Branch executive acknowledged that "the United Church has more and more placed upon the members of the W.M.S. the responsibility of carrying on Mission Work among women and children in our own and other lands - and has also laid upon us the responsibility of supporting all women missionaries."⁶¹ With union, there was also a greater need to rely on assistance from the Dominion Board for advice on how to interpret the new procedures and policies. In the midst of this confusion, Dominion Board raised the Alberta allocation to \$37,000 in 1927, reminding Branch Conference that it spent \$40,000 annually in the province, hoping to forestall any objections to the \$5,000 increase.⁶² The problem of raising the additional money was compounded by the fact that due to a budgetary adjustment 1927 was a nine-month fiscal year. This meant that the Auxiliaries had three months less in which to raise the funds from their members. Alberta Branch notified Dominion Board that the allocation was too high, and they would only guarantee \$22,530 and as much more as they could raise.⁶³ Dominion Board replied that with the commitments of the national program, \$37,000 was Alberta's minimum share and outlined their processes for determining allocations to the Branches.⁶⁴ Several Presbyterials struggled with meeting their quotas. High River "report[ed] close stock-

⁵⁹ UCA, PAA. PWMS Lacombe, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 133, Box 4, Minutes of annual meeting, March 7, 1923., n.p.

⁶⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of annual meeting, May 26-28, 1926, 95.

⁶¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of sub-executive meeting, Jan. 5, 1927, 119.

⁶² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 176.

⁶³ This amount did not include \$1500.00 which was the estimate for covering Branch expenses. UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 151.

⁶⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of full executive meeting, February 15, 1928, 188.

taking of resources but [felt] the allocation [was] rather high" while St. Paul's cited "poor crops and the removal [out-migration] of influential families" which made it difficult to meet the quotas.⁶⁵ In February, 1928, an emergency sub-executive committee meeting was called where WMS officers decided,

in view of the fact that Alberta was the only province that did not accept its full allocation ... we should cut the year's allowance for expenses to \$1000 and so send to Toronto for this quarter a total draft of \$15230.00, making a total for the year of \$24030.00 the amount of the original allocation.⁶⁶

Through 1928 and 1929, individual Presbyterials such as Red Deer continued to report 'non-acceptance' of their allocations. Alberta Branch established a new procedure whereby the Presbyterials voted on their acceptance of quotas at the provincial annual meeting instead of Branch assigning them, since the Presbyterials assumed "the burden of raising the funds."⁶⁷ Alberta Branch took the further step of sending a letter to Mrs. Bundy, the Dominion Board Secretary of Christian Stewardship, stating that "the constant pressure of increase instead of acting as an incentive is proving a discouragement."⁶⁸

The WMS annual reports of 1931 and 1932 began to reveal the impact of the Depression as the provincial economy foundered under the combined effects of drought and financial uncertainty. The 1931 annual report noted the Alberta Branch had sent the Board Treasurer \$34,300 which was \$3,700 short of its allocation. High River noted the loss of its YWA since young girls had left the area to find work or training. The report concluded, "[i]t was feared that they had stressed the financial side too much, keeping some women away who were particularly feeling the strain of these times. They plan[ned] to stress the spiritual side more"⁶⁹ Regardless, Branch Treasurer "urged those who have steady incomes to make greater sacrifices during the coming year."⁷⁰ In

⁶⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of sub-executive meeting, Jan 5, 1927, 119.

⁶⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of emergency sub-executive meeting, February 3, 1928, 184.

⁶⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of full executive meeting, February 15, 1928, 188.

⁶⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of sub-executive meeting, January 18, 1929, 232.

⁶⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, May 23-26, 1932, 361.

⁷⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29-30, 1931, 315-6.

1932, only two out of fourteen Presbyterials, Camrose and Wainwright had exceeded their allocations while Drumheller met theirs.⁷¹ Annual memberships had dropped by one hundred and eighteen and Mission Bands had lost three hundred members between 1931 and 1932.⁷² Baby Bands had lost more than one third of their enrolments during the same period; their fees were dropped for a trial period of a year to see if it would encourage members to remain.⁷³ Facing its loss of income and with no hope of immediate recovery, the consensus was to close the School Home at Kolokreeka in September, 1932. The WMS was only charging eight dollars a month for students to board there, which barely covered the cost of their food.⁷⁴ With year end, at December 31, 1932, Branch was still \$9,800 short of the \$37,000 allocation and had raised \$4180 less than at the same time in 1931.⁷⁵

Minutes of the provincial annual meeting in 1933, record the discouragement of members. They hadn't reached their allocation for 1932, and hadn't been able to reach it since the allocation had been raised to \$37,000. They noted "[a]t one time our income was increasing but since [the] crash [it] has been diminished."⁷⁶ Realizing the limits of present members' resources, the executive promoted a recruiting campaign since "[a]bout half of our women are not in Missionary Society and many of them are ones who have money. We are asked for \$37,000 yet \$52,000 is spent in Alberta."⁷⁷ Branch went so far as to revise the supply allocation lists from Toronto to ease the strain on struggling Auxiliaries. Branch executive held a vote on whether to cancel the annual meeting to save on expenses, but it was decided to hold the meeting while sending fewer delegates from each Presbyterial.⁷⁸ Through this time of hardship and sacrifice, AWMS members continued to believe that "[p]rayer will release power that will change minds or hearts

⁷¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, February 28, 1933, 384. Two Presbyterials had been created since 1925, Drumheller (1932) and Grande Prairie (1926).

⁷² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, February 28, 1933, 387-8.

⁷³ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, February 28, 1933, 387.

⁷⁴ Laycock, 20.

⁷⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of annual executive meeting, February 28, 1933, 384.

⁷⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, May 2-4, 1933, 12.

⁷⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, May 2-4, 1933, 12.

⁷⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of annual executive meeting, January 27, 1933, 383.

and release money for this work."⁷⁹ When this did not appear to be taking place they did not turn away from their faith, but took steps to renew their spiritual commitment to God, confessing "[w]e have failed to recognize the power of prayer."⁸⁰ Members of the AWMS consistently raised about \$24,000 through the years 1934 to 1939.⁸¹ By 1937, the Dominion Board had dropped the provincial allocation to \$28,000.⁸² However, closures of the school homes continued, Wahstao and the Radway Centre discontinued services in 1937 with the advent of public schools to these areas and less need for specialized non-Anglo-Saxon residential schools. With the cutbacks to church funds, the spectre of rising maintenance costs to the aging mission buildings added to the reasons for their closure. The Ruthenian School Home in Edmonton was sold to the YWCA in the same year. As New Canadians adapted to life in Alberta by acquiring English and securing employment opportunities, the need for home mission work in the province decreased substantially.

Auxiliaries in the rural areas of the province continued to be a concern for the AWMS, where the population dispersal greatly hampered organizing efforts. Initially, the missionary societies had grown more rapidly within the established urban congregations than in the sparsely populated countryside. In their annual reports to Branch, District Superintendents took notice of the "pluck of the women in the small country towns where there have been many discouragements."⁸³ Where remote Auxiliaries had been established, it was a constant struggle to maintain their viability and many of them eventually disbanded in the face of impossible odds. One way the WMS attempted to improve the quality of life of settlers was through the work of the library secretaries who attempted to reduce the isolation imposed by distance. The PWMS reported a considerable volume of "church and Sunday school papers and various magazines sent to

⁷⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, May 2-4, 1933, 12.

⁸⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 8th annual meeting, May 2-4, 1933, 12.

⁸¹ UCA, PAA. United Church of Canada Yearbooks, 1935-1940. See also "Conference Branch W.M.S. Reports \$25,617 Raised Discuss Financial Policy," Calgary Daily Herald, 3 March 1937, 16. The article reports that the allocation system was used until 1935, when it was replaced by a 10% per year increase which the presbyterials had difficulty raising.

⁸² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of sub-executive committee meeting, November 29, 1937, 188.

⁸³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 13th annual meeting, May 30-June 1, 1922, 393.

outlying districts throughout the province, postage charges amounting to \$60.32."⁸⁴ Determination and faith girded many women for the journey to their missionary meeting. St. Paul Presbyterial reported that "[f]or many women ... the monthly missionary meeting is the only service they have during the year. Members go long distances to attend - 14 miles."⁸⁵ It was very difficult attempting to coordinate an Auxiliary when the officers lived far apart and had problems keeping in contact with each other.⁸⁶ Mrs. McAmmond, president of the Medicine Hat Presbyterial, described the inherent obstacles in seeding rural Auxiliaries where "[u]nder the inspiration of the moment organization can be effected, but then the organizer comes away leaving behind no minister, no minister's wife, no women of any experience, and the work is handicapped. It is like throwing out an infant to forage for itself."⁸⁷ Compounding the problem was a fear that if Anglo-Saxon settlers abandoned the rural areas for the cities, "other racial stocks" with their Bolshevik ideas and labor unrest would ultimately control the agricultural sector of the economy.⁸⁸ Therefore, the welfare of rural areas was significant to the AWMS as it related to their vision of an ideal province. In 1925, the AWMS was pleased to note progress in that "[f]ive years ago 60% of Band members belonged to the cities, now 30% ... are from cities due to the expansion in the rural centres."⁸⁹ Once they were established, the activities of the rural groups such as the Coleman UCWMS Auxiliary paralleled those of urban Auxiliaries, even with a membership of seven to ten women. Monthly meetings were held at the women's homes instead of the church, with a July meeting scheduled as a picnic in the park. Similar to their urban counterparts, they delivered addresses on mission work, held Temperance readings, read leaflets on foreign mission projects, and sent a delegate to the sixtieth anniversary of the W.M.S. held in

⁸⁴ "Branches of W.M.S. Work Show Marked Increase," Edmonton Journal, 28 March 1923, p. 18.

⁸⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of the 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 138.

⁸⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, March 20-24, 1939, 221-2.

⁸⁷ "Presbyterial Reports Heard At First Session Provincial W.M.S. United Church Meeting," Edmonton Journal, 22 May 1928, p. 9.

⁸⁸ Oliver, 283. And, UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, May 21-24, 1928, 216.

⁸⁹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of the 16th annual meeting, May 26-29, 1925, 62.

Montreal.⁹⁰ Branch accepted that in some locales such as Carstairs, "where it is difficult to have both WA and WMS they were being combined and in this way meeting the church need also getting missionary education."⁹¹ However, this type of compromise could have detrimental effects on mission support, "[i]n one district, the W.M.S. works in conjunction with the Ladies' Aid, and the societies are largely responsible for the support of the home church, consequently they are hampered in their contributions to other mission work."⁹² Despite these problems, the competing demands on women's resources in the materialistic frontier society of Alberta necessitated that voluntary associations promote cooperative means to achieve their ends.

The woman's missionary societies defended their subordinate status within the church with a dynamic lay organization which marshalled a volunteer staff with highly developed expertise to rival that of professional churchmen, and transformed the liability of women's credit into a paragon of financial credibility. Their independence as a parallel institution working in harmony with the church was preserved by the effective blending of the church hierarchy with the recruiting and monetary practices of women's organizations. However, even with God as their leader, the AWMS was not exempt from the vicissitudes of the prairie economy during the interwar years. It endured these harsh lessons through the faith and commitment of its members, bruised but not broken. The AWMS was aware of the difficulties faced by its rural Auxiliaries and provided extraordinary long distance services to maintain their viability. The ensuing chapter explores the evangelically-based ideology of AWMS members as it pertained to their quest for spirituality, their ideals of family life and nationhood, and the concomitant status of women in the church during the years 1918 to 1939.

⁹⁰ UCA PAA. MWMS Coleman Church, Acc. No. 75.387, Items 2747-2749. Minutes of monthly meeting, June 19, 1924, n.p. And Minutes of August 21, 1924, n. p. and February 19, 1931, n. p.

⁹¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, March 20-24, 1939, 222. See also, Carstairs Ladies Aid, Acc. No. 75.387, Box 77, Item 2502, Minutes of Ladies' Aid meetings, 1928-1930. January 8, 1929, n.p.

⁹² "Presbyterial Reports Heard At First Session Provincial W.M.S. United Church Meeting," Edmonton Journal, 22 May 1928, p. 9.

Chapter 4

'Keeping Constantly In Tune With The Infinite': Assumptions & Objectives of the Societies, 1918-1939

The AWMS combined a fervent religious commitment with a devotion to spirituality which permeated every aspect of daily life. Their objectives are prioritized in a motto, described as the first three words of the society, "Pray. Study. Give."¹ This chapter argues that AWMS members considered themselves an elite group, a "church within a church," set apart by the depth of their spirituality.² The spiritual philosophy of the AWMS was based upon belief in a unique bond between prayerful women and God. The AWMS held the conviction that the family comprised the fundamental unit of society, and that within the ideal family Christian moral values were imbued by the mother. Since the AWMS perspective was framed by the family and women's nurturing role within it, this chapter examines assumptions about children, mothers, daughters, and sons. While several prominent members of the AWMS such as Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney and Emily Kerby were ardent supporters of women's rights, other members were not. In their opinion, the status of women in the church was of interest only insofar as it affected their ability to carry on the spiritual enterprise they had been chosen to do.

Prayer was the preferred weapon of the WMS, the "Church's new army in training."³ Mrs. McKillop, Presbyterian president for Lethbridge concluded, "[a] life without prayer is like a gun without powder."⁴ The spiritual superiority of women was manifested through a belief in the enhanced quality of their prayer. The prayerful relationship between society members and the divine enabled the AWMS to circumvent patriarchal control in religious matters. While Patricia Hill states evangelical women did

¹ "Conditions in China Graphically Described by Missionary at W.M.S.," Calgary Albertan, 2 June 1927, p. 27.

² Donna Sinclair, Crossing Worlds: The Story of the Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1992), 107.

³ "Increase," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 3 (March 1922): 409.

⁴ "Conditions in China Graphically Described by Missionary at W.M.S.," Calgary Albertan, 2 June 1927, p. 27. See also, UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 137.

not believe men were incapable of real prayer, they considered "women were more likely to possess the almost childlike, unwavering trust in which effective prayer was grounded."⁵ Hence, it was the duty of the MWMS to "supply the spiritual power of the church."⁶ Members sought to acquire and perfect the discipline of prayer by "meeting in groups for audible prayer ... [and] praying aloud when alone."⁷ After many years of enforced silence in the churches, women needed to "overcome ingrained inhibitions" in order to use their voice publicly.⁸ To achieve this objective, the following recommendations were made, "1. We must be right with God. 2. Private prayer will flower in public. 3. A few words from the heart are better than a flowery prayer."⁹ Every member of the AWMS, no matter how rich or poor, was able to contribute equally to the mission enterprise through the power of prayer.¹⁰ It cost MWMS members only "energy and heart-power" to pray.¹¹ They stressed the need for "[p]lans for impressing the importance of prayer in our work The leader must understand prayer and the meaning of prayer."¹² A prayer hour, held from five to six p.m. on Sundays, was set aside by the MWMS for all members to observe. The Missionary Outlook suggested "Subjects for Prayer" which included the various missions, while an addendum, "Birthday Prayer Cycle" listed missionaries' dates of birth for special observance.¹³ Similarly, the

⁵ Hill, 82.

⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 12.

⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 161-2. Also MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 20. The Methodists also had a Cycle of Prayer and they asked the Board of Managers if they could include the names of the wives of the General Board Missionaries in it. They also asked the board if they could continue their own W.M.S. day of prayer in addition to the Interdenominational Day of Prayer.

⁸ Hill, 79. Hill describes the advice given in mission magazines explaining modulation and voice projection, helping women to speak attractively as well as effectively.

⁹ UCA, PAA. PWMS High River. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 338 Box 12. Minutes of 5th annual District Meeting, October 24, 1923, n.p.

¹⁰ Hill, 82.

¹¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 39.

¹² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 12th annual meeting, June 7-10, 1921, 352. A further suggestion was made by Mrs. Scott, executive officer, that a child who was taught to pray for missions at home would influence their parents.

¹³ "Society's Hour for United Prayer," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXIV, No. 2 (February 1914): 53.

Missionary Messenger carried a notice each month scheduling the "Suggested Study for Auxiliaries" accompanied by a "Prayer Topic."¹⁴

The MWMS considered prayer as their "greatest unreported department," noting that "[p]rayer is something we owe to others, without which we leave them poor indeed."¹⁵ This was reinforced by correspondence with missionaries such as Dorothy McBain in Korea, who wrote,

I wish you could know the thrill I had when I learned that a group in my own province were planning to remember me in prayer. When I was a member of a Mission Circle we used to remember the missionaries in prayer, but somehow it never seemed to mean very much to me and I often wondered about it. Now, however, that I am here, with the ocean between home and me, I am realizing more & more the bond of prayer, and I know that I have been helped in times of difficulty even in these first few months.¹⁶

Home missionaries encouraged the support they received through prayer accordingly. Elizabeth Hawken wrote from Kolokreeka, "I know that it was the prayer of many friends that buoyed me up. So many times I could feel so definitely that someone was praying for me."¹⁷ A Cycle of Prayer was introduced at the High River Auxiliary which the provincial PWMS officers endorsed,

ask[ing] each Presbyterial to be responsible for one mission field - dividing the names of the missionaries working in that Field among the Auxiliaries. Each auxiliary to pray definitely at each meeting as well as in private devotions for the names allotted [sic] to them.¹⁸

¹⁴ "Suggested Study for Auxiliaries: Subjects for Prayer, March," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 3 (March 1922): 405. A prayer for the medical missions requested "[t]hat the doctors and nurses may have great skill in their work and may be the means of not only healing the body, but of winning the soul for Christ."

¹⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 14 & 15.

¹⁶ Glenbow Archives. Central United Church, Calgary. M1365, file 180. Correspondence from Dorothy McBain, WMS missionary in Wonsan, Korea to Miss Carr, Central United Church. March 23, 1936.

¹⁷ E. Hawken, "One Year's Experience at Kolokreeka," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXIX, No. 3 (March, 1919): 71.

¹⁸ UCA, PAA. PWMS High River. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 132, Box 4. Minutes of executive meeting, April 26, 1923, n. p.

They published a booklet explaining the process and listing the names of the missionaries as an aid to members.¹⁹ They believed coordinating the force of prayer improved its efficacy.²⁰

Observing that theirs was a society which was "born in prayer and only in prayer can it exist," MWMS leaders designated a Day of Prayer to be held during the last week of November in 1918.²¹ They believed that "[p]ublic prayer is most helpful and necessary."²² The suggested programme required that,

four and a half hours be given over to this service, under the themes - "The Home Base," "Our Missionaries," "Our Young Women," "China," "Japan," "Canada and the Empire," "Quiet Hour and Re-consecration," and under these headings are definite, vital requests for prayer. It is strongly requested that this day is not to be given over to addresses, reading papers, etc., but to prayer.²³

A further recommendation for the Day of Prayer encouraged members to form neighbourhood prayer circles. This provided an alternative for women on the home front to express an activism, albeit spiritual, during the travails of war. As members of the "oldest society," Presbyterian women were instructed to "take the lead in arrangements" for the first Annual Interdenominational Day of Prayer which was held Dominion-wide in 1920.²⁴ Members of the Medicine Hat Presbyterian reported the large attendance at St. John's Church on January 7, 1921 when "[r]epresentatives of all the Missionary Societies

¹⁹ Ibid., n. p.

²⁰ "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer at W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16. Mrs. W. T. Ash, past president, "stressed the development of prayer, united and individual, and its power to help the mission world."

²¹ "A Call to Prayer By the W.M.S.," The Christian Guardian Vol. LXXXIX, No. 46 (November 13, 1918): 29.

²² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 11th annual meeting, June 8-11, 1920. 326.

²³ Ibid., 29. Two previous Days of Prayer had been held in 1915 and 1916 across the Dominion.

²⁴ UCA, PAA. PWMS Medicine Hat. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 136, Box 4. Minutes of November 17, 1920, 65.

of the city were present and took part in the programme."²⁵ An International Day of Prayer observed in the United States and Canada, was inaugurated on March 3, 1922.²⁶

Through their devotion to prayer, AWMS women acquired greater moral authority within their church and community which contributed to their self-confidence, inspiring them to enlarge the scope of their home mission enterprise. However, with increased emphasis on expanding women's active service, the portion of meetings previously devoted to prayer diminished as mission study and the bureaucracy of mission work became more structured and time-consuming.²⁷ The Dominion level of the PWMS, finding itself overwhelmed with business matters concluded,

[o]ur society is now so large and includes so many branches of work that the Council meetings have become mostly business and our Provincial meetings will more and more have to become the place for giving and receiving inspiration along with our Presbyterian gatherings. We are anxious that they shall do this more and more as the years go on²⁸

Dissatisfaction arose in some quarters as the preeminence of secular matters eroded the expression of spiritual faith which had originally drawn many women to the organization and inspired them during the war years. Mrs. Crowe, president of Dominion Board, who led a worship service at the provincial meeting in 1935, attempted to re-vitalize the dispirited discipline of prayer. Addressing the delegates, she,

[e]mphasized the need of knowing the will of God in our lives - This can be done by reading this word and meeting with him in regular and quiet hours of meditation. Thus do we foil the attempts of Satan to make us disregard our Lord's commands.²⁹

²⁵ UCA, PAA. PWMS Medicine Hat. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 136, Box 4. Minutes of meeting January 7, 1921, 79.

²⁶ "The International Day of Prayer," The Missionary Messenger Vol. X, No. 2 (February 1922), 352. The first programme was formatted by the Interim Committee of the Women's Missionary Boards of Canada.

²⁷ Hill, 164. Hill argues that women's missionary societies followed the example of liberal evangelical Protestantism which shifted its theological ideology to accommodate the influences of modernization that ultimately resulted in the secularization of American society.

²⁸ "Provincial Presbyterian W.M.S. Annual Shows Splendid Record," Edmonton Journal, 26 April 1917, p. 12.

²⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 10th annual meeting, March 12-15, 1935, 98.

Having acquired their moral authority as "workers together with God," AWMS leaders attempted to resist the inexorable pull of the secular forces surrounding them in order to preserve the credibility of the society and continue working under their own auspices.³⁰ This quest for a renewal of faith was reinforced by the "dramatic" impact of a spiritual revival taking place in Japan. Led by a Protestant missionary, Toyohiko Kagawa, the Kingdom of God movement caused many missionary groups to reevaluate the apparent "stagnation of church life in Canada" with its materialistic preoccupations.³¹ With these implications in mind, women's missionary societies sought to secure the perpetuity of their enterprise by inculcating Christian mission values among their most malleable recruits, the children.

Members of the AWMS believed they had created an organization whose membership flowed from "cradle to grave."³² Children, as well as being considered amenable subjects for conversion were effective agents of mission.³³ The WMS of the Edmonton Presbyterial stated that "[e]very child should be a missionary, it should be borne upon them that there is something worth while, some romance, some spirit of sacrifice."³⁴ Miss Mitchell, a PWMS home mission worker described "a little boy trained in the Mission-Home, who led his parents to Jesus by his talk about him."³⁵ The goal of

³⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Medicine Hat Presbyterial, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1059, Box 32. Minutes of 12th annual convention, February 18, 1938, n. p.

³¹ Robert Wright, A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for A New International Order, 1918-1939 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 193. Kagawa's influence was most keenly felt from 1928 through the mid-1930s. While many Protestants became proponents of the Oxford Group movement that arrived in Canada in 1932 with its emphasis on individual spiritual regeneration, its appeal did not overwhelm members of the AWMS. The Lethbridge Presbyterial report from UCA, PAA, UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, March 6-9, 1934, 53, mentions it. However, the Kingdom of God movement appears to have had a more significant impact upon the Society. See Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940, 205-227 for further discussion of the Oxford Movement.

³² "Contribution of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church to the United Church of Canada," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLV, No. 8 (August 1925): 182-3.

³³ UCA, PAA. PWMS Lacombe, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 133, Box 4. Minutes of 11th annual meeting, March 16, 1920, n. p. Children were described as being much easier to interest in missions than adults.

³⁴ UCA, PAA. PWMS Edmonton, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 124, Box 4. Minutes of 5th annual meeting, Feb 24-25, 1918, n. p.

³⁵ UCA, PAA. PWMS High River, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 132, Box 4. Minutes of January 24, 1918, 17.

the WMS was to "guide the children of Alberta who [were] growing up in ignorance of Christ."³⁶ For children of immigrant families who attended the school homes, "we offer to teach any child along spiritual & intellectual lines and so to become leaders among their own people."³⁷ Groups of children from the school-homes provided proof of the success of the evangelization and assimilation efforts of the WMS, through performances of skits and choral work at presbyterial, district and provincial meetings. WMS officers were to lead by example and encourage their own children to participate in mission work if they expected others to do so.³⁸ One UCWMS member pointedly asked, "[a]re all the W.M.S. women consecrating their sons & daughters to Christlike vocations?"³⁹ The society was explicit about its recruiting practices, observing, "[i]t is a well known fact that many of our most efficient aux. workers are graduates of a M.B. and many of our missionaries in the field now tell us that it was in the M.B. that they first got their desire for missionary service."⁴⁰ In order to keep the children interested, Band leaders were instructed to "secure curios, pictures and costumes" which were accessible through church offices and visiting missionaries.⁴¹ They attempted to provide variety in the meetings, encouraging the children to become active participants in order to train them for "future service."⁴² Since the WCTU targeted children for their temperance program, materials were already developed and available for temperance education which was mandatory for the MWMS Bands.⁴³ The WCTU and AWMS were in favour of public school programmes which would instill temperance ideals and Christian values in the future citizens of Alberta. To maintain the children's enthusiasm, both evangelically-

³⁶ "Story of Mission Work Abroad and at Home Told at Wednesday Session of W.M.S. Presbyterial," Edmonton Journal, 26 March 1925, p. 17.

³⁷ UCA, PAA. United Church Medicine Hat, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1059, Box 32. Minutes of annual meeting, May 5, 1927, 27.

³⁸ "Alberta Branch," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXVII, No. 8 (August 1917): 187.

³⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Medicine Hat, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1059, Box 32. Minutes of annual meeting, May 5, 1927, 21.

⁴⁰ UCA, PAA. PWMS Lacombe, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 134, Box 4. Minutes of 15th annual meeting, March 5, 1924, n. p. M.B. was an abbreviation for Mission Band.

⁴¹ UCA, PAA. PWMS Edmonton, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 124, Box 4. Minutes of 2nd quarterly meeting, March 21, 1920, 117.

⁴² UCA, PAA. MWMS Edmonton, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 9.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9.

based organizations held extracurricular activities such as public lectures and held contests where special medals and pins were awarded.⁴⁴ In the AWMS, banners were awarded to Mission Bands who achieved the largest percentage of increase in membership and funds each year. The competitive aspects of the Banner award were not lost on the WMS leaders, who noted that since Coronation had received a banner, it would provide an incentive to other rural bands since the City Bands had usually won.⁴⁵ Presentations were held on public occasions such as a provincial meeting or a Rally Day, thus facilitating the promotion of mission work to a larger audience.⁴⁶ Kathleen Morrison, a member of Parkdale United Church, Calgary, described the excitement of a Rally Day held at the cow barns at the Stampede Grounds where thousands of children attended. The event was "filled with songs, choirs, hymns and a special sermon for children. For our category, small congregations, year after year we won a big blue felt banner with a large white 'A' on it. We came home rejoicing."⁴⁷

The WMS did not encourage parents to turn over the religious training of their young solely to the church, but to recognize their own duties in relation to this task. Women who displayed "eternal vigilance and incessant [sic] prayer" would succeed in sending their children from the "family altar strengthened for the world's battles."⁴⁸ The power of the mother's influence over her young knew few limitations. Members believed that "mothers could pray their children into missionary activity if they wished."⁴⁹ An address entitled "Responsibility of the Parents toward the Band", included a reference to the "pre-natal influence of the mother on the child" whereby it was "possible to be born

⁴⁴ Cook, "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930, 136.

⁴⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Edmonton, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 10.

⁴⁶ Cook, "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930, 137. Some WCTU groups sold tickets to their medal events since "adorable children would attract a paying public."

⁴⁷ Joanne (Enns) Rudrick. "... and Let There Be Light": A History of Parkdale United Church 1912-1989 (Calgary: First Western Printing, 1989). 15.

⁴⁸ UCA, PAA. PWMS Medicine Hat, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 136, Box 4, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, March 9, 1920, 75. Also "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VII, No. 8 (September 1920): 252.

⁴⁹ "Reports of Branch Meetings: Alberta Branch," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLV, No. 8 (August 1925): 184.

with a missionary spirit."⁵⁰ Parental support was solicited to provide reminders of meetings, discussion of mission work at home, and help in directing small coins towards the mite-box instead of treats. The discipline of self-sacrifice was best learned early. Mothers were urged to help their children save for junior memberships in the WMS. Life memberships could be purchased for daughters in their home Auxiliary potentially securing their future interest.⁵¹

Mission Circles for teen-age girls provided an all-round approach to personal development which included intellectual, physical, social and religious development.⁵² The spiritual objective of Circles was to "help the girls lift their sky-line ... [to] make them feel the importance of prayer."⁵³ The AWMS was prepared to mentor Circle members who might be persuaded to enter the mission field. Traits which bore scrutiny included the "character of the girl, her depth of spirituality, breadth of intelligence and natural disposition."⁵⁴ The AWMS made its "strongest appeal" during the teen years, utilizing the romantic appeal of mission work to spark the interest of idealistic girls.⁵⁵ They provided literature "containing some of the romantic figures of the mission fields for hero worship" believing that "there are many missionaries whose lives have just as romantic a setting as any historical hero."⁵⁶

Young women who heeded 'the call' could enjoy the spiritual rewards of missionary work. This did not preclude them from marrying after a few years, which many of them had the opportunity to do. Describing 'the call' as "a knowledge of the need and the ability to meet the need," qualifications included "a thorough and whole-souled consecration; a broad and intimate knowledge of the Bible ...; enthusiasm in a great cause; a keen sympathy with others, and the open-mindedness which enables one to carry

⁵⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th annual meeting, June 3-5, 1914, 131.

⁵¹ UCA, PAA. PWMS Lacombe, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 133, Box 4. Minutes of 11th annual meeting, March 16, 1920, n.p.

⁵² UCA, PAA. PWMS Edmonton, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 124, Box 4. Minutes of the 5th annual meeting, February 24-25, 1918, 23.

⁵³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 13th annual meeting, May 30- June 1, 1922, 389.

⁵⁴ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta Branch, Minutes of 12th annual meeting, June 7-10, 1921, 354.

⁵⁵ "Great Stress Laid on Power of Prayer at W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

out the golden rule."⁵⁷ Selection committees also took into consideration the physical fitness, life experience, and personal interests of the candidates. The minimum level of education accepted for teachers was high school matriculation although university training was preferable. By 1936, all WMS women working in the foreign missions were expected to be university graduates.⁵⁸ Though the pay for missionaries was low, the work demanding, the conditions primitive and the location far distant from home, potential candidates were encouraged to apply because the work was "so worth while and so very interesting."⁵⁹ In comparison, deaconesses employed by the MWMS and considered "key resources" in the Canadianizing and Christianizing of foreigners, also received low remuneration, working for salaries as low as \$8 to \$10 per month while PWMS workers received slightly higher salaries.⁶⁰ While PWMS workers had a voice in the location of their appointment, those in the MWMS did not.⁶¹ Many missionaries as well as mission workers were former members of the WMS and attributed their career choice to their education and fellowship in the society.⁶²

⁵⁷ "All Province Represented at Thirteenth Annual Meeting of Alberta Methodist W.M.S.," Edmonton Bulletin, 31 May 1922, p. 4. See also, Mrs. Robert Ross, "The Call for Recruits: The Openings and Qualifications Necessary," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 6 (June 1919): 179-80.

⁵⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 11th annual meeting, March 3-6, 1936, 138.

⁵⁹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of the 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 274.

⁶⁰ Nancy Hall, "The Professionalisation of Women Workers in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches of Canada," 120-133. In First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History, edited by Mary Kinneer (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1987), 126. Deaconesses were second in rank to missionaries. Also, Mary Anne Macfarlane, "Faithful and Courageous Handmaidens: Deaconesses in the United Church of Canada, 1925-1945," 238-258. In Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada edited by Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Fardig Whiteley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Macfarlane accurately describes the work of these 'handmaidens' of the church as including "limitless quantities of work, emphasis on responding to needs, invisibility of the work, separation from decision-making processes, and low status and remuneration." 239. For further information on the Methodist deaconess order, see John D. Thomas, "Servants of the Church: Canadian Methodist Deaconess Work, 1890-1926," Canadian Historical Review Vol. LXV, No. 3 (1984): 371-395.

⁶¹ Hall, "The Professionalisation of Women Workers in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches of Canada." 126.

⁶² Glenbow Archives. Central United Church, Calgary. M1365, file 180. Correspondence from Dorothy McBain, WMS missionary in Wonsan, Korea to Miss Carr, Central United Church. March 23, 1936. Also, Jean Forbes, Wide Windows: The Story of the Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1951), 13.

Seeking to replenish its staff, the societies were constantly searching for and screening missionary recruits.⁶³ They took great pride in this task and were very conscientious about their procedures. Candidates for mission work submitted their applications along with letters of reference to the Candidate Secretary of the AWMS. Miss Ethel Halpenny, a teacher, took the course of study for missionary candidates, and sent her references "all speaking in the highest terms of [her] ability, gifts and grace of charater [sic]" to the AWMS.⁶⁴ In an interview with them, she successfully responded to their questions.⁶⁵ The Executive committee forwarded a recommendation to the Board of Managers that Miss Halpenny be employed in missionary work, pending a satisfactory report by the medical examiner. In 1925, Mrs. A. M. Scott, the president of MWMS expressed her disappointment that no candidates had come forward from Alberta recently, and "urged the members to bring their influence to bear upon young people who seemed fitted for the work ... and to pray that these would be forthcoming."⁶⁶ Reminding delegates that Alberta had five members currently working in the mission field, she introduced "Mrs. D. L. Loree who has given two daughters to China."⁶⁷ Three candidates did come forward the following year.

One of the difficulties of the candidacy process from 1930 onward was the increasing cost of paying for the education that would make "women capable of meeting intellectual and theological problems" in order to effectively evangelize others.⁶⁸ In 1930, Mrs. Menzies, a senior missionary to China, made an appeal for candidates, as none had applied that year. The AWMS was embarrassed to have no candidates available since "to our discredit she is having to return after 20 yrs. service" instead of being able to retire.⁶⁹ As the effects of the Depression continued, the AWMS noticed that there were signs of a

⁶³ Brouwer, New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914., 36.

⁶⁴ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive committee meeting, January 25, 1918, 250.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁶⁶ "W.M.S. Holds Last Provincial Meeting at McDougall Church," Edmonton Bulletin, 27 May 1925, p. 7.

⁶⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 16th annual meeting, May 26-29, 1925, 58.

⁶⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 161.

⁶⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th annual meeting, May 13-16, 1930, 286-7.

renewed awareness of mission work as a vocation, since "unemployment has caused more girls to look to the church for work. Much higher academic standing is found in girls now becoming interested."⁷⁰ While the church may not have been the first choice of well-educated women who were trained for social work, there were those who found it a logical alternative to unemployment. In 1935, a generation of aging missionaries were due for retirement, some of them having been involved in mission work for forty years. Thirty-six were returning home to Canada and although trained native workers were assuming leadership positions in many missions, Anglo-Saxon candidates were still being sought to administer the enterprise.⁷¹ Educational qualifications had continued to rise for all workers, and of six applicants to the United Church Training School only two were accepted. The remaining four had educational levels "far below requirements."⁷² No candidates had applied for 1939, although Mrs. A. E. Ottewell, the candidate secretary, expressed some certainty that several applicants would be available in the following year.⁷³ While young women were the central focus of the AWMS, boys were eligible for membership.

Boys and the WMS were an uncomfortable match. The actual number of boys enrolled in the AWMS is impossible to ascertain from their records. However, one co-educational Band in Calgary reported that twenty of its sixty members were boys.⁷⁴ Programmes were directed towards the interests of girls and women and it was difficult to keep boys interested in Band work. In 1925, Mrs. Luck, leader of the Wesley Mission Band in Calgary, recommended that Bands be segregated by gender, thus creating "a wholesome rivalry and it is easier to arrange programs to suit the separate groups than of

⁷⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, May 24-25, 1932, 345.

⁷¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, March 12-15, 1935, 95. See Wright, 142. Wright defines the policy of 'indigenization' as "the process by which foreign missions were to be converted into self-governing and self-propagating churches." The policy was applied equally to the home mission field, where Ruthenian ministers were working among their own people in conjunction with the Presbyterian and Methodist churches by 1914.

⁷² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 11th annual meeting, March 3-6, 1936, 137.

⁷³ "Missionary Society," Calgary Daily Herald, 24 March 1939, p. 19.

⁷⁴ "Alberta W.M.S. Learns How Church Welcomes Strangers," Edmonton Journal, 10 June 1920, p. 8.

the boys and girls together."⁷⁵ However, this was never accomplished. There were several strategies employed to keep boys in the Bands. One approach was to have them plant WMS vegetable gardens to sell the produce in the fall. At the same sale, girls would sell their 'fancy work'.⁷⁶ The PWMS of High River recommended using books that would particularly interest boys such as The Black Bearded Barbarian (1912) written by Marian Keith.⁷⁷ The story provides a hagiographical narrative of the life of George Leslie Mackay, the first Canadian Presbyterian missionary to Formosa. Exciting descriptions of life in a strange and sometimes dangerous land are appealingly combined with prescriptive literature and Biblical metaphors extolling a life of religious dedication. One anecdote describes Mackay slaying a giant serpent which had invaded his study.⁷⁸ A common theme in the prescriptive literature emphasized the exemplary Christian family life provided by married missionaries for the edification of foreign peoples. A dual purpose was served by these vignettes, first of relating the process of mission work by example as well as inculcating the value of a Christian family life for the impressionable young male reader.⁷⁹ Another suggestion to involve teen-age boys in the work was to link mission activities with the Trail-ranger organization.⁸⁰ It took several years for PWMS leaders to realize that a more appropriate reward for boys' badge work would be "some part in the men's society" rather than a "life membership in the woman's society."⁸¹ This would indicate that few boys maintained a prolonged membership in the organization or this impediment would have been recognized before 1925.

⁷⁵ "Women's Missionary Society Hears An Inspiring Address," Edmonton Bulletin, 29 May 1925, p. 7.

⁷⁶ "Alberta W.M.S. Learns How Church Welcomes Strangers," Edmonton Journal, 10 June 1920, p. 8.

⁷⁷ UCA, PAA. PWMS High River. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 132, Box 4. Minutes of annual meeting of January 24, 1918, 15.

⁷⁸ Marian Keith, The Black Bearded Barbarian: The Life of George Leslie Mackay of Formosa (New York: Interchurch Press, 1912), 205.

⁷⁹ Keith, 215. One specific example begins "[s]o the home on the bluff, the beautiful Christian home, which was a pattern for all the Chinese, was broken up [by death]. The young doctor was compelled to leave his patients, and taking his motherless children he returned with them to Canada." The Victorian ideal of sacrificial motherhood was also reinforced in this particular recounting.

⁸⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 327, Box 11. Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 10.

⁸¹ "Mrs. Geo. Duncan, Calgary, President Presbyterial," Edmonton Journal, 26 March 1925, p. 17.

While the WMS was a women's organization, there were instances where men were admitted. In 1921, Central Methodist Church, Calgary, had seventeen honorary life members, all men. What had prompted some societies to allow men into the organization?⁸² Obvious advantages of male membership included the possibility of increased financial backing, greater prestige within the community, and a significantly larger membership count. Despite this, Alberta Branch ruled there was no constitutional provision for male membership and forbade further "soliciting" of men.⁸³ There are two possible explanations for this response from Branch officers: a desire to maintain the WMS as an exclusively female organization or to avoid censure from the church fathers who would consider this an encroachment on their membership.

The ambivalent support of laymen for the church caused consternation and embarrassment within Protestant denominations.⁸⁴ The frustration felt by church authorities over dwindling male participation is evident in an article which concluded,

[t]he amount of religious work done at the present time by men is far less than the work which is done by the women. ... The Christian religion began under the leadership of men. Men bulk large in the religious activities of this very hour, though women have assumed so much of the religious responsibility.⁸⁵

The chronic shortage of men for the ministry in the West, especially during the war years, meant that churches occasionally called upon the AWMS to fill vacancies with their workers during the interim.⁸⁶ For example, Methodist Rev. & Mrs. Pike serving at Chipman were transferred to Edmonton in 1918, leaving the post empty. The church

⁸² "Do Young Men Want To Do Missionary Work?" Calgary Daily Herald, 5 June 1914, p. 16. A suggestion was made to allow young men to join the MWMS as associate life members. Alberta President Mrs. Chown and others vetoed the idea, arguing that young men had their own organizations.

⁸³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 12. See also Laycock, 18.

⁸⁴ See Appendix 2 for information regarding the level of participation in men's organizations in the United Church in Alberta for the years 1926 to 1939.

⁸⁵ "Contemporary Opinion: What Men Owe Their Church," The Presbyterian Witness Vol. LXXVI, No. 9 (March 8, 1923): 5.

⁸⁶ "Presbyterian Missions Were Undermanned in Alberta Last Winter," Edmonton Journal, 2 May 1919, p. 8. Rev. Dr. M. White of Camrose, in presenting the home mission report identified the undermanning of work in Alberta. Out of a total of 142 Presbyterian mission fields in Alberta, 74 had been vacant during the winter. It was hoped that the return of men from overseas would alleviate the crisis.

"expressed the hope that the WMS might place a worker at that point as the Conference had no man available."⁸⁷ They complied. In return for their cooperation, the AWMS sought support from local ministers to promote the activities of the societies. In congregations where WMS work was not established, they "appealed for more interest on the part of the ministers" realizing that the influence wielded by the clergy was necessary to overcome apathy and maintain the credibility of the organization in the eyes of churchgoers.⁸⁸

Clergymen were often present at formal events of the missionary societies, serving both in ceremonial and advisory capacities. While PWMS women conducted their own elections, concluding with a prayer, the MWMS process required a clergyman to oversee the elections.⁸⁹ The latter ritual was maintained by the UCWMS, including the Installation Service which "set apart" the officers in their new duties and responsibilities.⁹⁰ They believed the service, conducted by a clergyman, served "to re-affirm our purpose and re-dedicate our lives to the great tasks to which God has called us."⁹¹ The inclusion of the ministry in their electoral process signified the desire or need for an endorsement of the newly-elected executive by the church. This validated the authority they would wield both in mission work and the spiritual stewardship of their members.

An inherent assumption of WMS mission enterprise was that Christianity elevated the status of women.⁹² This was one of the driving forces behind their evangelizing efforts which focussed on women in 'heathen' countries. Miss Armstrong, a missionary from Japan, quoted Margaret Addison as saying, "[i]f you want to realize what our Christianity has done for us you should go to the Orient & see what their religions have

⁸⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 284-5.

⁸⁸ "Educational Work of Church Stressed as Policy Keynote," Edmonton Journal, 27 May 1932, p. 13. Mrs. Miller, president of Alberta UCWMS regretted that only one-third of the pastoral charges had WMS work.

⁸⁹ "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 8 (September 1919): 248-9.

⁹⁰ UCA, PAA. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 915. "Installation Service," The Woman's Missionary Society of The United Church of Canada. Pamphlet.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 35.

not done for them." ⁹³ AWMS members reminded themselves of the plight of other less fortunate, non Anglo-Saxon women who suffered humiliation and disgrace due to their subordinate status. ⁹⁴ The High River PWMS described "[t]hese poor foreign women [who] are - Unwelcomed at birth / Untaught in childhood, / Unloved in wifehood, / Uncherished in widowhood / Unlamented at death." ⁹⁵ In comparison, Louise McKinney described her view of woman's situation in Alberta in the 1920s, where newly gained "privileges are channels through which she may more fully give herself to the work of her generation. What woman now has and is comes to her through the gospel of Christ. ... In view of this great heritage no self-pity or self-complacency is possible." ⁹⁶

While it was inappropriate for WMS women to seek "self-advancement or earthly preferment" they acquired power through their spiritual relationship with God as they helped to advance His works. ⁹⁷ Women of the missionary societies gained in self-confidence when,

during the long dark days of the war, ... women and mothers had learned to the full the real meaning of work, prayer and sacrifice. The spirit that upheld them then ... will strengthen the work of the association in the great fight for Christ in the mission fields. ⁹⁸

⁹³ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 8th annual meeting, May 2-4, 1933, 2-3. This was part of a broader argument that Buddhism engendered to great a passivity in its adherents, and that Christian ideals were "much higher in moral life than Buddhist." Also see, Miss Caroline Macdonald, "Canadian Woman Ordained an Elder in The Japanese Presbyterian Church," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VII, No. 10 (October 1921): 234. Ironically, the progress of gender equality in foreign missions sometimes exceeded that of Home Base in Canada. For example, Miss Macdonald was elected (along with seven other women and several men) an elder in the Japanese Presbyterian Church. She related that "at its last General Assembly in 1920 ... men and women were equally eligible for both the eldership and the ministry. ... I feel very much touched by it all and feel the responsibility greatly."

⁹⁴ "Moslem Proverbs," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXXIV, No. 2 (February 1914): 53. These 'proverbs' would incite outrage in the most complacent WMS member, for example, "*Women* are worthless creatures and soil men's reputations." or "*A woman*, a dog and a walnut tree - the more you beat them the better." Italics included in Outlook. References are scattered through foreign mission reports, such as "the unfortunate condition of the women of China ... left without any help to a higher life." MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 273. Also, "The Sorrowful Sex in India." United Church Observer and Missionary Review Vol. 5, No. 1 (January 1929): 13.

⁹⁵ UCA, PAA. PWMS High River, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 132, Box 4. Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, March 5, 1919, n. p.

⁹⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 12th annual meeting, June 7-10, 1921, 372.

⁹⁷ "General Council Meeting," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 7 (Jul/Aug 1919): 198.

⁹⁸ "Presbyterian W.M.S. of Province Went Over the Top by \$282.96 on the Big Budget of 1924," Edmonton Journal, 25 March 1925, p. 20.

However, despite these brave sentiments, a significant number of the rank-and-file members of the AWMS struggled with their emerging public personas. Traditional gender roles were not easy to shed as Auxiliaries taught women to speak and lead prayer in public, or to understand parliamentary protocol for meetings.⁹⁹ In spite of these difficulties, the societies expressed confidence stating "[w]oman to-day has a tremendous new *social influence*, for she sets the tone for man."¹⁰⁰ Through their participation in the AWMS, women experienced a sense of inclusiveness within the church culture which mitigated a sense of alienation and marginalization. As Mrs. Scott, an executive member of the society, reminded delegates, "[w]e are first members of the church, and afterwards W.M.S. women."¹⁰¹ The desire to be recognized as equal members of the church is implicit in a WMS report of the 1919 General Council meeting of the Presbyterian Church, "[t]hen as we stood - officials of the Church, members of our Society and missionaries, a further message fell from the lips of the Moderator"¹⁰²

Despite this, the status of women in the church remained ambiguous. While their work was encouraged and venerated, there were strict limitations on the avenues of activity for which they were eligible. In both the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, liberal evangelical women, influenced by the social gospel and woman's rights movements, were expressing an interest in the ministry.¹⁰³ While all members of the WMS may not have unanimously supported ordination, it is surprising that neither organization provided significant advocacy for this step for churchwomen. Meeting minutes at local, regional and provincial levels make few direct references to the ordination debate. As a result, the issue was not seriously addressed until after Union.

⁹⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 2nd annual meeting, June 1-3, 1927, 140. See also MWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 338, Box 12. Minutes of Annual District Meetings of High River. Minutes of 5th District Convention, October 24, 1923, n. p.

¹⁰⁰ "The New Place of Woman In The World," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 4 (April 1921): 114.

¹⁰¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 13th annual meeting, May 30-June 1, 1922, 389.

¹⁰² "General Council Meeting," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 7 (Jul/Aug 1919): 198.

¹⁰³ Sharon Anne Cook. "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930, 11. Cook describes liberal evangelicalism as

The Christian Guardian printed an editorial in 1918, reflecting on the reluctance of the Methodist General Council to pursue the matter,

Conference was not opposed to women preaching, but its vote showed that at present it did not see its way clear to admit them to the ministry on terms of absolute equality with men, and in any case this would seem to be impossible. If women do enter our ministry, it seems clear that they will have to have special consideration and to enjoy special privileges.¹⁰⁴

Though General Council did not want women in the pulpit, their work in the mission field was respected, valued and indispensable. Both the Presbyterian and Methodist WMS were asked by their churches to help in leading an interdenominational Forward Movement in 1919, to increment church memberships and boost participation in church and mission work.¹⁰⁵ Consequently, PWMS women noted proudly and not without irony that "[w]omen of the church were generally called the 'kitchen brigade' but they are fast coming to the front and being recognized"¹⁰⁶ Even more ironically, Miss Caroline Macdonald, a Tokyo missionary, announced her pleasure at being elected as an elder in the Japanese Presbyterian church. She remarked on the "absolute democracy of the church" where "men and women were equally eligible for both the eldership and the ministry."¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the downtrodden and oppressed women of 'heathen' countries were achieving equal rights within the Presbyterian mission churches with greater facility than their 'privileged' Canadian sisters.

To work effectively in conjunction with the church to realize the goals of the Forward Movement, the PWMS asked for a "closer link" between itself and the

"the view that individual salvation depended on the collective cleansing of society as a whole... eventually [becoming] a constituent element of social gospelism."

¹⁰⁴ "Admission of Women to the Ministry," Editorial. Christian Guardian Vol. LXXXIX. No. 34 (October 1918): 5.

¹⁰⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 280. Also, PWMS High River, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 132, Box 4. Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, March 5, 1919, 30.

¹⁰⁶ UCA, PAA. PWMS High River, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 132, Box 4. Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, March 5, 1919, 30.

¹⁰⁷ Miss Caroline Macdonald, "Canadian Woman Ordained an Elder in The Japanese Presbyterian Church." The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 10 (October 1921): 234. The Japanese Presbyterian Church had passed this ruling at its General Assembly in 1920. The United Church permitted women to become elders in 1928. United Church of Canada Yearbook, 1928, 121.

Assembly's Boards.¹⁰⁸ This was granted in 1921, when three PWMS representatives took their place on the Executive Board.¹⁰⁹ The society was eager to participate in the future planning of the church's affairs, and of "placing before such a body ... the scope of our activities as a whole."¹¹⁰ Members also hoped to facilitate cooperation between the PWMS and the church and to "prevent any tendency of the W.M.S. to become isolated from the main body."¹¹¹ That is, the organization was not necessarily seeking further independence through equality, but a more effective voice within the church organization. In 1922, the Presbyterian church ruled that "[w]omen who have graduated at theological colleges will not receive a license to preach."¹¹² In its decision, the Board argued there was no current demand for women's ordination and although a ministry of women had existed in the past, there was no historical precedent for full ordination of women. The assembly,

recognized gladly and thankfully the ministry of women in both an official and non-official capacity, in many of the church's work, but was not prepared to direct that women be ordained to the office of the ministry in view of the intimacy, the variety, the gravity and the burdensome nature of the work on one side, and in view of the liquidation necessarily involved in the fact of sex on the other.¹¹³

In 1923, Lydia Gruchy, a member of the Presbyterian church, became the first woman to qualify for ordination in that church. Even with the support of Saskatoon Presbytery and Dr. E. H. Oliver, principal of St. Andrew's College, she was refused ordination.¹¹⁴ Mrs. John MacGillivray, national President of the Presbyterian WMS, spoke out about the controversy attaching more importance to women's participation in church courts than to their inability to preach from the pulpit,

[w]e are not pleading for women to enter the pulpit, (though the public press

¹⁰⁸ "President of W.M.S. Urges Members to Renewed Activity," Edmonton Journal, 1 May 1919, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ "Editorial," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VII, No. 6 (June 1921): 160.

¹¹⁰ "Editorial," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 7-8-9. (Jul/Aug/Sept 1921): 200.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹¹² "Presbyterian Law on Divorce Is Not Changed," Edmonton Bulletin, 9 June 1922, front page.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, front page.

¹¹⁴ Valerie J. Korinek, "No Women Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church, 1918-65," Canadian Historical Review Vol. LXXIV, No. 4 (1993): 473-509.

headlines would understand it so). Our women are conservative on that point, but where the need arises and she is academically prepared, and is actually doing the Church's work ... why should recognition be withheld in the courts of the Church? Has the day not come also when the relationship of the Women's Board of the W.M.S. to the Assembly's Mission Boards should be co-operative rather than auxiliary?¹¹⁵

Despite these setbacks, a report from Winnifred Mission, thirty miles southwest of Calgary, noted that "Mrs. (Rev.) W. J. Rayner, in the absence of the pastor, conducted the whole service in a most acceptable manner. The address, which traced the work of the Society from the beginning was both interesting and inspiring."¹¹⁶ In some quarters of the PWMS at least, the inhibitions against women in the pulpit were abating.

It was generally conceded that "advocates for women's ordination were often from western Canada" where the need for ministers was greatest and the feminist leadership the most aggressive.¹¹⁷ Methodist advocates of ordination such as Nellie McClung and Louise McKinney, argued that as women gained entry to other professions the ministry would not be exempt; that "the opposition which is voiced against their entry now is just one hundred years late, and should have been directed against their learning to read for that is where the trouble started."¹¹⁸ While many churchwomen supported the arguments of McClung and others for the right of women to enjoy full participation in all venues of church endeavours, conservative members of the WMS defended their organization from any moves toward integration. They believed it would only be a question of time until the independence of the WMS would be compromised within the church. McClung, an ardent advocate of women's rights and honorary president of the Alberta MWMS for several years, was not an elected officer of the society. Therefore, while she was

¹¹⁵ "The Women of the Church, 1864-1924," *The Missionary Messenger* Vol. XI, No. 7 (Jul/Aug 1924): 200. See Margaret Whitehead, "Let the Women Keep Silence: Women Missionary Preaching in British Columbia, 1860s-1940s," 117-135, *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*. Whitehead recounts a similar situation in British Columbia missions where Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican women were preaching, limited only by domestic constraints and male control.

¹¹⁶ "Alberta Provincial Society," *The Missionary Messenger* Vol. XII, No. 1 (January 1925): 20-1.

¹¹⁷ Valerie J. Korinek, "No Women Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church, 1918-65", 486 & 491.

¹¹⁸ British Columbia Archives. McClung, Box 1, File 7, Add Mss, 10 Box 1. "The Ordination Debate in Calgary." n. p.

sympathetic to the mission cause and a devoted supporter of the church, she was able to exercise more freedom in her outspoken public addresses if she maintained her independence. Correspondingly, while the AWMS enjoyed the benefits of McClung's popularity, her personal opinions about women's rights in the church were not shared by all of its members.

Women of the MWMS dealt with the ban on ordination by noting that "Jesus taught his disciples to pray, not preach."¹¹⁹ This interpretation reaffirmed women's unique relationship with God as His appointed disciples through their devotion to prayer. It also effectively undermined the authority of male preachers. McKinney, attending the Toronto General Conference in 1922, the first year in which women were permitted as delegates, voiced her support for the ordination of unmarried women.¹²⁰ The proposal for ordination was rejected that year and once again at the 1928 General Council meeting of the United Church, when the president of the WMS stated unequivocally, "[y]ou have not asked us what we think of the ordination of women - and it is just as well. You will find us very conservative."¹²¹ As late as 1935, Rev. H. A. Kent, principal of Queen's Theological College and an opponent of women's ordination, argued that the UCWMS did not support women in the ministry.¹²² He noted, "I speak with knowledge when I say that many of the most devoted, capable and generous members of the Woman's Missionary Society are vehemently opposed to the proposal."¹²³

¹¹⁹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 12th annual meeting, June 7-10, 1921, 352.

¹²⁰ "Women Have Right in Pulpit Declares Mrs. L. C. McKinney," Lethbridge Herald, 28 September 1922, front page. See also Mary Hallett & Marilyn Davis, Firing the Heather: The Life and Times of Nellie McClung, 197. McKinney was also an honorary president of the MWMS in Alberta at this time. McClung and McKinney became honorary presidents together in 1921. McClung remained one until Union while McKinney became first vice-president in 1925 relinquishing the former position.

¹²¹ Nellie McClung, "Shall Women Preach?" Chatelaine (September 1934): 14-15. McClung does not identify the speaker. Carol L. Hancock, "Nellie L. McClung: A part of a pattern," 202-215. In Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West, states that "the woman was only making a personal comment ... not representing the WMS position." 215. However, she provides no evidence to support her conclusion. See also Mary Hallett & Marilyn Davis, Firing the Heather: The Life and Times of Nellie McClung, 204. The authors identify the speaker as the president of the WMS.

¹²² Rev. H. A. Kent, M.A., D.D., "The Ordination of Women: A Reply to Principal Oliver," New Outlook Vol. 11, No. 11 (March 13, 1935): 258-9. This was a rebuttal to an article by Edmund H. Oliver, "The Ordination of Women," New Outlook Vol. 11, No. 9 (February 27, 1935): 210.

¹²³ Rev. H. A. Kent, M.A., D.D., "The Ordination of Women: A Reply to Principal Oliver," New Outlook Vol. 11, No. 11 (March 13, 1935): 258-9.

In 1928, an article appearing in the Missionary Monthly had concluded, "[t]here is no doubt that a quiet revolution is taking place concerning the part women will take in the work of the local churches of the future, and in all the larger boards and federated societies which combine for greater efficiency."¹²⁴ The article suggested that if future missionary societies would include both men and women, it would enable "great matters of economy in administration, the merging of missionary magazines, equal standards which will look only to the fitness of the individual to the task, irrespective of sex"¹²⁵ However, conservative evangelicals knew that this would also extinguish the independent women's society which held jurisdiction over its own, virtually independent, area of church endeavour. With or without ordination, these AWMS members assumed that "God [is] using us... to deliver men from sin. Not only are we to be Christians ourselves but Saviors of the world with Jesus."¹²⁶ However, the forces of liberalism within the United Church prevailed and women were granted full rights within the church. For the first time, "women members of the session" assisted the pastor in conducting the communion service at the eleventh annual Alberta Conference Branch meeting held in Edmonton, March 3-6, 1936.¹²⁷ A few months later, Lydia Gruchy was ordained as the first female minister of the United Church.¹²⁸

Women of the AWMS, belonged to a spiritually-motivated organization which attempted to advance God's work through prayer and good works. The cornerstone of their work was based upon reinforcing the reproductive and nurturing responsibilities of women within a transforming urban society. By retaining gender exclusivity in the

¹²⁴ "Women in the Church," The Missionary Monthly Vol. 3, No. 2 (March 1928): 98. This was in response to a report by the joint committee representing the Council of Women for Home Missions, the Federation of Woman's Boards of Foreign Missions, and the Federal Council of the Churches, dealing with the "Relative Place of Women in the Church." This report was published in the Federal Council Bulletin, n.d.

¹²⁵ "Women in the Church," The Missionary Monthly Vol. 3, No. 2 (March 1928): 98.

¹²⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, May 24 -26, 1932, 360.

¹²⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 11th annual meeting, March 3-6, 1936, 124.

¹²⁸ Lydia Gruchy, "A Message from Our First Woman Minister," United Church Record and Missionary Review Vol. XII, No. 11 (December 1936): 15. Her ordination took place on November 4, 1936. See also two earlier articles, Eva M. Ferguson, "Canada's First Woman Minister: Miss Lydia Gruchy Ordained," The New Outlook Vol. 12, No. 45 (November 4, 1936): 1015 & 1026. And Rev. T. H. Sendall, "The Ordination of Miss Gruchy," The New Outlook Vol. 12, No. 47 (November 18, 1936): 1059.

societies, they affirmed women's unique role as conservators of Christian values through and beyond the family environment. As a 'church within a church' many members felt they did not require the sanction of ordination to fulfill their women's ministry. Indeed, they believed further integration between the United Church and the WMS would seriously compromise the autonomy of the latter. They idealized the lives of missionary women and their accomplishments in order to attract young women to a life of service and sacrifice in the work of the society. Through these years, God was an amenable silent partner, enabling them to advance their work in His name. By dealing directly with Him and circumventing the troublesome dictates of a patriarchal church, they attempted to broaden their moral governance beyond the realm of family to the wider community. The strategies employed by the woman's missionary societies in Alberta to realize their objectives in home mission fields are explored in the chapter to follow.

Chapter 5
'Spiritual Enthusiasm and Missionary Zeal':
Implementation of the Missionary Enterprise, 1918-39

Home mission work in Alberta was based on the foreign mission paradigm of gaining entry to a community for evangelizing purposes through the good-will generated by medical and educational aid. When immigrants with a different language, culture and religion arrived in Alberta, homesteading in block settlements, the worst fears of the Protestant majority were realized. They perceived that the 'unifying' homogeneity of Anglo-Saxon society was under siege by foreign elements and latent anxieties of 'race suicide' re-surfaced. Consequently, medical missions and school homes were established by the AWMS to Canadianize and Christianize the 'heathens' on Alberta's doorstep through benevolent surveillance and intervention.¹ In the words of Nellie McClung, "it's for the church of God to decide whether Canada will be a nation or a mob."² This chapter argues that a significant shift in the mission orientation of the AWMS became evident during the interwar years, when a more secular objective of cultural assimilation through education eclipsed the former goal of evangelization. During the pre-war years, Protestant mission policy had advocated the Christian conquest of the world. However,

¹ Cynthia R. Commachio. "Nations are Built of Babies": Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children 1900-1940, 49. The author uses the term "surveillance" referring to the intrusive home visits of public health nurses in Ontario. See also, Michael Owen, "Lighting the Pathways for New Canadians': Methodist and United Church WMS Missions in Eastern Alberta, 1904-1940," 1-18. In Standing on New Ground: Women in Alberta edited by C. A. Cavanaugh and R. R. Warne (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993), 9. The subversive aspect of assimilation is noted by the author where Wahstao teacher Alice Stanford discussed the essential advantages of school homes over public schools, where "missionaries had unrestricted access to and control over the children." Mary Anne MacFarlane, "Educating, Sanctifying and Regulating Motherhood: The Cradle Roll Department in Methodist Sunday Schools," 167-191. In Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers Volume 9 (Toronto, 1993), 172. MacFarlane describes the Cradle Roll as "provid[ing] a legitimate entry point into people's homes with which to define the desirable aspects of home life and especially mothering." The "monitoring and constructing" of Methodist ideals of motherhood was facilitated by the removal of children to school homes away from the deleterious influences of Ruthenian family life. Also Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1991), 121. In her analysis of the Presbyterian Department of the Stranger, Valverde notes the "system of surveillance" which characterized this work begun by Mrs. Ethel West, an executive officer of the Woman's Missionary Society.

² "For Church of God to Decide Whether Canada Will Be Nation or a Mob' Declared Mrs. McClung," Medicine Hat Weekly News, 18 November 1920, p. 10.

the basic tenets of the women's missionary enterprise were being undermined by nationalists who challenged the Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism implicit in both the foreign and home mission work of Christian missionaries. Criticism levied against them by nationalist Ukrainian groups in Canada caused members of the AWMS to "rethink [their]... missionary work."³ The nationalist groups challenged the right of missionaries to impose their values of Christianity upon another Christian church. As the interwar period progressed an acknowledgement of international pluralities replaced pre-war imperialism, encouraging "Canadian missionaries and clergymen to engage in a genuine dialogue with peoples of their cultures and religions."⁴ As a result, AWMS leaders endorsed the idea of a more tolerant and respectful attitude in their mission study, stressing an appreciation of "the beautiful in the lives and customs of non-Christian peoples, instead of laying bare only the misery and drudgery."⁵ While immigrants determinedly resisted religious proselytizing, many of them took advantage of the educational opportunities afforded their children by the mission schools. This concession moved them a step closer towards cultural assimilation. Consequently, although the number of conversions remained low, the AWMS regarded its home missions in Alberta as a success.⁶ Moreover, the proliferation of 'experts' competing for the mission-related fields of medicine, social work and teaching accelerated this shift towards secularization, thus subverting the previously sacrosanct moral authority which validated the power of the AWMS.⁷

³ Margaret Addison quoted in Owen. "Lighting the Pathways for New Canadians': Methodist and United Church WMS Missions in Eastern Alberta, 1904-1940," 6.

⁴ Wright, 176.

⁵ UCA, PAA. WMS United Church Alberta Conference Branch, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 327, Box 11. Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, May 21-24, 1928. 212. Mrs. A. D. Richard, secretary for Affiliated C.G.I.T. Groups, speaking on Y.W.A. and Circles.

⁶ Orest T. Martynowych. The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890-1930: A History. Occasional Paper No. 10, Historic Sites Service, March 1985. 200. "In 1931 only 5,400 Ukrainians belonged to the United and Presbyterian Churches in Canada. About 810 United Church members lived in Alberta." Also, "Reports of Branch Meetings: Alberta Branch," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLV, No. 8 (August 1925), 184. Nellie McClung describes the Woman's Missionary Society as "a great international organization and educational society", but not as an evangelical one.

⁷ Comacchio, "Nations are Built of Babies": Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940. Comacchio investigates the appropriation of child nurture and family health from the female-ordered private sphere to the public sphere under the aegis of male doctors and an increasingly interventionist government. See also Hill, 117.

Social and political unrest in post-war Alberta contributed to a further re-alignment of AWMS mission priorities. The uncertainties of a vacillating economy were exacerbated by high rates of immigration, labour radicalism, agrarian reform, and population migration. Contentious moral and religious issues such as prohibition and church union added to the turmoil of the twenties. The rise of fundamentalism under the leadership of William Aberhart and others in the 1930s altered the religious milieu which had been conducive to women's active participation in church and public life. Fundamentalism "defined religious orthodoxy as a masculine enterprise" refuting the spiritual superiority or equality of women, contradicting the Victorian cult of ideal womanhood.⁸ As these issues began to emerge, Rev. A. C. Farrell, Missionary Secretary of the Alberta Conference, reminded AWMS members that the need was "to prove that the gospel we recommend to foreign lands can save us at home. We must put our own house in order before turning our attention to other households."⁹ The first item of business for this national housecleaning was the one-way assimilation of foreign immigrants.¹⁰ The assimilation of these groups of newcomers would prevent a "premature intermingling of races [which would cause] ... moral, physical, intellectual and social decay" in the Anglo-Saxon race.¹¹ Home mission workers of the Presbyterian church described assimilation as the "near 'obliteration of ethnic differences' through education."¹²

Negative stereotypes of Ruthenian immigrants contributed to the sense of urgency which characterized the pursuit of home mission work by the women's missionary societies on the northern frontiers of Alberta where the majority of immigrants were situated. Missionaries were initially concerned with health issues in the overcrowded

⁸ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 3.

⁹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 16th annual meeting, May 26-29, 1925, 65.

¹⁰ The term 'one way' suggests that the Anglo-Saxon community would not experience any transformation through contact with the Ruthenians.

¹¹ Owen. "Keeping Canada God's Country": Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 188. Also, Valverde, 107.

¹² Owen. "Keeping Canada God's Country": Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children." 188.

living quarters where large families inhabited sparse one-room dwellings with earthen floors. The necessity of educating immigrant women to the minimum standards of sanitation and proper diet was a top priority to protect "God's first institution - the home."¹³ The ethnocentrism of the Anglo-Saxon workers resulted in their ascribing the poor conditions to superstition and ignorance on the part of European peasants rather than to the harsh realities of homesteading on the prairie.¹⁴ Ruthenian social traditions of dancing, drinking, and the custom of marriages for girls as young as fourteen were an anathema to AWMS women.¹⁵ The contentious issues were exacerbated at the 1918 convention of Methodist Ruthenian workers which included a discussion of the "lack of morals among many of these new citizens."¹⁶ One member suggested that "the government ought to compel divisions in the sleeping quarters to provide for privacy and to permit the growth of modesty."¹⁷

While a long-standing denominational rivalry between Protestant and Roman Catholic churches created a climate of mistrust, further suspicions arose as missionaries became increasingly sensitive to the potential spread of Bolshevism within the settlements.¹⁸ They feared a dangerous combination of ignorance and illiteracy on behalf of the immigrants would lead to their political manipulation by atheistic Communists, resulting in the eradication of churches as well as the suppression of democratic

¹³ The United Church of Canada Yearbook, 1926, 351. Since problems of nutrition and health were endemic to the poor, middle-class reformers found it an effective means to initiate cooperation and good-will.

¹⁴ Vivian Olender, "The Canadian Methodist Church and the Gospel of Assimilation, 1900-1925," Journal of Ukrainian Studies Vol. 7, No. 2 (Fall 1982): 61-74. While Olender's work is very polemical, it does provide an alternate perception to the home mission work of the Methodist church.

¹⁵ Gregory Robinson, "Rougher Than Any Other Nationality? Ukrainian Canadians and Crime in Alberta, 1915-1929," 214-230. In Age of Contention: Readings in Canadian Social History, 1900-1945, edited by Jeffrey Keshen (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1997), 227. Robinson sums up the Anglo-Canadian reaction to drinking and brawling at Ukrainian weddings, christening parties, and funeral receptions. They regarded it as an "abomination" of Christian rites and sacraments. He notes that this fueled efforts for temperance, prohibition, and Sabbatarianism causes among nativists.

¹⁶ "Northern Alberta Letter." Christian Guardian, Vol. LXXIX, No. 36 (September 4, 1918). 17.

¹⁷ Ibid., 17.

¹⁸ "Busy Days Before Christmas at Kolokreeka," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (February 1924): 42-3. The Methodist WMS was not reticent to challenge the authority of the Catholic Church over the Ruthenians concluding "[t]here is no truth in the charge that this people as such does not want to become an integral part of our nation. It is true that the Roman Church does not want them to

government. The Methodist church believed subversive ideas were communicated through the circulation of Ukrainian language newspapers. Therefore, it was crucial to teach the coming generation English, to reduce the viability of this threat.¹⁹ Political tensions had been exacerbated during World War I, when the War Times Election Act of 1917 rescinded the right of 'enemy aliens' to vote. The hostile treatment of many immigrants during the war, including confinement in internment camps, resulted in a resentment which "resurfaced at the end of the war in their support for radical political organizations."²⁰ Consequently, interventionist measures were devised to rehabilitate the Christian social order of the province which the AWMS perceived was succumbing to the combined onslaught of modernization and immigration.

During the interwar years, health professionals in Canada were becoming aware of the high rates of infant and maternal mortality among the poor throughout the country.²¹ Dr. Archer, Superintendent of Lamont Hospital, cited a fifty to sixty per cent mortality rate of babies in the immigrant communities.²² Workers believed the babies were not receiving sufficient milk due to their parents' ignorance of nutrition.²³ There were fears that without knowledge of the modern rules of contagion, diseases such as

become an enlightened part of the nation - but that only means that we must be cleverer than the church. And we shall have the people almost to a man on our side."

¹⁹ "How 'New Canadians' Get Their News," *The Missionary Outlook* Vol. XL, No. 2 (February 1920): 30. The commentary argued that foreign language newspapers "perpetuate those racial differences which hinder assimilation of foreign elements in Canadian national life." Readers were reminded that "because of their anti-Allied attitude" during the war, many of the papers were suppressed. The *Outlook* simplistically concluded that "[s]hould their readers master English, their circulation would disappear."

²⁰ Palmer with Palmer, 173. See also Bill Waiser, "Aliens," 3-47. In *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1995). Waiser concludes that the Borden government implemented internment camps to control the large numbers of unemployed and restive European workers gathering in urban centres, who had provided a temporary labour force for the development of railways and resource industries in the country. Despite investigations by the RNWMP completed in February, 1915 which found no basis for allegations of subversive activities, the internment of unemployed unnaturalized aliens proceeded. The government later explained its action as a panacea for the workers' plight, as it provided them with work and shelter, while protecting them from the hostility of Canadians during the conflict.

²¹ See Commachio, "Nations Are Built of Babies": *Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940* and Katherine Arnup et al, editors, *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).

²² "Dr. Archer Tells of Conditions In Non-English Speaking Colony," *Edmonton Journal*, 10 June 1920, p. 8 & 11. Lamont Hospital was established by the Methodist Home Mission Board and funded in part by the AWMS.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 8 & 11.

whooping-cough would decimate the infant population in the Ruthenian colony.²⁴ The MWMS requested the Department of Public Health to "undertake the publication of pamphlets in the Ruthenian language dealing with questions of general health and the care of children."²⁵ Dr. Archer expressed his concerns about the lack of professional medical care for women in childbirth, stating, "[n]ot more than one per cent of the mothers are attended by a doctor during confinement. Probably less than fifty per cent have anyone whom even among themselves, is considered a competent midwife ... If everything goes alright, the mother lives; if not, she dies."²⁶ An additional health concern was the prevalence of tuberculosis among immigrants which was attributed to their housing conditions and their ignorance of how to avert the disease. Archer's suggestion that there were more cases of tuberculosis in the colony than could be accommodated in the new government sanitarium signified the gravity of the situation in his opinion.²⁷ PWMS mission work was divided between two groups in Alberta, the Ruthenians at Vegreville, and the French-Canadian settlement at Bonnyville.

A mission hospital was opened on October 13, 1917 at Bonnyville, in an area "once bitter towards any Protestant settlers."²⁸ Working among the French Canadians, Rev. J. E. Duclos, his wife, and a nurse, Miss Jean Stewart, had treated seventy-four cases as of September, 1918.²⁹ Miss Stewart reported in a letter to the Missionary Messenger that in June, six French Roman Catholic men and women had converted to Presbyterianism, confirming the missionary's belief that "the Hospital is an open door for

²⁴ "Northern Alberta Letter," Christian Guardian Vol. LXXIX, No. 33 (August 14, 1918): 22.

²⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 11th annual meeting, June 8-11, 1920, 330. The Federal Department of Health was established in 1919 and its Division of Child Welfare subsequently in 1920 as a response to the dismally high mortality rates of WWI and the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-19. See "Introduction," xiii-xxiv, Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Commachio. Nations are Built of Babies": Saving Ontario's Mothers and Children, 1900-1940, 3. Commachio concurs that scientific motherhood emerged from the impact of World War I as a means to "save mothers and infants and improve national health."

²⁶ "Dr. Archer Tells of Conditions In Non-English Speaking Colony," Edmonton Journal, 10 June 1920, p. 8. & 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8 & 11.

²⁸ Janet T. MacGillivray, "Seeing Our Work at First Hand," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 11 (December 1922): 649.

²⁹ "Letters from the Field," The Missionary Messenger Vol. V, No. 8 (September 1918): 251.

the Gospel, as well as a means of relief to the suffering body." ³⁰ Mission hospitals were often the only source of medical care for accident victims or the seriously-ill since "there was no doctor nearer than St. Paul, forty miles south, and no nurse nearer than Vegreville, a hundred miles away." ³¹ By 1921, a Presbyterian church had been built where services were conducted in French and English by agreement of the congregation, two school homes were functioning in Edmonton, and plans were made for creating the additional medical unit at Cold Lake, two hundred miles north east of Edmonton. ³² The volume of cases handled in the Presbyterian medical outposts reveals the service they rendered to the settlements, for example, the "Katherine H. Prittie" hospital in Grande Prairie admitted two hundred and twenty-five patients over the year and delivered forty-one babies; the "Rolland M. Boswell" Hospital in Vegreville cared for two hundred and sixty-eight patients; Bonnyville treated two hundred and fifty-one patients, and Cold Lake provided home nursing in the district. ³³ Typically, evangelical work was inextricably interwoven with hospital care, as a description of Bonnyville indicates,

[f]amily worship is held every morning after breakfast and the whole staff, nurses and servants, meet, as well as convalescent patients who desire to attend ... people who had never read the Bible now read it in the ward frequently. When Rev. Mr. Duclos is not present at the Hospital, Miss Shipley [Lady Superintendent] conducts family worship. The Hospital has the confidence and patronage of Roman Catholics as well as Protestants. ³⁴

Despite the strong opposition encountered by placing the intrusive presence of a Protestant mission in a predominantly Catholic area, the PWMS was pleased with the progress of the mission enterprise at Bonnyville.

³⁰ Ibid., 251.

³¹ "Bonnyville Hospital," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 1. (January 1922): 328-9.

³² Janet T. MacGillivray, "Seeing Our Work at First Hand or Ten Weeks on the Trail," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 11 (December 1922): 649-651. See also "Alberta Provincial Society: Edmonton Presbyterian Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 3 (March 1921): 88-9.

³³ "Our Work in Canada," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 5 (May 1921): 135. For comparative purposes see Raymond R. Smith, "A heritage of healing: Church hospital and medical work in Manitoba, 1900-1977," Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West, 265-282.

³⁴ "Our Work in Canada," The Missionary Messenger Vol. XII, No. 5 (May 1925): 144.

The PWMS started a Girls' School Home to accommodate children from Bonnyville in Edmonton in 1920, enabling them to attend public school. Mrs. Duclos organized the efforts to find a house, "to furnish [it] with our own furniture ... the girls themselves to do the housework - thus saving the Society the salaries of a matron and maid, and the cost of furnishing for the first year."³⁵ The students who ranged in age from ten to fifteen years, were taught a Bible lesson in French each day. With their experience living in a modern home, acquiring an education and learning English, the PWMS hoped that they would return to their homes able to lift their community "to a higher plane of Christian living."³⁶ Missionaries described the homes as 'families', justifying their intervention through woman's moral authority and motherhood. There was no evident concern regarding the isolation or homesickness which must have been experienced by young children so recently removed from their homes, families, and culture. By 1922, a Boy's Home had been opened in addition to the Girls' Home in Edmonton. Though the Homes had been founded primarily to convert the French-Canadian settlement, the PWMS soon provided schooling for an ethnic mix of French, Scandinavian, English, Scots and Canadian children.³⁷ In both 1924 and 1925, reports indicate that the Homes were filled to capacity with thirty-four children, with many others turned away. Three years after amalgamation, children in the Edmonton Homes moved closer to their parents in Bonnyville, where two buildings were remodelled for the use of the PWMS. Thirty-five students were in residence in January, 1929. Justifying the mission impulse, a PWMS history noted, "[a]t the beginning of term, there were always a few who came to the Homes in very poor physical condition, due to lack of proper food and care. In a short time, they were strong, well and happy."³⁸ Many of the problems which missionaries

³⁵ Mrs. J. E. Duclos, "Our New School Home for Girls in Edmonton," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VII, No. 10 (November 1920): 239. Also Laycock, 11. It was not unusual for home schools to waive the costs of boarding students for families who could not afford to pay, or to take barter in produce in lieu of funds.

³⁶ Mrs. J. E. Duclos, "Our New School Home for Girls in Edmonton," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VII, No. 10 (November 1920): 242.

³⁷ "Our Work in Canada: Edmonton, Alta," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 5 (May 1922): 455. Specifically noted to include 12 French children, 3 Scandinavian, 2 English, 1 Scots and 1 Canadian child.

³⁸ History of the WMS in Alberta, 63.

interpreted as a lack of care, were caused by poverty not necessarily by a lack of concern on behalf of parents.³⁹

Members of the PWMS were alarmed as they learned of the high rate of illiteracy discovered by professionals working with the Ruthenians. Dr. Archer cited an average rate of literacy at twenty per cent for men, and at ten per cent for women.⁴⁰ This caused concern both for the welfare of the individuals who were vulnerable to fraud as well as for the political future of the province. Fears of unscrupulous Bolshevik radicals usurping the processes of democratic government by manipulating the immigrant vote were expressed by leaders of both churches and AWMS officers. Dr. Archer commended the efforts of New Canadians who sought to educate themselves under difficult circumstances.⁴¹ He believed that a Canadian education with its traditional alignment of church and school, would inculcate desirable cultural and ultimately, Christian values in its recipients.⁴² In the winter of 1918, the PWMS bought block 28 in the Mount Pleasant sub-division in Vegreville which was large enough to contain twenty-two lots on which to build their school home for girls. Although the Presbyterian church had established three boys' homes and one girls' home in Vegreville, the need was considered very great for another girls' school.⁴³ With their belief in the importance of a mother's influence on

³⁹ Vivian Olender, "'Save Them for the Nation': Methodist Rural Home Missions As Agencies of Assimilation," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* Vol. 8, No. 2 (Winter 1983): 38-51. See "Introduction." In *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. According to the changing ideology of motherhood, these immigrant mothers would have failed in their 'natural' task of caring for their children and would require the assistance of professional health care workers to remedy the problem. Also see Comacchio, 10 & 202. "Ill health was largely due to poor choices, ignorance, incorrect behavior - in short, to personal deficiency now labelled 'inefficiency.'" She notes the counterproductive results of attitudes exhibited by doctors and those of the middle-class supporting them, "who employed humanitarian arguments and displays of moral superiority to further their cause without considering the repercussions for those whom they professed to help", in this case, the Ruthenians.

⁴⁰ "Dr. Archer Tells of Conditions In Non-English Speaking Colony," *Edmonton Journal*, 10 June 1920, p. 8 & 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Archer noted the detrimental effects of the loss of the vote for loyal Ruthenians during the war, stating it would "take years to get these people back where they will feel they are as integral a part of Canada as they did before ... it was a great misfortune."

⁴² Owen. "'Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 189.

⁴³ "Editorial Notes," *The Missionary Messenger* Vol. V, No. 1 (January 1918): 4-5. In 1910, a home for 12 boys was established for Vegreville students, while in 1911 a school home for 13 girls was founded. Subsequently in 1912, two additional homes provided accommodation for another 20 boys.

her children, members of the PWMS realized the need for Ruthenian girls to be well-educated in 'English ways.' They assumed that "[o]nly if educated in a 'Christian' and Canadian home environment would the homes of these young Ruthenian women be 'refined.'"⁴⁴ The Superintendent, Rev. R. G. Lang, described the home as housing twenty-two girls in two dormitories on the second floor with the potential for a further fifteen beds in the attic area. There was a small sick room as well as lockers providing storage for the girls' possessions.⁴⁵ To reduce overhead costs, the reserve land not used by the building itself was utilized to grow feed for the stock and vegetable gardens.⁴⁶ As the children entering the homes did not speak English upon their arrival, their assimilation experience began with the suppression of their first language and the acquisition of English.⁴⁷ Miss Johnson, matron of the Girls' Home, reiterated a prevalent view when she remarked that "[o]ur policy should be to make them Canadian citizens; only the English language should be taught."⁴⁸ The repressive language policy was somewhat mitigated by the fact that the Vegreville school offered Ukrainian language instruction in order to improve speech and written grammar.⁴⁹ At the close of 1921, the Girls' Home

⁴⁴ Owen, "Keeping Canada God's Country': Presbyterian school-homes for Ruthenian children," 195.

⁴⁵ During the influenza epidemic of 1918, children were sent home, and the Girls' Home became a hospital. Reports indicate that the death rate among immigrants was very high. See Rev. G. R. Lang, B. A., "Spanish Influenza at Vegreville," The Missionary Messenger Vol. V, No. 11 (December 1918): 352 and Miss Harriet Johnson, "Letters from the Field. Canada: Vegreville Girls' Home a Temporary Hospital," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 2 (February 1919): 49.

⁴⁶ "Editorial Notes," The Missionary Messenger Vol. V, No. 1 (January 1918): 4-5.

⁴⁷ "Mrs. D. G. McQueen Reelected President Provincial W.M.S.," Edmonton Journal, 2 May 1919, p. 20. Ukrainian language instruction had been a contentious issue in Alberta since at least 1913 when the "Great Ruthenian School Revolt" occurred. Trouble erupted when Ukrainian school trustees preferred to retain non-qualified Ukrainian teachers as opposed to hiring qualified non-Ukrainian speaking teachers. See Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Ruthenian Schools in Western Canada, 1897-1919," 39-58. In Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West, edited by David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan, Robert M. Stamp. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1979), 54. The Methodist WMS was well aware of the teacher controversy concluding, "Owing to strong Ukrainian prejudice, many school boards are employing Ukrainian teachers. Some few of these are sympathetic with our work, but the majority prove a hindrance to the Canadianizing of the children under them." From "Busy Days Before Christmas at Kolokreeka," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (February 1924): 42-3.

⁴⁸ "Alberta Provincial Society: Edmonton Presbyterial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. V, No. 4 (April 1918): 118-9.

⁴⁹ Martynowych, 199. In comparison, the Methodists were less compromising in their attitudes towards language instruction until later years. See "Mrs. A. M. Scott President W.M.S.," Calgary Daily Herald, 23 May 1929, p. 13. A resolution was passed by the Alberta UCWMS "[t]hat a year of language

accommodated children ages seven through fifteen years, including thirteen Ruthenians, and one each of German, French and Scots origin.⁵⁰ To help offset the costs of residential education, PWMS Auxiliaries were encouraged to provide support for students.⁵¹ By 1924, the Boys' Homes, deteriorating with age, had been closed, and a new structure built on the same lot as the Girls' Home.⁵² In 1925, the two homes had a combined attendance of forty-five children, including eight girls and six boys of high school age. In addition, a Mission Band with an average attendance of fifty children held monthly meetings.⁵³

Primary missions of the MWMS in Alberta included school homes at Wahstao, Kolokreeka, Radway and the Ruthenian Home for Girls in Edmonton. By 1918, a large building had replaced the original five-room structure at Wahstao. There were approximately eighteen children registered for the winter school in 1918, with forty applications pending.⁵⁴ The pupils resident at the Wahstao Boarding School followed the public school curriculum with additional instruction in domestic science, and religious studies.⁵⁵ Originally, public schools ran only during the summer months when university students were available to teach in them. With the long lapse of instruction over the winter, it was difficult for children to retain their knowledge from one year to the next. The mission schools, which ran during the winter months, were a great improvement upon this. The mission workers noted, "[a]t first the novelty of going to school claimed attendance and when this wore off the law compelling eight months' school attendance came to the rescue."⁵⁶ Problems in school attendance were caused by the need for immigrant families to utilize their children's labour as part of the domestic economy they

instruction in Ukrainian be given an evangelical worker before commencing her work among the Ukrainian people."

⁵⁰ "Editorial Notes," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VIII, No. 12 (December 1921): 290.

⁵¹ "Provincial Presbyterian W.M.S. Gratified With Past Year's Work," Edmonton Journal, 28 March 1923, p. 19. For example, in 1923, Nanao and Patricia each sent in \$50.00 to help with these costs.

⁵² "Formal Opening of Boys' Home, Vegreville," The Missionary Messenger Vol. X, No. 4 (April 1923): 110.

⁵³ "Our Work in Canada: School Homes in Western Canada: Vegreville, Alta," The Missionary Messenger Vol. XII, No. 5 (May 1925): 145.

⁵⁴ "Alberta's Home Missionaries Are Doing Excellent Work," Edmonton Journal, 7 June 1918, p. 14.

⁵⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 274.

⁵⁶ "Alberta's Home Missionaries Are Doing Excellent Work," Edmonton Journal, 7 June 1918, p. 14.

depended upon to survive and the observance of numerous religious holidays. Cultural differences in attitudes towards education marginalized many immigrant families where, "non-attendance in areas of Ukrainian settlement may be attributed to lack of experience in their homeland with the organization and conduct of a school district, extreme personal hardships, ... and a lack of knowledge of the language, the laws and the institutional forms of the new land."⁵⁷

Evangelical work was conducted via house to house visits, Sunday School work and a Mission Band with ninety members enrolled in 1925.⁵⁸ A MWMS Auxiliary was founded for women of the settlement.⁵⁹ Miss Ethelwyn Chace, missionary at Wahstao, wary of the gradual shift in emphasis towards education and community work, voiced her concerns, stressing that, "[t]he important thing is that the influence of Jesus Christ must be brought to them. Teaching them housekeeping and the care of children is but a mere incidental."⁶⁰ In 1924, there were thirty-three children attending the Boarding School under the supervision of four workers.⁶¹ By 1924, six hundred children had attended the school over the years. Miss Chace observed, "some of the girls and boys who have become converted are regular little missionaries."⁶² The MWMS emphasized that its conversion efforts were focussed on the youngest children, "[o]ne of the salient features of the home is that the girls are allowed religious freedom. Only in cases where the children are very small is any effort made to alter or direct their beliefs."⁶³ The Wahstao School Home was closed in 1937, a casualty of the Depression years and the reduced

⁵⁷ Jaenen, "Ruthenian Schools in Western Canada, 1897-1919," 51.

⁵⁸ "Methodist W.M.S. Convention Deals with Varied Program," Edmonton Bulletin, 28 May 1925, p. 7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁰ "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer at W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16. See Cheri Isabell Rauser. "'Clean Hearts and Clean Homes': The Work of Methodist Women Missionaries Among Ukrainian Immigrants in East-Central Alberta, 1904-1925." Ottawa: Carleton University, M.A. Thesis. 1991. Rauser analyses the attempt to inculcate Protestant domestic ideology as a means to convert and assimilate women and girls of the foreign communities.

⁶¹ "Great Stress Laid On Power of Prayer at W.M.S. Session," Calgary Daily Herald, 6 June 1924, p. 16. Due to a change in regulations, boys over fourteen years were no longer able to attend the school. Some were sent to the United States to continue their studies.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶³ "Our Ruthenian Home at Edmonton," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLIV, No. 9 (September 1924): 208 & 211.

need for church-sponsored residential schooling in the 1930s. Community outreach was subsequently conducted by two workers in Vilna.⁶⁴

Kolokreeka, with a staff of four, provided schooling for students in grades one through seven.⁶⁵ Although boys' education took first priority within the rural communities, the idea of girls' schooling was eventually accepted.⁶⁶ At Kolokreeka, children were discouraged from speaking Ukrainian at all times, and received a picture postcard as a reward for speaking English for the entire day.⁶⁷ Subsequently, the Ukrainian language was taught enabling "children ... [to] carry the lessons learned at the mission to their parents."⁶⁸ Amenities of school life contrasted with the harsh conditions of pioneering, as Elizabeth Hawken, teaching at Kolokreeka observed, "[t]he pump and water system are sources of keenest delight to the children. There is not another pump for miles around. We appreciate the bath-room very much too - especially last winter when the thermometer went down to 64 below, as it did more than once."⁶⁹ Students helped in the domestic tasks of the home, which included baking forty loaves of bread a week in the outdoor clay oven. This required a co-operative effort where,

[a] special tub was brought out and the ingredients for the bread were measured and mixed by the girls in the evening, and left well covered in a warm place till morning. Then the boys, two at a time, with sleeves rolled up, mixed in the flour and used up some excessive energy, punching the dough amid much laughing⁷⁰

The matron's work included giving advice to New Canadians who were unfamiliar with both the language and procedures of government bureaucracy in Alberta.⁷¹ Night classes were conducted for adults three times a week. In 1926, the mission acquired a car to

⁶⁴ Laycock, 13. The building itself was dismantled and reassembled at Vilna to provide a home for the community workers residing there.

⁶⁵ History of WMS in Alberta, 59.

⁶⁶ Laycock, 19. Laycock notes that no girls had completed high school before 1925.

⁶⁷ Olender, "'Save Them for the Nation': Methodist Rural Home Missions As Agencies of Assimilation," 47.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁹ E. Hawken, "One Year's Experience at Kolokreeka," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XXIX, No. 3 (March 1919): 71.

⁷⁰ Laycock, 19.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

facilitate the many miles of travel required for home visits throughout the district. The school at Kolokreeka was closed in 1932 and the students sent to Radway where there was a high school which would accept the senior pupils. A community worker continued to liaison with the settlement after the school closure.

The Ruthenian Home in Edmonton provided shelter for girls arriving in the city until they found suitable employment. Many of them had little money or knowledge of English. The Home taught English as well as housekeeping skills to help the young women find 'respectable' work in domestic service.⁷² Girls attended public school, while mission workers taught kindergarten, sewing classes, fresh air work and child care.⁷³ Miss Gray, matron of the Home, noted that ironically, "[m]any of the foreign girls make as much as our Teachers. For example one girl as cook earns \$50 per month besides her board."⁷⁴ While the administrators of the Home warned the young women away from unsavoury work environments such as cafés and restaurants, there were dangers inherent in domestic service as well where unwary females could be sexually exploited by male family members. However, by 1924, as career opportunities for women expanded, the Home directed its efforts towards helping the thirty-two girls in residence to acquire academic or business schooling at Victoria High School or Alberta College. Mrs. Dever, matron, observed that the girls were expressing disapproval of "early and forced marriages."⁷⁵ She was also pleased with the growth of the Mission Circle of the Home which averaged an attendance of 35 at monthly meetings, demonstrating the success of their assimilation efforts.⁷⁶ Evangelizing was incorporated into the day's routine, "[t]he girls took turns conducting morning worship and in saying grace. Sixteen of the girls joined the Church in one year. Some of the older girls helped in choir and Sunday School" at McDougall Church.⁷⁷ In 1926, a request was made for expansion of the Home

⁷² "Our Ruthenian Home at Edmonton," The Missionary Outlook Vol. XLIV, No. 9 (September 1924): 208 & 211. The article describes free evening classes in English for the Ruthenian girls.

⁷³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 274.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 275.

⁷⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 16th annual meeting, May 26-29, 1925, 59.

⁷⁶ "Methodist W.M.S. Convention Deals With Varied Program," Edmonton Bulletin, 28 May 1925, p. 7.

⁷⁷ History of the WMS in Alberta, 63.

due to overcrowding. However, with the administrative uncertainty in the years after Union this was not approved, and some younger students were sent to board at Kolocreeka.⁷⁸ With the onset of the Depression, the school could not be saved. Taxes rose on the building, while the monthly rate charged for room and board remained at \$10.00.⁷⁹ The Home closed in 1937 and the building was sold to the YWCA for \$2400.00. This token amount was to ensure that the agency would continue to provide services to the Ruthenian girls arriving in Edmonton as required.⁸⁰ By 1935, Wahstao was the only WMS supported school home in Alberta that still maintained a resident teacher.⁸¹

The need for a school home in the Radway area, located half-way between the capital city and Kolocreeka, emerged as the population grew with the arrival of the CNR Railroad from Edmonton to St. Paul de Metis. Radway was a mixed settlement with a majority of Ruthenian settlers. The mission and community work benefited people of many origins, including Finns, Germans, Americans and English.⁸² The school was opened in 1921 and one year later accommodated twenty-five to thirty girls in residence. By 1924, Miss Chace, missionary, reviewed the progress at Radway, on the twentieth anniversary of Ruthenian work. She described the 20,000 voters in the Ruthenian colony as holding the balance of power in the province, noting that forty-two per cent of Alberta's population was foreign-born. The school home was "a centre of power for the whole community" serving as both a school home and church until 1933.⁸³ A horse and buggy had sufficed for transportation over the rough roads until a car was acquired in 1929.⁸⁴ With the 1930s, modern trends towards larger, centralized schools, better roads and school bus services reduced the need for residential school homes.⁸⁵ Consequently,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 62.

⁷⁹ Laycock, 31.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁸¹ "W.M.S. Ends Provincial Conference," Calgary Daily Herald, 15 March 1935, p. 20.

⁸² Laycock, 29.

⁸³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 39. See also History of the WMS in Alberta, 61. A United Church was built in the community in 1933.

⁸⁴ History of the WMS in Alberta, 61.

⁸⁵ Laycock, 29.

educational services at Radway diminished as the centre became a temporary facility housing children briefly as other school homes shut down. By 1937, the school was no longer co-educational, but was used as a residence for girls who wished to attend the high school. It was sold to the local school district in 1946.⁸⁶

Members of the AWMS were compelled to re-align themselves with professionals such as doctors, teachers, and legislators, to retain their influence in social service work.⁸⁷ Their preoccupation with professionalism reflected their motivation to maintain their supremacy in the realm of family and child nurture, in conjunction with the new 'experts'. Their moral authority had been grounded in a spiritual superiority associated with the Victorian ideal of womanhood, however, with the emergence of 'scientific motherhood' they needed to re-establish their credibility in secular terms. In an attempt to do this, the PWMS re-assigned its home mission work to the Social Service Department.⁸⁸ For years, mission society members had worked hard to overcome stereotypes which had served to limit their participation in the public sphere. Rev. Arthur Barner of Calgary praised the Alberta MWMS for their efficient business meeting in 1915, which contrasted greatly with the meeting of the previous year when, "a great deal of time was wasted and ... many of the delegates spent their time in gossiping instead of listening to the proceedings."⁸⁹ Consequently, AWMS officers, committed to the success of their organization, constantly exhorted their members to attain higher levels of education and proficiency in their mission-related tasks. A model Auxiliary was demonstrated for delegates at the 1925 annual meeting by the Hillhurst Auxiliary of Calgary. Points

⁸⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁸⁷ Valverde, 52. Valverde affirms the credibility of these organizations as she discusses the considerable power of private bodies who organized to influence state legislation and policy and that "in the absence of large government bureaucracies and associations of professionals, churches and women's groups commanded a great deal of respect and were in many ways treated as experts, not as opinionated interest groups." See also, Cynthia Comacchio, "'A Postscript for Father': Defining a New Fatherhood in Interwar Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 78, No. 3 (September 1997): 385-408. Comacchio posits that experts became the archetypal fathers, "all-knowing and all-powerful," in the interwar Canadian family. She notes that expert's efforts were focussed primarily on re-defining the role of motherhood with little evidence of prescriptive literature describing an ideology of fatherhood.

⁸⁸ "Excellent Reports of W.M.S. Work at Tenth Convention," *Calgary Daily Herald*, 20 March 1924, p. 18.

⁸⁹ "W.M.S. of Methodist Church in Alberta Meets in City," *Edmonton Daily Bulletin*, 10 June 1915, p. 3.

stressed were that the "meeting started promptly; continued one hour; President took little time; conducted the business well; singing hearty; Scripture reading, papers and prayers distinctly heard."⁹⁰ 'How To' pamphlets or explanatory papers were recommended for members of Auxiliaries on many topics including the planning of district conventions to "Help for Auxiliary, Mission Band, and Other Workers" which explained duties to members.⁹¹ Study books were described by Louise McKinney as "a bond of sympathy between us all over the Dominion" suggesting that "[e]very woman should read the chapter before coming to the meeting to get the best out of it."⁹² Suggestions to aid study included questionnaires prepared by members for the text under study, plays, pageants, lantern slides, mission magazines and the Annual Report.⁹³

As part of their process of self-education, AWMS members presented papers on aspects of mission work to other members of their Auxiliary. The best of these were reproduced and given to the Paper Exchange Secretary either locally, or in Toronto, to be loaned out on request. For example, Mrs. Archer's "eloquent and comprehensive address" on the "Impact of Missions on Ukrainian Life" was sent to Mrs. Frank Rae, Chairman of the Publications Committee, to be reproduced, if necessary at the Branch's expense.⁹⁴ This process strengthened women's public speaking skills and provided a sense of pride in scholarship. Additionally it established a lending library of information about mission work for the society. For newly-founded Auxiliaries whose members were reluctant public speakers, the literature library, listed in the mission magazines, eased the way.⁹⁵ The emphasis on research, learning and public speech diminished for several reasons during the 1930s. Members were using much of their time and energy to cope with the plight of their families and communities during the Depression. Additionally, increased centralization of the Society after amalgamation resulted in a more bureaucratized

⁹⁰ "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. XII, No. 4 (April 1925): 125.

⁹¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 11th annual meeting, June 8-11, 1920, 321. Also PWMS Lacombe, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 133, Box 4. Minutes of annual meeting, March 16, 1920. n. p.

⁹² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 338, Box 12. Minutes of Annual district of High River. Minutes of 3rd District Convention, October 13, 1921, n. p.

⁹³ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, May 24-26, 1932, 368-9.

⁹⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of Calgary executive meeting, May 5, 1933, 22.

⁹⁵ "Mrs. Row of Calgary, Elected President W.M.S.," Edmonton Journal, 14 April 1921, p. 11.

approach to Auxiliary membership which marginalized local members. Study plans, not only for Bands and Circles, but for Auxiliaries as well, were thematically regulated through published guides in the mission magazines and left little room for diversity or independent initiative.⁹⁶ The AWMS increasingly adhered to a model of national uniformity which defined piety, polity, and prayer.

A further manifestation of the trend towards centralization and conformity was the founding of Schools for Leaders in central Canada in 1934 as a manifestation of the drive to professionalize church workers. A discussion involving the establishment of leadership schools in Alberta arose when Mrs. Forbes, president of Dominion Board was a guest at the 1937 annual meeting. Although AWMS officers decided that the cost for the current year would be prohibitive, Mrs. Forbes highly recommended the venture, suggesting she "could pick out a secretary who had attended one of these schools by the efficient way they give reports and [the] logical way they carry on the business of a meeting."⁹⁷ The Schools became an adjunct of the provincial conferences held in 1938 and 1939.⁹⁸ Hill argues that a division occurred between the rank and file members and leaders of American mission societies with the pursuit of "professionalization." A distance was created as "experience and training initiated certain women into the inner mysteries of missions and made the rest of them dependent upon instruction from the initiates."⁹⁹ Hill concludes that down to the local auxiliary level, a divisive hierarchy developed according to levels of expertise acquired at summer schools, or through attendance at regional or national conferences.¹⁰⁰ This alienation is manifested in the WMS as well, where national and provincial officers became more concerned with

⁹⁶ Hill, 152. Hill's conclusions about American female missionary societies are similar. She observed a "transformation of auxiliary meetings from prayer groups into mission study classes led by trained leaders and officers [which] reduced the rank and file from vital participants whose spiritual force worked wonders on the mission field to auditors whose bodies filled otherwise empty chairs."

⁹⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 12th annual meeting, March 2-5, 1937, 173.

⁹⁸ United Church of Canada Yearbook, 1935, 164.

⁹⁹ Hill, 150. Cook, "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930, 202. Cook also suggests a difference in perspective between provincial officers and the local members of the Ontario WCTU after 1905. The provincial level had moved away from a conservative evangelical vision to a more liberal interpretation.

¹⁰⁰ Hill, 150.

business efficiency and study than on the heartfelt power of prayer, which had originally formed the basis for fellowship. As a result, prayer became a formality, a ritual which punctuated society meetings.

In her address to the annual provincial meeting in 1935, Miss Hunt, the Literature Secretary, characterized the evident shift in mission orientation away from spiritual conversion and towards education during the interwar years, as she

emphasized the need of intelligent study if we would properly understand the scope of missions and give to our workers on the field the intelligent support they deserve. Also deeper study would lead to an abandonment [sic] of superior attitudes on the part of english speaking people and would lead to a finer appreciation of the fine background of character and accomplishments of the new Canadians in our land.¹⁰¹

Hunt's remarks imply that education in lieu of prayer provides the way to enlightenment, and moreover, that it is the AWMS that needs to be educated. The revision of interwar Protestant mission policy from one of Christian conquest to one of promoting tolerance and respect for other cultures and religions had direct consequences for the work of the AWMS.¹⁰² Having imparted English language skills and citizenship values to the Ruthenians, the AWMS was satisfied that a tolerable ethnic equilibrium had been achieved within the province. The pre-war objective of evangelization through the power of faith and prayer had been brought into alignment with the secularized and scientific approach to social reform. Cultural assimilation was accomplished through education. The AWMS relinquished its control over the home mission field to professional social workers, doctors, teachers and government officials. Cooperative action between immigrant groups, public schools and government agencies would determine the future welfare and policies of assimilation towards New Canadians, not the churches. Similarly, women in the AWMS had developed a co-operative network of women's organizations that shared concerns over the preservation of Christian values and family life in the

¹⁰¹ UCA, PAA UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, March 12-15, 1935, 90-1.

¹⁰² Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940, 251. Marshall states, "as the difficulties in planting Christianity in other societies became increasingly apparent, medical and educational work was emphasized instead of proselytizing."

province. The results of their combined efforts in the area of legislative reform are examined in the final chapter.

Chapter 6

'Ordinary Women Made Strong':

Social Reform and the Women's Network, 1918-1939

To combat the erosion of traditional Christian values, the AWMS advocated women's involvement in public social and health issues to "try to keep Alberta clean and a pure place for true homes - a province that would love righteousness and honor it."¹ Evangelical feminists believed that women were the conservators of Christian moral values and the guardians of traditional family life.² Their convictions were shaped by a social construction of womanhood based on the "specific function of reproduction" which informed "every social function connected to it - with motherhood and its duties."³ This chapter argues that through their pursuit of temperance, peace and moral purity, members of the AWMS sought to ensure the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' and its cultural ideals as they established the kingdom of God in Alberta.⁴ The AWMS aligned with other women's organizations who shared an ideology of family, sanctioned by churches and political institutions in Canadian society, which facilitated the "propagation of politically pro-family ideas and the strengthening of families themselves."⁵ An effective women's network existed beyond that which developed between 'sister societies' in the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches which formed the Federation of the Women's Mission Boards of Canada in 1919 and joined the Women's Foreign Mission

¹ "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 8 (September 1919): 248-9.

² Cook, "Through Sunshine and Shadow": The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evangelicalism, and Reform in Ontario, 1874-1930, 11. Cook distinguishes conservative evangelicals as viewing salvation as personal and experiential, and Christian family units imbued with moral leadership by the mother comprised the ideal society. In comparison, liberal evangelicals believed that individual salvation was attained through collective cleansing of society as a whole.

³ Andr  e L  vesque, Making and Breaking the Rules: Women in Quebec, 1919-1939. Translated by Yvonne M. Klein (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), 12.

⁴ Valverde, 61. Valverde considers "racism and feminism [as] ... integral parts of a single whole" for women reformers of this period. It is important to remember, however, that in the context of the times, the term 'race' was often used to denote nationality.

⁵ Snell, 28. The author notes that the ideal of the conjugal family was sustained by ideological, economic and political relations. He concludes that state activities were aimed at maintaining a "family household dependent largely on men's wage labour and on women's domestic labour."

Boards of North America the same year.⁶ More extensive affiliations which included Ladies' Aids and Women's Associations, the YWCA and CGIT, the Local Councils of Women, the Alberta Women's Institutes, the United Farm Women of Alberta, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom broadened their power base for social reform. These alliances helped to counteract the chilly climate of the patriarchal public sphere, where women's activism in favour of legislation protecting women's rights, temperance, religious education, disarmament and immigration was not always welcome. Greater numbers would ensure their voice would be heard.

Temperance work in Alberta, begun by the WCTU in 1907, garnered strong support from the local clergy and churches.⁷ AWMS reformers felt that the social costs imposed by the liquor trade, especially among women and children of the poor, were too great to be ignored by the government. A campaign to educate the public about 'scientific temperance' was initiated to build support for the passage of legislation banning the sale of alcohol.⁸ Women's enfranchisement was an intrinsic part of the temperance campaign to sway the vote in what was regarded as a predominantly women's issue. The temperance movement in Alberta benefited from the skilled and aggressive leadership of public women such as Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, the famous five, and Mrs. G. H. V. Bulyea, wife of the lieutenant-governor.⁹ The implementation of the Act of Prohibition as of July 1, 1916, with a three to one vote, signaled a significant success for temperance proponents as well as an advance for women's rights. The WCTU and affiliated organizations such as the WMS, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, the Temperance Moral and Reform League,

⁶ "Knox W.M.S. Meeting," Lethbridge Daily Herald, 3 April 1920, p. 21. See also "Editorial Notes," The Missionary Messenger Vol. VI, No. 3 (March 1919): 72. The executive of the PWMS determined that "in making our influence felt as a religious force in national questions, federation would be desirable"

⁷ Ruth Spence, Prohibition in Canada (Toronto: William Briggs, 1919), 446-458.

⁸ Phyllis D. Airhart, Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 103. Airhart describes the origins of Methodist activism in the temperance campaign as a result of their belief in educating the Christian conscience on public issues after the turn of the twentieth century.

⁹ Nancy M. Sheehan, "'Women Helping Women': The WCTU and the Foreign Population in the West, 1905-1930," 395-411. International Journal of Women's Studies Vol. 6, No. 5 (1983): 396.

the Social Service Council, and the United Farmers Association remained vigilant against their opponents, the Moderation League, liquor manufacturers, hoteliers and veterans. Anti-temperance groups presented the UFA government with petitions requesting a referendum on the question in 1923. The MWMS launched a pro-temperance offensive in advance of the referendum, organizing rallies to bolster their support.¹⁰ Despite their efforts, the results in the November vote were strongly in favour of government control of the sale of alcohol.¹¹ Shortly afterwards, the PWMS recorded their disappointment with the reluctance of the UFA government to invoke stricter temperance legislation.¹² Louise McKinney, speaking to the MWMS after the defeat, observed, "[i]f we are children of God all the power of heaven and earth are combined on our side, and nothing can hinder or defeat our work ... enduring to the end under any opposition or difficulty."¹³ However, the majority in the province had expressed their disillusionment with a 'dry' Alberta.¹⁴ Despite this defeat, the AWMS reiterated its advocacy for Temperance and renewed its commitment to continue temperance education in its post-union agenda.¹⁵ Falling into line with the Dominion-wide policy of the UCWMS, the AWMS established Temperance Departments through all its Auxiliaries, emphasizing anti-liquor education through all of its programmes. The Alberta Branch Conference noted, "[t]his is not a new work or a new interest - but a new department - a definite place to be given to it on our programs - preferably at every meeting ... in every unit of our

¹⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 13.

¹¹ Palmer with Palmer, 214.

¹² UCA, PAA. PWMS Edmonton, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 124, Box 4. Minutes of 11th annual meeting, November 18, 1924, 83. Allen notes that the pro-temperance UFA government was not willing to be defeated over one unpopular issue. 276-7.

¹³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 38.

¹⁴ Nancy M. Sheehan. "'Women Helping Women': The WCTU and the Foreign Population in the West, 1905-1930," *International Journal of Women's Studies* Vol. 6, No. 5 (1983): 395-411. Sheehan notes the difficulty encountered by the Alberta WCTU in attempting to overcome ethnic traditions in alcohol consumption among immigrant groups. Also Sheehan, "The WCTU on the Prairies, 1886-1930: An Alberta-Saskatchewan Comparison," *Prairie Forum* Vol. 6, No. 1 (1981): 17-33 and Sheehan, "The WCTU and Educational Strategies on the Canadian Prairie," *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring 1984): 101-119.

¹⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 1st annual meeting, May 26-28, 1926, 98. See also, Allen, 279-280. He reports the reaction of the national WCTU president, Sarah Rowell Wright in the aftermath of prohibition's defeat, "[i]f ever we needed a prayer-hearing, covenant-keeping God, it is now,

society"¹⁶ Temperance Secretaries were appointed in every Presbyterian, literature and posters were distributed, and regular three-minute talks on Temperance were initiated at Auxiliary meetings. In 1930, The Three Partners, a temperance book, was approved for use in the Mission Bands, while Wesley Church Circle girls performed a pageant illustrating the "ill effects of alcohol as a medicine."¹⁷ In the same year, a petition was circulated by the Presbyterian Temperance Secretaries to abolish beer parlors. The AWMS petitioned the Dominion Board to propose an amendment to the Canada Drugs Act which would declare alcohol a narcotic drug, "the only step consistent with the findings of Science."¹⁸ As the Depression continued to devastate the western economy, the AWMS waged a battle against the use of relief money to buy liquor. They petitioned the government to close beer parlors for the duration of the financial crisis.¹⁹ Fighting the apathy that the public displayed towards temperance, executive officers exhorted members to "feel a real responsibility about temperance education."²⁰ Despite its earlier disapproval of government inaction, the AWMS,

commend[ed] Hon. Wm. Aberhart, Premier and his government for the forward steps they are taking on the temperance and liquor question, in prohibiting liquor advertisements in the press, placing a luxury tax on wines and hard liquors and as minister of education his intention to stress the teaching of Scientific Temperance in the schools of the Province.²¹

Drunken drivers came under attack by the AWMS, as they renewed their offensive against alcohol. Drumheller Presbyterian put forward a resolution to have Conference

when our hopes for Canada are for the *Present moment* immersed in the sea of a great and almost universal defeat." 279-80.

¹⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, May 21-24, 1928, 211.

¹⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of Edmonton sub-executive meeting, November 24, 1930, 303 and UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th Annual Meeting, May 13-16, 1930, 290. Pageant was entitled "Mrs. Smith Learns the Truth."

¹⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th annual meeting, May 13-16, 1930, 296.

¹⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 7th annual meeting, May 24-26, 1932, 374.

²⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of annual executive meeting, February 28, 1933, 385.

The Temperance Secretary, Mrs. McArthur stated that "this work is not popular and interest is hard to gain."

²¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 11th annual meeting, March 3-6, 1936, 134.

Branch approach authorities to cancel the licenses of convicted offenders.²² They contacted the Premier, Attorney General and Treasurer of the Alberta Government as well as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation concerning the cancellation of liquor ads in broadcasts.²³ In 1939, as international tensions escalated, the AWMS endorsed the WCTU platform of restricting the production, importation and sale of liquor, especially in connection with the Canadian militia during recruiting or training.²⁴ In 1939, Solon E. Low, the Provincial Treasurer, acknowledged the correspondence from the AWMS concerning the liquor issue. He suggested that the continuance of temperance education by the WMS would be the most effective means to help the government in their efforts to control the trade.²⁵

Religious education in public schools became a contentious issue for the AWMS. The MWMS declared that after investigation it had been found that "there is a deplorable lack of moral and religious knowledge among the boys and girls of this province."²⁶ As a result of the perceived threat to the religious and social order, the societies advocated religious instruction in public schools to reinforce values endemic to the Christian family. In 1919, they passed a resolution which supported the recital of the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of the school day as well as a graded syllabus of scripture selections for reading without comment by the teacher. This was to be supplemented by the display of the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer and Christ's summary of the Law in individual classrooms. In addition, the curriculum was to include the teaching of ethics and morals,

²² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 13th annual meeting, March 8-11, 1938, 201. This resolution was instigated in part as a response to "Try Punishment." an editorial in MacLean's Magazine, October, 1937.

²³ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Edmonton, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1021, Box 31. Minutes of 12th annual meeting, February 16, 1938, 12.

²⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 14th annual meeting, March 20-24, 1939. Paper inserted into minute book.

²⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 14th annual meeting, March 20-24, 1939, 241.

²⁶ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 309. This paralleled the experience of chaplains counselling soldiers at the front when "they discovered ... that the soldiers had little understanding of Christianity and scant regard for the church." Consequently, this instigated a "quest for a deeper theological understanding of the Word of God and Jesus Christ in the postwar era [which] had its roots in the bloodied soil of the battlefields." See Marshall, Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940, 157 & 178.

with a definite morality code.²⁷ One resolution suggested that the Board should discontinue funding to any Social Service Missions which prohibited religious instruction.²⁸ The provincial Minister of Education, the Hon. Geo. Smith wrote to the provincial executive "promising that the question of religious training in the schools [would] receive proper consideration."²⁹

The AWMS fervently believed that "religion & morality [need] to be built into the institutions of our country."³⁰ They shouldered a great responsibility which was "given to them by the hand of God" to rehabilitate the religious and moral tone of their home province.³¹ This perceived need for a reaffirmation of Christian values and spirituality was bolstered by the Kingdom of God movement begun in the late 1920s, by Toyohiko Kagawa, an evangelical Christian missionary working in Japan.³² The results of his work resonated throughout the missionary world. Mrs. Miller, president of the AWMS in 1931 lamented the "retreat" of Christianity in Canada in comparison to its apparent vigour in Japan.³³ AWMS members believed "[n]ew spiritual life will come back to us from the East" as they hoped that Kagawa's efforts might spark a Christian revival which would spread to the western world.³⁴ However, this did not occur and in 1938, the Rev. J. E. Duclos, D. D., founder of the Bonnyville Hospital and School Home, reluctantly observed that in order to allay fears of 'creed prejudice' the only concession to religious instruction in the schools continued to be the Lord's Prayer. He argued that Bible instruction must be included in the curriculum to offset the Communist influence which

²⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 309. Also "Religious Training Asked for Schools," Calgary Daily Herald, 13 June 1919, p. 17.

²⁸ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, July 16, 1919, 313.

²⁹ Ibid., 313.

³⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Edmonton, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1020, Box 31. Minutes of 1st annual meeting, April 26, 1927, 19.

³¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Medicine Hat, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1059, Box 32. Minutes of 3rd annual meeting, March 6, 1929, n. p. See also "Alberta Provincial Society," The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 5 (May 1922): 469. In High River Presbyterian minutes, "question was asked: 'Does Alberta, the province of which we are so proud, measure up in moral tone?'"

³² Wright, 190. In 1928, Kagawa initiated an evangelical campaign called "A Million Souls for Christ" in Japan.

³³ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29-30, 1931, 324.

³⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Grande Prairie, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1033, Box 31. Minutes of 6th annual meeting, May 10, 1932, n. p.

was present in Alberta's mixed population. Duclos sought a "welding on the anvil of the Gospel, of a great heterogeneous element into one Christian nationhood."³⁵ This fusion could only occur if Christian moral values were protected and preserved within Canadian society.

Sabbatarianism and movie censorship were two additional areas of concern for the missionary societies who feared the deleterious effects of creeping materialism in the lives of the younger generation. Maintaining the holiness of the Sabbath had been a long-standing concern for religious groups. In an industrializing urban society, sports and other leisure activities for the working-class were apt to be scheduled on their only day off, Sunday. The UCWMS supported the efforts of the Lord's Day Alliance by doing "the utmost of our ability to place the Christian Sabbath on a firm footing in our land."³⁶ In 1933, the Calgary Presbyterial report included a protest against Sunday baseball games which were being held at the Stadium.³⁷ Movie censorship emerged as a social reform issue in the 1920s.³⁸ Objections arose concerning the portrayal of "the lowest forms of life - bootlegging, work of gangsters, silly sentimentality, all of which have a detrimental effect on the impressionable minds of youth."³⁹ Additionally, as ardent nationalists, they strenuously objected to 'Hollywood' pictures which left "the impression that dog-teams, trapping & that type of life is characteristic" of Canada.⁴⁰ A motion was passed asking Alberta Auxiliaries to make reports on the quality of motion pictures and their advertisements to assess their uplifting or degrading influence upon youth. This in turn, would permit them to "take intelligent action to bring about a better class of pictures, that will portray Canada as she is" and have an ameliorative effect on the young.⁴¹ Protests

³⁵ "Religious Education in the School," by Rev. J. E. Duclos, D. D., United Church Record and Missionary Review Vol. XIV, No. 2 (February 1938): 8-9.

³⁶ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of annual meeting, May 26-28, 1926, 98.

³⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes executive & annual meetings, May 2-4, 1933, 15.

³⁸ "Social Service League Lead Moral Demand Against 'Movie' Menace to Rising Generation in Canada," Edmonton Bulletin, 24 January 1921, p. 1.

³⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29 & 30, 1931, 332.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 332.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 332.

against the negative effects of Hollywood productions continued through 1937, when the AWMS offered its views on the quality of films to the provincial Censor.⁴²

A lingering disillusionment over the devastation of war resulted in a resurgence of pacifist sentiments after World War I. The churches' idealistic support of the conflict left Protestant leaders divided over the complex ethical question of what the appropriate Christian response to war should be. Could the defense of Christian democratic ideals justify the horror of wartime atrocities and cost in human lives that it engendered? Was peace more important than social justice? Members of the AWMS were certain that as women became more integrated in the decision-making processes of society, aggressive male behaviour would diminish, eliminating the primary cause of war.⁴³ Thomas Socknat defines three types of pacifism which emerged during the interwar period. The radical group believed liberal pacifist ideals combined with significant social change in the economic and political superstructure of the country was the solution. The Alberta School of Religion initiated by, but later dissociated from the United Church, would promulgate this philosophy.⁴⁴ The two remaining groups in Socknat's paradigm would best describe the pacifist continuum in the AWMS. While traditional Victorian liberal-progressives favoured international arbitration to resolve conflict, a majority of liberal internationalists supported the League of Nations. Though their campaign for peace did not endorse total pacifism, they lobbied for disarmament, international harmony, as well as social and economic reorganization.⁴⁵

⁴² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 12th annual meeting, March 2-5, 1937, 176.

⁴³ Barbara Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada." In Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics, edited by Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 278.

⁴⁴ Thomas P. Socknat, Witness against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 144. In 1935, the School became the western affiliate of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, which "viewed socialism as the practical application of radical Christianity." 138. In other words, the economic ills of the Depression years resulting from the excesses of capitalism would be alleviated by a new Christian social order based on socialism. In 1924, United Church minister, Henry M. Horricks, established the Alberta School of Religion at Mount Royal College in Calgary. Organized under church auspices, the School became increasingly radicalized over the next few years and the United Church relinquished ties with the group. However, the pacifist influences of the School were felt throughout the province as ideas disseminated from its annual sessions with socialists such as James G. Endicott, a China missionary and T. C. Douglas of the CCF.

⁴⁵ Thomas P. Socknat, Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945, 10.

As the peace movement gathered momentum, the PWMS endorsed the League of Nations in 1925.⁴⁶ Nellie McClung established the Edmonton Peace Study Group in 1930, which later became a branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). The Canadian WILPF concerns included peace, economic and social justice issues, and women's rights. Violet McNaughton was an influential representative of the WILPF as it emerged in the early 1920s in western Canada. By 1927, the WILPF had garnered the support of the Alberta WCTU as well as seventeen United Farm Women of Alberta locals.⁴⁷ With the rise of fascism in Germany and Spain, sympathy for the cause of peace increased as fears of another international conflict grew.⁴⁸ The threat of Sino-Japanese war contributed to these apprehensions. In the wake of the Kellogg Peace Pact of 1930, whereby the federal government "renounced war as an instrument of national policy," the AWMS sent a resolution to the federal government suggesting that equivalent amounts be spent on peace as on armaments.⁴⁹ They voted to discontinue any use of military titles in church documents.⁵⁰ The society endorsed the General Council's censure of cadet training in schools and colleges as it was "out of harmony" with the quest for peace.⁵¹ The AWMS supported the WILPF in the circulation of the International Disarmament Petition of 1931 which was initiated to consolidate public support for the upcoming International Disarmament Conference in Geneva in February, 1932. As a corporate member of the League of Nations Society in Canada, the Dominion Board ensured each Auxiliary received a copy, requesting that as many signatures be obtained

⁴⁶ "Story of Mission Work Abroad and at Home Told at Wednesday Session of W.M.S. Presbyterial," *Edmonton Journal*, 26 March 1925, p. 17. See also Thomas P. Socknat, "For Peace and Freedom: Canadian Feminists and the Interwar Peace Campaign," 66-88. In Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham, *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace* (Toronto: The Woman's Press, 1989), 73.

⁴⁷ Palmer with Palmer. 233.

⁴⁸ Deborah Gorham, "Peace History," *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace*, 32.

⁴⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th annual meeting, May 13-16, 1930, 296. This resolution echoed the platform of the WILPF. This occurred again over military training in the schools, embargoes on Japanese trade and support for refugees' entry to Canada. See Socknat article, "For Peace and Freedom: Canadian Feminists and the Interwar Peace Campaign," and Veronica Strong-Boag, "Peace-Making Women: Canada 1919-1939," 170-191. In *Women and Peace: Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives*, edited by Ruth Roach Pierson et al (New York: Croom Helm, 1987).

⁵⁰ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of sub-executive meeting, December 29, 1930, 305. The UCWMS Dominion Board was a corporate member of the League of Nations Society in Canada.

⁵¹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 5th annual meeting, May 13-16, 1930, 304.

as possible.⁵² Other organizations which endorsed the petition included the WCTU, the YWCA, as well as Anglican and Baptist churchwomen.⁵³ In presenting a review of The Christian's Contribution for Peace written by Dr. Leyton Richards, Mrs. A. D. Miller, former president of the AWMS, expressed the pacifist feelings of many when she remembered how,

[i]n the Great War a whole generation of the finest young manhood had been lost to the world - The world had lost the wealth of their keen thinking - their power to grapple with scientific and economic problems; hence our sorry plight to-day. ... If a future war occurs it will take a greater heroism to denounce war, than the heroism that marches in the ranks.⁵⁴

The AWMS continued to condemn preparations for war, promoting principles of tolerance, understanding and justice to ensure peace. By the mid-1930s, international peace strategies switched from disarmament to imposing sanctions against aggressor nations. Calgary Presbyterian voted on the following proposal,

[t]hat we ask our Dominion Government to invoke the Amendment to the Customs Act, passed on April 10, 1937, in order to prohibit the shipments to Japan of all arms, ammunition, implements or munitions of war, military, naval or air stores, or any articles deemed capable of being capable of being converted ... or made useful in the production thereof.⁵⁵

While the resolution was lost, the delegates insisted that the executive re-word an expression of these sentiments and forward it to Branch level. Through this measure, the Presbytery indicated its support of the boycott of Japanese goods in alignment with WILPF policies during the Sino-Japanese conflict. In the late 1930s, as Canadian volunteers left to fight in the Spanish Civil War against the fascist regime of Franco, two

⁵² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 6th annual meeting, April 29 & 30, 1931, 325. An explanation of the petition was contained in the Missionary Monthly February (1931): 50.

⁵³ Socknat, Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945, 129. The petition contained over 8 million signatures collected from fifty-six countries.

⁵⁴ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, March 12-15, 1935, 90-1.

⁵⁵ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Calgary, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 995, Box 30. Minutes of 13th Annual Meeting of February 9, 1938, 8.

more WILPF organizations were established in Jasper and Edson.⁵⁶ In 1939, the AWMS supported the acceptance of refugees, especially those with credentials in scientific, technical or cultural fields, as they were troubled by the circumstances of "millions of fellow human beings who are suffering intense agonies and persecutions at the hands of brutal dictators."⁵⁷ While Jewish refugees are not specifically designated in the minutes, the WILPF had voiced its support for German refugees earlier in 1936. Although AWMS women had re-configured their patriotic zeal and nationalistic ideals to ameliorate international tensions, the shadow of war still lingered.

While the AWMS concentrated on "uplift[ing] the spiritual life of the church" the Ladies' Aid (LA) interests were more practical; assisting the Pastor in his work, overseeing the furnishing of the manse, fundraising, and helping with social or welfare work within the congregation.⁵⁸ The WMS and LA groups were independent organizations within the congregation. The missionary societies envied the success of the LA with its larger membership, questioning its own appeal to churchwomen. While Ladies' Aids focussed on fundraising projects such as teas, plant sales, bazaars, catering or revenues from church hall rental, they did not normally incorporate mission study into their meetings. Veteran, in the Coronation charge, had a Ladies' Aid which performed local works of charity, conducted Bible study and raised money to help pay the minister's salary.⁵⁹ Depending upon interest, some Ladies' Aids, such as the one at Central Methodist Church in Calgary, became involved in social work in their communities. Joining with the efforts of Knox and Wesley United, "each church devoted two days a week to help. Meals were served each day to the unemployed at the Salvation Army kitchen. On Sundays all three churches participated."⁶⁰ Central LA also assigned

⁵⁶ Palmer with Palmer. Over twelve hundred volunteers fought, and twenty-three Albertans died in the conflict. 251. See also Socknat, Witness Against War. Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945, 133.

⁵⁷ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 14th annual meeting, March 20-24, 1939, 229.

⁵⁸ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 305. See also The Manual of The United Church of Canada, 157.

⁵⁹ UCA, PAA. Veteran Ladies' Aid. Acc. No. 75.387, Item 2771. Minutes of monthly meeting, February 2, 1927 and October, 1931, n. p.

⁶⁰ Ross, 216.

delegates to attend meetings of the Calgary LCW and the League of Nations society meetings.⁶¹ Seven Persons in the Presbyterial of Medicine Hat, reported that "the W.M.S. work was a prelude to the Ladies' Aid meeting, [the] L.A. transacting the business and setting apart their amount for the W.M.S. work. This society not only helps financially but does its share also with supplies."⁶² While the LA and AWMS employed "a very strong appeal to the middle-aged women" there were many younger women who were prepared to develop skills in Christian citizenship.⁶³

Interest in the structure and processes of the Canadian government resulted from the excitement over women's recently-acquired voting rights.⁶⁴ Although mission study was not a primary focus of the CGIT groups, their programmes enabled women to mentor girls ages thirteen to seventeen for future leadership within the church and community.⁶⁵ Sunday school programmes, mid-week meetings and camps were supplemented by Bible study and good works. Hobby work such as gardening, cooking, and photography were combined with temperance education and study of the women's suffrage movement. To learn more about their communities, the girls also visited different local industries.⁶⁶ Founders of the CGIT had established it under the control of the church-based Board of Religious Education instead of the WMS to achieve official status. The fear of loss of authority in church education combined with the threat of a declining Band and Circle

⁶¹ Glenbow Archives, Central United Church, M1365, Box 13, file 132. Ladies' Aid Society, Minutes of December 9, 1926, 8 & 9.

⁶² UCA, PAA. UCWMS Medicine Hat, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 1059. Minutes of annual meeting September 6, 1927, n. p.

⁶³ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 327, Box 11. Minutes of 15th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1924, 32.

⁶⁴ Lucille M. Marr, "Church Hierarchy and Christian Nurture: The Significance of Gender in Religious Education in the Methodist, Presbyterian and United Churches of Canada, 1919-1939." Ph.D. Dissertation. Waterloo: University of Waterloo, 1990. 136-7. A study guide covering these topics was prepared by the Local Council of Women in Regina.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 43-4. See also Margaret Prang, "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-1939," *Canadian Historical Review* LXVI, 2, (1985): 154-184. A joint committee of the YWCA and the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican and Baptist Sunday School boards and associations founded the CGIT in 1917.

⁶⁶ UCA, PAA. PWMS Medicine Hat Presbyterial, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 136, Box 4. Minutes of 10th annual meeting, Feb 14, 1924, 25.

membership worried the WMS in both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.⁶⁷ The apprehension did not disappear with Union, although conciliatory efforts by both the WMS and CGIT officials resulted in a process of affiliation whereby CGIT groups who spent one meeting in four on mission work and contributed to the WMS either through givings or supply work could initiate affiliation with the AWMS.⁶⁸ By 1935, affiliated CGIT groups in Alberta numbered sixty-three with 597 members contributing \$57.95. A report indicated that "[t]he difficulties in this department are being solved as a result of a better understanding of the meaning of affiliation on the part of leaders of groups and our WMS women in general. ... As we come to see the work of the Church as a whole rather than concentrating on separate organizations."⁶⁹ Beyond organizations, there were social movements which had the power to unite diverse groups in a common cause, for women's associations at this time it was temperance.

Temperance literature from the WCTU was an integral component of all AWMS educational programmes. As a proponent of total prohibition, the PWMS condoned WCTU work among foreigners, stating "they will be a menace to Canada if they are not educated and Christianized. This is true missionary work."⁷⁰ Nellie McClung and Louise McKinney were prominent prohibitionist advocates during their tenures with the MWMS and UCWMS. In 1923, McClung advised members of the AWMS on the choices for the November 5th ballot over whether or not the provincial government should control liquor sales. The AWMS executive instructed its Superintendents to arrange district conventions early in October to publicize the temperance issue and upcoming plebiscite.⁷¹ In

⁶⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, February 12, 1919, 292. See also "Forward Movement," *The Missionary Messenger* Vol. VIII, No. 7-8-9 (Jul/Aug/Sept 1921): 194.

⁶⁸ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of full executive meeting of Alberta Conference Branch, January 26, 1927, 120.

⁶⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, March 12-15, 1935, 92.

⁷⁰ "Alberta Provincial Society," *The Missionary Messenger* Vol. V, No. 11 (December 1918): 354. See also Nancy M. Sheehan. "Women Helping Women": The WCTU and the Foreign Population in the West, 1905-1930."

⁷¹ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 13.

following this suggestion, it was noted that nine district conventions were successfully held to help fight "against the insidious iniquitous propaganda of the liquor forces."⁷²

There was significant overlap in activities between the Local Council of Women and the AWMS involving issues of immigrant enfranchisement, religion in schools, the welfare of women under Canadian law, and temperance. Mrs. A. M. Scott, described as a "Local Council influential" at the passing of prohibition in June, 1915, held the office of president of the Alberta UCWMS a decade later, from 1926 to 1930.⁷³ While the MWMS did not officially affiliate with the NCWC, it did facilitate the networking of information for those who were interested. In 1918, Mrs. W. R. Howie, a representative from the NCWC was permitted to address the annual meeting of the MWMS held in Edmonton, where she introduced the Woman's Century, the Council's new publication.⁷⁴ Despite the lack of official affiliation, Nellie McClung, Alberta reporter for the Century, ensured that newsworthy items about mission work in the province such as Dr. Lawford's work at Pakan during the influenza epidemic or the churches' attempts to encourage women "to qualify for work on the mission fields in Alberta" were included.⁷⁵ The Calgary LCW allied with church groups in an attempt to secure religious instruction in the schools in 1927, by supporting the use of Bible readings, the Lord's Prayer and scripture verses in the curriculum.⁷⁶ This had long been a goal of WMS groups who sought to preserve Christian ideals concerning the sanctity of the home and family for the nation's youth through the school system.⁷⁷

Alberta Women's Institutes (AWI) also "viewed the home as the bulwark of the nation," as they sought to endow "a new sense of importance to rural women's primary

⁷² UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, November 15, 1923, 25. See also MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 13.

⁷³ Marjorie Norris, A Leaven of Ladies: A History of the Calgary Local Council of Women. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 94.

⁷⁴ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 9th annual meeting, June 4-6, 1918, 265.

⁷⁵ "Alberta News," Woman's Century Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 1919): 42. And "Alberta News," Woman's Century Vol. 6, No. 10 (October 1918): 33.

⁷⁶ Glenbow Archives, Central United Church, M1365, Box 13, file 132. Ladies' Aid Society, Minutes of executive meeting, January 6, 1927, 10.

⁷⁷ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of executive meeting, August 29, 1918, 280-1.

occupation as homemakers."⁷⁸ They focussed on family-related issues such as prohibition, improved health care and education, more liberal legislation regarding divorce, property and child custody. Nellie McClung was elected the first president of the Edmonton Branch of the AWI in 1919.⁷⁹ The AWI sponsored scholarships to train workers among immigrants.⁸⁰ Members who lived near the block settlements attempted to assimilate the newcomers with varying degrees of success,

Anglo-Saxon women living in the minority among 'foreign' or block settlement communities had a difficult time trying to introduce their values. When the Radway Centre WI formed in 1921 there were five English speaking women living in the district ... in 1924 Mrs. W. A. Preston was the only one trying to carry on the Institute in a community of newcomers. ... The constituency rallied around to give her support and asked her to report to members of surrounding branches about her efforts to Canadianize the women of Radway.⁸¹

Similar to the experience of the AWMS, the difficult economic years of the 1930s caused many of the AWI members to abandon their locals, either by moving away due to the drought or by forfeiting payment of their dues.

The United Farm Women of Alberta had a political agenda to improve the quality of life for farm women and their families living in isolated areas far from the benefits of hospital care, libraries and year-round schooling.⁸² Temperance, pacifism, health issues, social service, education and immigration were also primary concerns of the UFWA and they all coincided with AWMS pursuits. In 1924, the UFWA publicly commended the Alberta Methodist conference which "ask[ed] for the elimination of militarism in the physical training in the provincial public and high schools."⁸³ In 1935, both organizations

⁷⁸ Shelley Anne Marie Bosetti. "The Rural Women's University: Women's Institutes in Alberta From 1909 to 1940." M.Ed. Thesis, Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1983, 54-5.

⁷⁹ Catherine C. Cole and Judy Larmour. Many and Remarkable: The Story of the Alberta Women's Institutes. (Edmonton: Alberta Women's Institutes, 1997), 6.

⁸⁰ "The Department of the Stranger" The Missionary Messenger Vol. IX, No. 5 (May 1922): 459-60.

⁸¹ Cole and Larmour, 25.

⁸² Nanci L. Langford. "Social Isolation of Alberta Farm Women." M.Sc. Thesis, Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1985, 15-25.

⁸³ "U.F.W.A. Denounces Military Training in Public Schools," Calgary Daily Herald, 5 June 1924, p. 16.

supported resolutions sent to the provincial government protesting any extension of sales hours of beer in the province.⁸⁴ Members of these organizations were aware that trying to impose their values on a resistant citizenry required sound tactical strategies as well as numerical strength in order to ensure the support of legislators and sway public opinion in their favour.

The AWMS supported a broad programme of social reform, the central tenets of which encompassed temperance, peace, and moral purity. These issues, characterizing their conservative evangelical perspective, reflected concerns voiced by the AWMS as well as other women's organizations who shared an ideology of family and Christian moral values. Reflecting the social construct of womanhood based on the biological function of reproduction, their social reform interests were centered upon issues of procreation and nurturance. The limited success of many of their proposed measures such as temperance, religious education in public schools, censorship, and peace revealed their idealistic evangelical basis which was out of step with an increasingly secularized society. However, their activism had a significant impact in Alberta in the realm of woman's rights, social services, and the church itself, during the interwar years.

⁸⁴ Nancy Langford, Politics, Pitchforks and Pickle Jars: 75 Years of Organized Farm Women in Alberta (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1997), 73. And UCWMS Alberta, Minutes of 10th annual meeting, March 12-15, 1935. Typewritten pages added into minute book.

Chapter 7

Conclusion:

'Time Spent Waiting Upon God Is Not Lost'

There were several factors which contributed to the demise of WMS missions in Alberta. By 1934, year-round public schools established by the provincial government lessened the demand for this type of residential school. Concurrently, immigration levels had dropped substantially through the years of the Depression.¹ The second generation of New Canadians had acquired sufficient competency both in English and employment skills to function effectively in the provincial economic and cultural milieu. Ruthenian communities had developed to the point of providing many of their own social services.² At the same time, sympathy lessened and wariness grew as the suspicion of Communism shadowed the immigrant settlements.³ Public demonstrations of labour unrest such as the hunger march on Edmonton in December, 1932 and the "On to Ottawa Trek" in the spring of 1935, heightened the potential for animosity between nativists and newcomers.⁴ The United Church and the WMS, both reeling from the devastation inflicted on their budgets by the economic collapse of the Great Depression, had to retreat from many of their mission initiatives.

As growing numbers of medical practitioners and professional social workers were drawn into the field which had been the exclusive purview of the AWMS, the moral authority of the latter came increasingly under scrutiny. Prayer as an activating force for reform paled in comparison to the scientific, managerial style of the new professionals.

¹ Palmer and Palmer. "From 1931 to 1939, only 12,500 immigrants arrived in the province." 246. The Alberta government also deported over 2500 immigrants between 1930-1934 to cut down relief rolls. 247.

² Owen, "Lighting the Pathways for New Canadians': Methodist and United Church WMS Missions in Eastern Alberta, 1904-1940," 15.

³ Palmer and Palmer, 248. The authors indicate that "hostile public opinion" compounded the daily difficulties encountered by members of the immigrant groups, noting that "95 per cent of the communists during the 1930s were central and eastern European immigrants." The Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA) with its thirty-nine locations in Alberta, was an affiliate of the Communist Party.

⁴ Palmer and Palmer, 250-1.

As a result, the AWMS was forced to realign its mission priorities. The spiritual foundations of the societies while never abandoned, were assigned diminished importance in the emerging field of social work. The emphasis for mission work shifted to the administration of hospitals and the education of children in school homes which would provide them with the tools to participate effectively as New Canadians in Albertan society. As religious tolerance grew, there were fewer and fewer references to 'pagan' populations in the province. The reform programme of the AWMS encompassed a constellation of issues which characterized the evangelical values held by society members. These issues reflected their desire to protect and preserve the ideology of family, the traditional gender construct of womanhood, and Christian moral principles. They formed alliances with other women's associations that shared their belief in the need to create an ideal Christian society which would not be undermined by materialism or religious and cultural pluralism. Ultimately, their continued support of unpopular and out-dated measures such as temperance, moral purity and cultural homogeneity clearly illustrates that their Christian evangelicalism no longer represented the rapidly-changing social landscape of Alberta.

Evangelical feminists were able to participate in missionary work due to the moral authority attributed to them by their gender. Characteristic of the gendered division of labour within the church, their mission mandate was limited to the uplift of women and children. However, in their determination to "elevate the spiritual life of the church" through inculcating values in the next generation of boys and girls, and supporting reforms to improve the quality of life for all women and children, the influence of the AWMS was far-reaching.⁵ Both rural and urban immigrant groups in Alberta benefited from educational and medical assistance provided by the societies. Members of the AWMS were forced to re-consider the status of women in Alberta in light of their attempts to help women less fortunate than themselves. Participation in the AWMS provided women with organizational and political expertise which increased their effectiveness both to the church and to the reform movement of the interwar years.

⁵ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta. Minutes of 10th annual meeting, June 10-12, 1919, 305.

While outspoken liberal evangelical members such as McClung and McKinney attempted to circumvent the 'stained glass ceiling' that women experienced in many venues of church membership including ordination, the AWMS did not provide leadership in this regard. By retaining the segregation of men and women in the church, the AWMS affirmed woman's divinely-inspired role as conservator of Christian values both in the family and society at large. Independence within their parallel organization was a highly-valued asset which was zealously guarded. They did not want to lose the "structural visibility" provided by the AWMS.⁶ In the eyes of many, any move towards integration with the church including ordination for women, posed an implicit threat to their hard-won self-government. Additionally, complete equality between men and women would negate the superior spiritual status of women upon which their power was founded. To maintain the viability of their moral authority, and their status of a 'church within a church', it was imperative that the nurturing ideals inherent in the traditional biologically-based definition of womanhood be maintained.

However, the secularizing influences which were taking place in Alberta were impossible for the AWMS to counteract. Young women were attracted to better pay and working conditions as professional social workers, teachers and nurses. The demand for missionary workers lessened as missions were replaced by government or municipally administered schools and hospitals. Within the United Church itself, tolerance of diversity both in culture and religion replaced the conquest philosophy which had sparked nineteenth century evangelical missions. In response to the trend towards secularization, an increasingly popular fundamentalist movement emerged in Alberta. In 1935, William Aberhart, leader of the Social Credit and a fundamentalist Baptist preacher, became premier of the province.⁷ His election victory legitimized the movement, and added to its

⁶ Sinclair, 107.

⁷ Palmer with Palmer, 241. The authors account for the popularity of fundamentalism in Alberta due to its "strong degree of lay participation and informality, and the close social bonds in the sects, [which] harmonized with the social ideals and needs of frontier society." There were forty fundamentalist Protestant sects in the province during this time. Aberhart also founded the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, one of four fundamentalist Bible schools in Alberta. His religious radio broadcasts attracted three hundred thousand listeners. See "W. Aberhart Heard By 7,000 At Edmonton," Winnipeg Free Press, 23 April 1935, p. 1 & 5. The article also reveals the pervasive influence of fundamentalism in the province at

prestige. Conservative evangelical feminists were attracted to fundamentalism which opposed any liberalizing influences in the Protestant church, advocating a return to religious orthodoxy which included the doctrines of biblical inerrancy and premillennial dispensationalism. Arguing that the "antipathy of many early fundamentalist leaders to feminism was deep, widespread, and well documented," Bendroth describes their subsequent rejection of women's spiritual authority both in the church and home. While evangelicals held an optimistic view of human progress and "cultural ascendancy" which underlay their mission work, dispensationalists were "hostile to the ethic of social progress that energized women's work in missions and temperance."⁸ Believing that it was futile to interfere with God's plan which had preordained catastrophic events preceding the Second Coming, fundamentalists remained aloof from the sinful world rather than attempting to reform it. The devotional theme of the 1937 provincial meeting, "[t]he Kingdom of God in my own heart and life" reflects this change in AWMS philosophy from evangelical outreach to individual salvation.⁹ With the erosion of their spiritual authority through the cumulative effects of secularization and emerging fundamentalism, the most dynamic years of the Woman's Missionary Societies in Alberta were behind them. Although the romantic vision and glory days of evangelism and mission work on the frontiers of Christian society were gone, AWMS women had for a time during the interwar years, fulfilled their spiritual covenant and "become a power for God."¹⁰

this time as it notes that the theme song for the Social Credit campaign was the hymn, "O God Our Help in Ages Past" and that Mrs. W. W. Rogers, a campaign organizer "declared that 'Social Credit means Christianity.'" Also, "Religion in the Alberta Regime," Winnipeg Free Press, 27 June 1936, 17, this article denotes the strong relationship between fundamentalist religion and Alberta politics under Aberhart.

⁸ Bendroth, 31 & 43.

⁹ UCA, PAA. UCWMS Alberta, Acc. No. 75.387, Item 927, Box 28. Minutes of 12th annual meeting, March 2-5, 1937, 164. The Oxford Group movement which also endorsed a renewed individual spirituality seemed to be superseded by Kagawa's Kingdom of God movement in the 1930s for the AWMS. However, McClung speaks favourably of it in her autobiography, The Stream Runs Fast (1945), 297-300.

¹⁰ UCA, PAA. MWMS Alberta, Minutes of 14th annual meeting, May 28-31, 1923, 12.

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Appendix 1

Membership Statistics and Funds Raised by Alberta WMS and Ladies' Aid/Women's Associations,
United Church of Canada, 1926-1939

Woman's Missionary Society Membership and Funds Raised:

Year	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Auxiliaries	125	119	196	216	221	220	225	222	216	202	197	207	218	212
# Members	3,338	3,430	5,081	5,453	5,456	5,295	5,128	5,169	4,785	4,474	4,422	4,377	4,518	4,484
Funds Rsd.	\$30,660	\$24,012	\$35,192	\$36,461	\$35,288	\$32,127	\$29,172	\$25,439	\$24,581	\$24,001	\$24,530	\$23,351	\$24,454	\$23,915

Note: the term Auxiliaries includes all groups within the AWMS.

Ladies' Aid/Women's Associations Membership and Funds Raised:

Year	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Groups	293	321	344	368	395	408	405	419	423	414	437	423	438	445
# Members	6,661	7,484	8,089	8,266	8,409	9,088	8,817	9,543	9,716	9,800	10,184	10,095	10,435	10,952
Funds Rsd.	128,439	\$119,437	n/a	\$154,300	\$134,106	\$116,736	\$104,081	\$89,419	\$106,016	\$104,996	\$106,997	\$105,139	\$107,522	\$109,633

Statistics compiled from United Church of Canada Yearbooks, 1927-1940, UCA, PAA.

Appendix 2

Membership Statistics and Funds Raised by Men's Groups and Congregations in Alberta:
United Church of Canada, 1926-1939:

Men's Group Membership and Funds Raised:

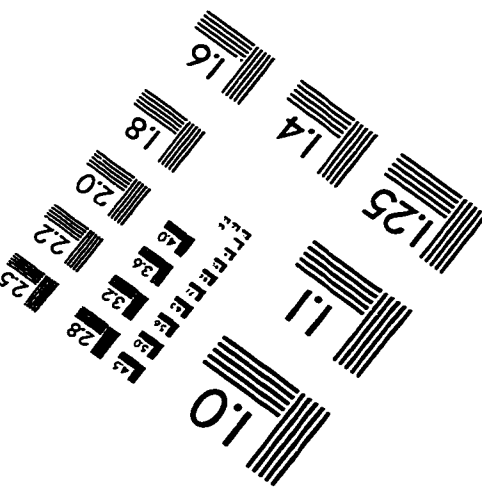
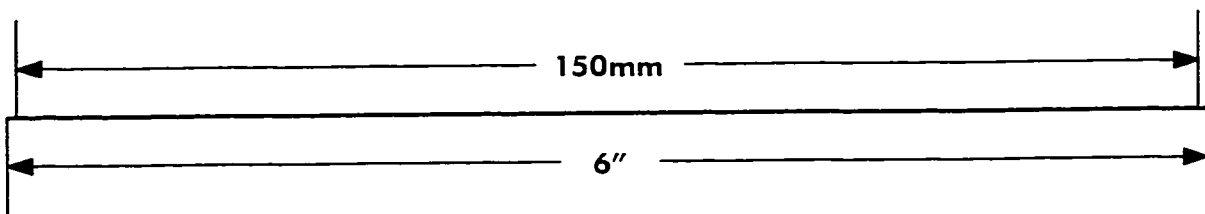
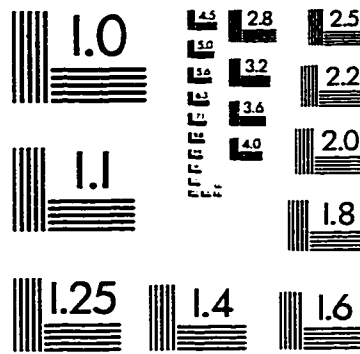
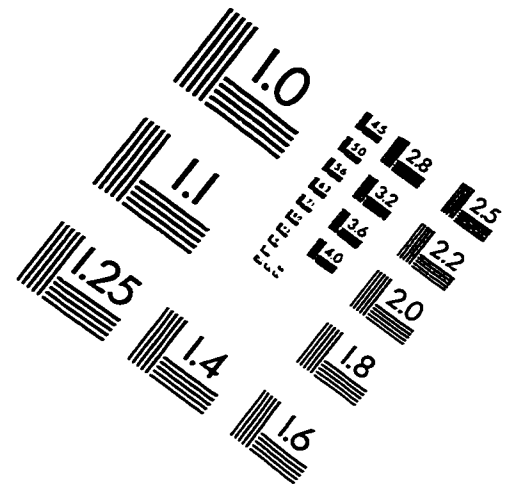
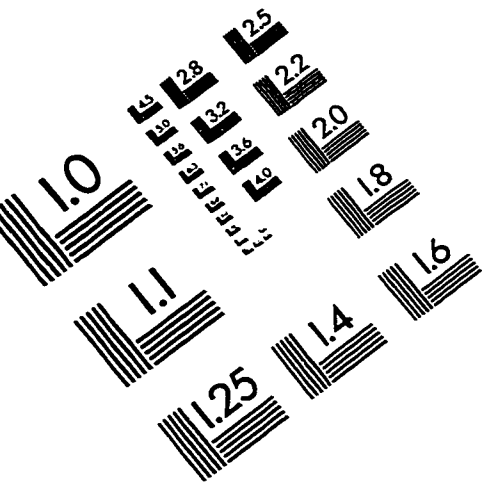
Year	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Groups	11	10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
# Members	388	323	421	593	732	502	705	715	638	735	795	708	601	935
Funds Rsd	\$1,332	n/a	\$1,842	\$1,157	\$1,590	\$10,869	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Congregational Membership and Funds Raised:

Year	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Funds Rsd	\$802,795	\$741,709	\$968,511	\$938,737	\$842,923	\$731,308	\$642,786	\$599,512	\$597,484	\$577,874	\$580,574	\$569,051	\$601,670	\$606,108
# Members	26,111	n/a	28,079	30,252	30,252	32,305	34,306	34,342	34,617	34,382	34,702	35,420	36,145	\$36,081

Statistics compiled from United Church of Canada Yearbooks, 1927-1940, UCA, PAA.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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