

Ottawa Valley Covenanters

ELDON HAY

The Covenanters were also called Reformed Presbyterians [RP], because they professed to adhere to the principles of the Church of Scotland in the purest times of the second Reformation, between 1638 and 1649. A summary of Covenanter convictions reads as follows:

1. Covenanting – public witnessing – is a command of God, hence the name, “the Covenanters.”
2. Christ is head of church and state.
3. Since Christ was not yet recognized as head of state, Covenanters did not hold public office, did not swear oaths and did not vote.
4. Supreme scriptural authority – what is not commanded in the Scripture about the worship of God is forbidden; in church services, hymns were prohibited, psalms only were sung. Organs and all musical instruments were excluded. All secret societies were forbidden.
5. Communion was open to believers only.

In Canada, there were Reformed Presbyterian communities in the Maritimes, as early as the 1820s, all founded by the Irish Synod. These were located in the Saint John River valley, the Chignecto region,¹ and the Annapolis valley.² Another group of Covenanter communities in eastern Ontario and western Quebec, was founded slightly later, mostly by the Scots Synod. There was a much later group of congregations in Western Canada, founded by American [Old School] Covenanters in the early 1900s.³ The Covenanter communities in the Maritimes and in Western

Historical Papers 1993: Canadian Society of Church History

Canada died out, though not those in the Ottawa valley, Ontario. This essay is devoted largely to this Upper Canadian branch, particularly those congregations in two counties which have classically been considered the oldest in Upper Canada – Lanark and Glengarry counties. The RP also witnessed in what is now Quebec, and in what is now called south-west Ontario: some attention will be given to these regions as well. The history of the Upper Canada RP is easily divided into three periods: a) The mission situation, 1830-1850 (most of this paper is devoted to this period); b) Ontario RP in the American RP Synod 1850-1975 (very little attention is given to these); and c) contemporary Canadian RP (a brief account will be given of the denomination from 1975 to the present).

The Mission Situation – 1830 to 1850

There were Covenanters in British North America before either the Irish or Scots RP synods established missionary societies. Both in New Brunswick on the one hand, and in Upper Canada on the other hand, appeals seem to have been made, in the first instance, to American RP Synods. Whereas New Brunswick was too far away to get much help from American sources, Upper Canada was closer to American RP assistance; the first three recorded RP missionary clergy came south of the border for visits to Upper Canada. These three were Rev. Robert McKee (1798-1840),⁴ then of the Northern Presbytery of the American Synod, who visited Lanark County in early 1830; Rev. James Milligan (1785-1862), then of Ryegate, VT,⁵ who later in 1830 visited Lochiel in Glengarry County and Ramsay in Lanark County. At Ramsay,

he organized the members into a congregation; admitted several others into the communion of the church; and preached on the first and second Sabbaths of July, on the latter of which he dispensed the Lord's Supper to 28 Communicants, with the usual week-day sermons.⁶

In October of 1831, the third missionary visited Lanark county: Mr. Symmes (1801-1874), “a probationer from the Reformed Synod in the States, preached in Ramsay three Sabbaths.”⁷ Licentiate Symmes later became Rev. John H. Symmes.⁸ In fact, considerable thought was given by Lanark County RP to the possibility of looking to American RP for

permanent clergy. Two things stood in the way. One, financial resources were scarce in Upper Canada, though it was felt that should “one of the preachers, expected from the States . . . come, [that] influence would very considerably further the object contemplated.”⁹ The second factor proved more daunting. The American RP church and its clergy were convulsed in the early 1830s in a controversy which would lead to an actual schism in 1833 between Old School Covenanters and New School Covenanters (The New School opting for a more liberal compromise with the state – allowing voting and holding civil office – the Old School standing by previous standards disallowing these practices.) “During the excitement consequent upon this [controversy], the Covenanter[s] . . . in [Upper] Canada received no further supplies of preaching.”¹⁰ So recourse was made to the Scots RP Synod and missionaries sent out by them.

In 1831, the Scots RP Synod “virtually declared itself a *Missionary Society*, and became pledged to *new* and *more vigorous* efforts, for extending the kingdom of the Messiah,”¹¹ though it would be 1833 before its first missionary was sent to Upper Canada. The Irish Synod had formed its Missionary Society in 1823.¹² Evidently, the old world synods divided the mission: “the Irish will cultivate Nova Scotia and New Brunswick,” the Scots will cultivate “the Canadas.”¹³

Before outlining something of the career of Rev. James M’Lachlan and later colleagues sent out from Scotland, I note the missionary philosophy of the Scots RP Synod, particularly as compared to that of the Irish Synod. There are two differences: first, the Irish Synod made clear that missions in the new world were secondary to missions in Ireland.¹⁴ The Scots Synod made no such hierarchy of priorities. Among the Scots RP Synod there was no suggestion that the Canada mission was secondary.¹⁵ The second difference is in some sense a reversal of the first. The Irish Synod sent out its missionaries, kept strong ties with them, and consistently supported them financially if not generously: the mission was underwritten over the long haul. As a result, the Maritime RP did not switch from the mother Irish RP Synod until 1879. The Scottish Synod sent out its missionaries, but urged them to become financially independent quickly, for there would be no continuing life-line from Scotland. The letter accompanying the first missionary, offered this pointed advice to the Canadians greeting and hosting their first missionary:

God helps them, it is said, who help themselves . . . While your

supreme dependence . . . should be on God, and the exalted Mediator; your *next* should be *on your own exertions* . . . If we are not greatly mistaken in our judgment of *the signs of the times*, every other [financial] source of supply will prove INADEQUATE, TEMPORARY, and PRECARIOUS.¹⁶

The RP in Upper Canada switched to the American Synod in the early 1850s.

The RP in Glengarry, like those in Lanark, owed their origin and continued existence to Scottish lay RP. In both counties, there were many Scots and many Presbyterians. In both counties, many of these Scots Presbyterians “joined the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Established Church of Scotland.”¹⁷ Yet there were a few who could not and would not take this course. This is particularly evident in Glengarry county. From 1833 until the early 1850s Lanark County RP had a long, reasonably consistent experience with the Scots RP missionary, James M’Lachlan. Glengarry County RP did not have such a relationship – in fact, they never had a consistent pastor, but survived for some thirty years on occasional ministers from south of the border.¹⁸ The Brodies were a particularly strong Glengarry family:

In 1815 Mr. John Brodie and his family came from Scotland and settled in the eastern part of the township on land given by the Government to encourage emigration. They were accompanied by many of their neighbours and acquaintances from the land of their birth, but were the only family among the emigrants arriving at that time, who were then members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Both Mr. Brodie and his wife were earnest and devoted Christians, and lived with an ardent love the principles they professed. They could not conscientiously join with the established Presbyterian Church of Scotland, because of its complicity with an ungodly Civil Government, and because of the laxity of practice which was tolerated in it. Still less could they join with other churches which held doctrines more unscriptural and allowed practices still more at variance with the revealed will of God. Zealous for the truth and for the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, they could not accept ecclesiastical fellowship with any religious society in which the supreme authority of God’s word and the Mediatorial Dominion of the Messiah were not plainly asserted and practically upheld.¹⁹

The earliest Scots Covenanter missionary, the longest serving, and perhaps the most able, was James M'Lachlan (1798-1864).²⁰ He was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on 14 June 1798, in a pious Secession home, with which body he was connected in early life. He graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1822. He studied theology at Perth Seminary, was licensed by the Glasgow Presbytery on 19 April 1826, was ordained by the same presbytery on 16 November 1826 by the Associate Burgher Church. In the spring of 1827, he went out to the Cape of Good Hope to labour in South Africa under the auspices of the London Missionary Society. On account of the serious illness of his wife (Jane Campbell, whom he had married in 1825), he returned to Scotland in 1828 where his wife died. In 1829, he received the appointment of Chaplain to the Seamen's Chapel in Glasgow, Scotland, an office he held for four years. On 24 May 1833, he connected with the Covenanter Church. In the same year he married Christiana Hamilton of Glasgow.

On the recommendation of secretary Rev. Stewart Bates, the Scots RP Committee on Missions, decided to seek out Rev. James M'Lachlan as missionary to the Canadas; this decision met with the approval of both the Scots presbyteries and of M'Lachlan himself.²¹ M'Lachlan's designation as missionary took place in Edinburgh on 10 July 1833. The canny Scots also negotiated and agreed in "regard to pecuniary arrangements."²² Having received a communication from Megantic County in Lower Canada,²³ the Committee determined that "had they been able to obtain another missionary, they would gladly have sent him to unfurl the banners of the Covenanted Reformation in Lower Canada also." As it was, they "ordered Mr. M'Lachlan to visit the townships [of Inverness, Halifax and New Ireland] on his landing in Quebec, and preach for a short time to the people before he proceeded to . . . Upper Canada."²⁴

"Mr. and Mrs. M'Lachlan sailed from Greenock in the *Favourite* on 17 July and arrived at Quebec on 18 August after a passage of thirty-three days."²⁵ Rev. M'Lachlan preached several times in Megantic County,²⁶ then left Montreal on 4 September arriving at Ramsay in Lanark County on 13 September 1833. Since there had been no public ordinances in Lanark for three years, many had fallen by the wayside; so M'Lachlan's "arrival was a great joy to the few who still adhered to the Testimony of the [RP] Church."²⁷ For his part, M'Lachlan re-organized the congregation with a regular session. While there were difficulties, M'Lachlan was able

“on the last Sabbath of February, 1834, assisted by [Rev.] Mr. [James] Milligan, [to] dispense the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.”²⁸ In a letter to the Scots Missionary Society, M’Lachlan wrote in April 1834, “our little Church consists of twenty-five members, in Ramsay thirteen, in Beckwith seven, and in Lanark five.”²⁹

For the next few years, M’Lachlan was busily engaged in pastoral work and the erection of church buildings in several communities in Lanark County. Much of the information from this period comes from M’Lachlan’s own pen,³⁰ for he was an assiduous letter-writer to the Scots RP Missionary Society.³¹ By 1838, he had “succeeded in organizing three distinct [Lanark County] congregations, Ramsay, Beckwith and Perth, each of which had a separate session”; M’Lachlan’s labours were “regularly divided among them.”³² The three congregations called M’Lachlan as pastor, and after thinking about the matter for some time, M’Lachlan said yes. But because of M’Lachlan’s missionary work in other areas, it was “agreed that the induction should be delayed for some time.”³³ In addition to the core Lanark labours, M’Lachlan made missionary trips east to Megantic County in Lower Canada and west to the upper parts of Upper Canada.

As we have seen, Rev. James M’Lachlan visited RP in Megantic County in 1833. The Scots RP Mission Society kept being appealed to by these folk. And so, apparently, was Rev. James M’Lachlan in Lanark County. That same cluster of congregations was again heard from, by the Scots Committee, in 1835. They stated, “more than two years have now elapsed since Mr. M’Lauchlan visited the petitioners, and still they are looking with the deepest anxiety for a minister from the Reformed Presbyterian Church.”³⁴

The Synod’s Committee was eventually able to respond to these pleas from Lower Canada; early in 1837 it was announced that James Geggie (1793-1863) “had consented to go . . . as a Missionary.”³⁵ Geggie had been employed as a licentiate in mission work among RP in Scotland. “At Edinburgh, on the evening of Tuesday, 27th June, Mr. James Geggie was ordained by the Reformed Presbyterian of Edinburgh to the office of the ministry, and set apart as a Missionary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to Lower Canada.”³⁶ On 12 August Rev. James Geggie, his wife, and child, arrived in the new world, and Geggie wrote, “The voyage was, on the whole, tolerably comfortable, and not very long; but I was frequently very squeamish, though never very sick. Mrs. G. was twice so

sick as not to be able to attend properly to our child, who, notwithstanding, thrived very well at sea."³⁷ When he arrived in Quebec, Rev. James Geggie made his way to the townships of Leeds and Inverness – a brother of Rev. Geggie's, Robert Geggie, was there to greet him. Rev. Geggie's work was the subject of favourable comment in the *Sixth Report of the Committee on Missions* in April, 1838.³⁸ Geggie wrote again from the area late in 1838, noting that his work was proceeding well, though "nothing has, as yet, been done by the people to contribute to the support of the Gospel among them, excepting the putting up of two places of worship."³⁹

The Megantic RP were not supporting the missionary in a pecuniary fashion, and this may have been the chief reason why the Scots Synod in 1840 noted that "Mr. Geggie's engagement with the Synod expires in September [1840], and the Committee were instructed to inform him that no new arrangement would be entered into with him. He is, therefore, at liberty to return to Scotland, or to remain in Canada, as it may suit his convenience."⁴⁰ A letter was sent to Geggie, but having received no answer, the 1841 Scots Synod "instructed the Presbytery of Edinburgh to communicate with Mr. Geggie, and to inform him, if he does not furnish them without delay, with a satisfactory account of his conduct, it will be necessary for them to take steps for exercising the discipline of the Church towards him."⁴¹ Clearly "disheartened, and at outs with the Reformed Presbyterian Church,"⁴² Geggie "was led to connect himself with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland."⁴³ He served in that church and the Free Church, which he joined in 1844, until his death in 1863.⁴⁴ RP efforts in Quebec did not entirely cease, as M'Lachlan again visited the province on at least one occasion,⁴⁵ yet there were no successful, long-term congregations established in that province.

James M'Lachlan's main field of endeavour was in Lanark County. He had made a few trips to Quebec in the mid-1830s, and many more over a twenty-year period to points west. As early as 1838, "there was considerable dissatisfaction with the pastor [in Lanark County], on account of his frequent and long absences, performing missionary labour in . . . Toronto, Guelph, Hamilton, etc."⁴⁶ Yet his missionary visits west were clearly mandated by the Scots Committee on Missions. In a letter written on Christmas Day, 1839, to the Scots Committee, M'Lachlan outlined in some detail an eleven-week journey that took him from Lanark to several others, among them Frontenac, York, Waterloo, Peel and Halton counties, travelling on foot, on horse-back and on steam-boats.⁴⁷

The Scots Committee attempted to find a missionary for Upper Canada west, and they seemed to have found a fine candidate in Thomas M'Keachie (1810-1844). The Scots committee had plans for M'Keachie, as laid out in February 1843:

Mr. M'Keachie, preacher of the gospel, was appointed as a Missionary to the districts of Dumfries, Hamilton, &c., in Upper Canada, where, in the course of his missionary tours, the Rev. Jas. M'Lachlan has succeeded in forming several praying societies. These Societies have applied to the Reformed Presbyterian Church for a Missionary, and promised a considerable sum to aid in supporting him. In consequence of the appointment of Mr. M'Keachie to the upper part of the province, Mr. M'Lachlan will be relieved from labour which rendered it necessary for him to be absent from his own congregations for several months each year, and their request, that the pastoral relation should be formed between him and them, may now be conveniently granted. [Further] . . . it is intended that, on his arrival, he and Mr. M'Lachlan shall constitute a Presbytery in Canada.⁴⁸

Ordained as a missionary on 2 May 1843,⁴⁹ and given a letter of instruction from the Committee on Missions,⁵⁰ “he and Mrs. M'Keachie embarked at Glasgow for their destination, the township of Dumfries, on 26th of June.”⁵¹ M'Keachie gave early evidence of energy and effectiveness; the Scots Committee received a letter (dated 7 August 1843) when the M'Keachie's were “on passage up the St. Lawrence” River.⁵² Writing from Toronto on 6 November 1843, where he has been labouring, M'Keachie said that “Mr. M'Lachlan accompanied him to his station [Galt] and introduced him to the people among whom he had been sent to labour.”⁵³ In March (4th) of 1844, M'Keachie writes that his “principal stations are Galt, Guelph and Toronto. He expresses a strong desire to divide the field with another labourer.”⁵⁴ Largely on the strength of M'Keachie's efforts, Rev. James M'Lachlan, accepted the long-deferred RP Lanark call; Edinburgh Presbytery, in which presbytery M'Lachlan had been a member, formally recognized the “pastoral relation between Rev. James M'Lachlan and the united congregations of Perth, Carlton and Ramsay.”⁵⁵ But all the promise and energy coming from M'Keachie came to naught because of his sudden death in the summer of 1844. Some time after, James M'Lachlan visited the places where M'Keachie had laboured:

The people in general who sat under his [M'Keachie's] ministry, esteemed him highly. Never do they speak of him but with regret. He was generally esteemed by all who knew him, as kind and amiable in his disposition, and faithful and zealous in all his efforts to do good to his fellow-men . . . The sudden and early removal of their pastor by death has been to them a severe trial.⁵⁶

Nonetheless, the sorrowing RP pressed for a replacement for M'Keachie, urging this on M'Lachlan when he visited.⁵⁷ "The stroke [of M'Keachie's sudden death] fell heavily on the hopes of the Committee,"⁵⁸ yet the pleas kept coming from Upper Canada.

A replacement for M'Keachie was found in the person of John M'Lachlan (ca. 1805-1870), apparently no relation of Rev. James M'Lachlan. John M'Lachlan made his desires known in September 1846. The necessary arrangements having been made,

Mr. [John] M'Lachlan was ordained to the office of the holy ministry, in West Campbell Street Church, Glasgow, by the Glasgow Reformed Presbytery, on the 26th of October. On the 23d of the ensuing month, he and Mrs. M'Lachlan sailed from the Clyde for New York, and on the 9th of January [1847] following they reached their destination at Galt.⁵⁹

Rev. John M'Lachlan, writing from Upper Canada the following May, was able to say "I am thankful to say that, through the tender mercy of our heavenly Father, my dear partner and myself have hitherto been blessed with a good measure of health and strength."⁶⁰ He ministered where M'Keachie had done, and mentioned three new possibilities – Oneida, Ayr and Hamilton. John M'Lachlan concludes his letter by asking for additional help:

I am strongly of [the] opinion, that the sooner an additional labourer be sent forth the better. I will receive him as a brother, and do all in my power to strengthen his hands. I feel persuaded that two missionaries would be fully as well supported by the people as one, because they would in that case be more abundantly supplied with ordinances. Until our church have a presbytery formed, she cannot be said to have a substantial footing in this country.⁶¹

Both Reverends James and John M'Lachlan pressed for additional missionaries; the Scots synod, however, was not persuaded of its merits.

Both sides – the RP in Upper Canada and the Committee of Missions in Scotland – were wearying of the relationship. The new world RP kept petitioning for more clergy. The Scots committee was less than enthusiastic: “The Committee do not entertain any strong opinion on the subject [of sending more missionaries]. Were a person of suitable gifts to offer himself for service in Canada, the Committee are not disinclined to entertain the offer. At the same time, they do not feel justified in pressing the matter on the attention of the preachers or of the church.”⁶² Was there a way out? What about the Upper Canadian RP joining with the American RP? The Canadians suggested it first, and the Scots applauded the move. Discouraged at being rebuffed by the Scots committee in his pleas for more clergy assistance, Rev. John M'Lachlan demitted the RP in 1851 after four years of service.⁶³ The congregations and mission stations in which he had worked connected with the Rochester Presbytery, as did Rev. James M'Lachlan and the Lanark County congregations. At the 1851 Scots Synod, the Committee on Missions looked back on its efforts, and noted the changes that had transpired.

Your Committee regrets that they cannot report favourably regarding the results of your missionary operations in Canada. Since the time that your first missionary [Rev. James M'Lachlan going out in 1833] was sent to those provinces the state of matters, as regards the supply of religious instruction, has undergone a great change. Churches have multiplied in connexion with the larger religious communities, and facilities for farther increase have been also provided. Both as regards the amount of existing destitution, therefore, and the prospect of enlargement without, to the societies under the care of your missionaries, there is a decided change. The families formerly connected with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland and Ireland are at the same time so widely scattered, and like the other emigrants, so frequently changing their residence, that it is a rare thing to find any considerable number of them so situated as to be able to assemble for public worship in one place. It was the understanding of the Committee from the beginning, that temporary assistance only should be allowed to the missionaries proceeding to Canada; and that to multiply small stations – all of them depending more or less for support on the mother country, would not be satisfactory to the

church. The arrangement made at the time of sending out each of the three ministers [Reverends James Geggie, Thomas M'Keachie and John M'Lachlan] last appointed to Canada, included a promise of assistance only for three years. The first of these missionaries [Rev. James Geggie, going out in 1837] withdrew at the end of three years. In the providence of God, the second [Rev. Thomas M'Keachie, going out in 1843] was removed by death, after one year of faithful and successful labour. The third [Rev. John M'Lachlan, going out in 1847], after having received assistance from home for four years, has followed the example of the first. The societies to the westward, therefore, are now again without one to break the bread of life to them, and it does not appear that they have at all increased in strength since the decease of Mr. M'Keachie. The course of events for a considerable time past, has led your committee to the conclusion that it would be better on many accounts were the societies, and also the united congregations under the care of Rev. James M'Lachlan, placed in ecclesiastical connexion with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of the United States . . . Under the care of judicatories so near at hand, and from which the requisite advice and succour can be readily and promptly obtained, the various preaching stations which have been formed, may, by the divine blessing, become self-sustaining congregations, at no distant period. In such a result, the Committee, and it is believed, the entire church in this country, would greatly rejoice.⁶⁴

The transition was soon effected. Later, Rev. James M'Lachlan left Lanark County, Ontario, being called to the Lisbon, NY RP church in 1855 where he served until his death on 19 November 1864.⁶⁵ Glasgow has this tribute and assessment of the man:

He was a devoted soldier of the Cross, and bore many hardships in presenting the gospel in new fields. He shrunk from no toil, however arduous, and most cheerfully performed every Christian duty. He was a very quiet, unassuming, and humble Christian, avoiding the very appearance of pomp or pride, and took his chiefest joy in silent meditation with his Saviour. While he was well-read in theology and the puritan Divines, yet he had no taste for general reading and avoided public life. His discourses were carefully written and committed to memory before delivery. He was an acceptable speaker, but by no means eloquent.⁶⁶

Ontario RP in the American RP Synod, 1850-1975

I do not deal with this period except in passing. Two historians of the movement served in this time – Rev. Robert Shields (1827-1883), who was minister from 1865 until 1883,⁶⁷ and Rev. Robert J. More (1835-), who was minister from 1963 until 1975.⁶⁸

One matter which did change was the alteration in a key Covenanter conviction: the one that held that Covenanters could not vote or hold civic office. Under fire for some time, the final debate came at the Synod in 1967.⁶⁹ Thereafter, from a public point of view, Covenanters were distinguished from other conservative Christians, not by their refusal to vote or hold public office, but rather by their continuing practice of the exclusion of musical instruments from public worship, and by the singing of psalms only.

There were also other changes. The congregations in upper Upper Canada did not develop, but rather withered away. There were no longer three congregations in Lanark county but one only – Ramsay – and the name of that congregation was changed to Almonte in the early 1890s. In the 1850s, when the Upper Canadian congregations switched from the Scots to the American Synod, they were affiliated with the Rochester Presbytery; its name also was changed to St. Lawrence Presbytery in 1937. The congregation in Glengarry county, never large, was under the New York Presbytery until 1865, then in 1866 it became part of Rochester (later St. Lawrence) Presbytery. The name of the congregation was changed from Glengarry to Lochiel in 1867.⁷⁰

Contemporary Canadian RP – 1975 to the Present

Until fifteen years ago, the Ontario RP were largely an ethnic religious group, dependent almost exclusively on Scots and Scots-Irish settlers and their descendants. The movement was also largely dependent on non-Canadian financial and spiritual support – from Scotland until 1850, and from the United States until 1975.

That profile began to be changed some 15-18 years ago. An awareness grew that the Canadian RP work was small and decreasing. Was there a way these fortunes could be reversed? The Rochester presbytery, nudged by the Almonte, Ontario (where Rev. Kenneth McBurney became pastor in 1976) and Lisbon, New York, congregations, determined to try

a reversal. A man was called as associate minister at Almonte, for outreach work in the Ottawa region. That associate minister was Richard Ganz, and his coming made a significant change.

Richard Ganz (1946-) was born in New York, of an Orthodox Jewish family. He converted to Reformed Presbyterianism. He was educated largely in the United States, holding a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Wayne State University. He is a man of considerable energy and charisma. Ganz realized that RP fortunes could only be reversed if the movement became entirely Canadian. He therefore bent his considerable energies towards that goal.

Largely through his efforts, a mission station, and then a congregation was formed in Ottawa in 1981. Again, largely through his efforts, a theological hall was established about a year later in this city.⁷¹ How was it related to the denomination's institution, the Reformed Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh? In a sense, marginally. The Ottawa Theological Hall is not a wing or arm of the Pittsburgh Seminary. It is actually accountable to St. Lawrence Presbytery. The Synod had a lot of questions about the project – what about a library? It was minimal, strictly RP material came from professors' libraries, though of course there are fine libraries in this city. What about salaries for professors? No salaries were paid. Travelling expenses only.⁷² The whole matter seems somewhat shaky – it was and is – yet Ganz, and a few colleagues, have made it successful and effective. Ganz built up a network of American and Ulster allies who supported the effort in the RP ecclesiastical-political structure, and I have sensed a good deal of support for Ganz, for Canadian RP, in contacts I have made with American RP, largely at the Seminary in Pittsburgh. In effect, American (and some Irish) clergy come for a few weeks at a time, and give of their time and talent gratuitously.

There have been very few graduates of the theological hall, some of them from American congregations. The best known is Christian Adjemian (1947-), who was converted through Ganz's efforts. Adjemian was born in France, baptized as a Roman Catholic, educated in the United States, became a Ph.D. in Romance Linguistics, and was lecturer, assistant professor, and associate professor of linguistics at the University of Ottawa 1977-88. He was ordained in 1988, and became RP minister at Perth, one of the original Lanark county congregations, though that growing congregation is now centred in Smiths Falls.⁷³ Adjemian's skills as a linguist are also utilized at the Ottawa Theological Hall. A more recent

graduate, Matthew Hadwen (1946-) was ordained and installed as minister of a mission in Kingston, Ontario in the autumn of 1991.⁷⁴ That situation did not work out, at least it is in abeyance at the present time.⁷⁵

Ganz was also responsible for giving Canadian RP a more visible public posture. He has been instrumental in leading the Ontario congregations in vigorous support of the Pro-life movement; in this regard he is allied with American RP, who are also engaged in that political controversy.⁷⁶ In an article in the late 1980s, Ganz is reported to have professed interest in the Christian Heritage party – a political movement that seems closest to Covenanter ideals.⁷⁷ Moreover, through editing, co-authoring and writing articles and books, Richard Ganz has also raised the profile of the Canadian Covenanters.⁷⁸

The RP movement is still a minor movement.⁷⁹ Lochiel maintains its small, precarious, but long-standing existence. The Almonte-Ottawa-Smiths Falls congregations are engaged in traditional outreach – Bible Studies groups – in neighbouring communities. There is a small tent-making ministry in Montreal.⁸⁰

Ganz, however, has changed the Covenanter face in Canada, in at least two ways: first, it has broken out of its Scots and Scots-Irish cultural and historical mold; and secondly, the movement has a much higher public profile.

Endnotes

1. See Eldon Hay, *The Chignecto Covenanters: A Regional History of Reformed Presbyterianism in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, 1827 to 1905* (forthcoming).
2. See Frank Archibald, "The Reformed Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia or The Covenanters in the Lower Provinces" (B.D. Thesis, Pine Hill Divinity Hall, Halifax, 1934).
3. See Robert M. More, Jr., *Aurora Borealis: A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Canada (Covenanter), 1820-1967* (Pittsburgh: Board of Education and Publication, 1967). This is the only work that attempts to outline Covenanterism across Canada.
4. "Reformed Presbyterians in Canada," *Scottish Presbyterian* 1 (March 1835): 26. McKee is also named in William Bell's Diary: "Rev. McKee, a Cameronian preacher from New York, had preached this winter in

various parts of the settlement, especially in Ramsay. He preached too in Perth where he had large congregations. He called upon me in inquire into the principles and views of our church, in order, as he said, to bring about a union between them. But a union with a church under another government, did not appear [to us] expedient” (entry of March 1830, in *A Man Austere – William Bell, Parson and Pioneer*, ed. Isabel Skelton [Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947]). For further information on McKee, see W.M. Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America* (Baltimore: Hill and Harvey, 1888), 559ff.

5. See Glasgow, 187, 630ff.
6. More, 26.
7. More, 26.
8. See Glasgow, 188, 700ff.
9. More, 25-26.
10. Rev. Robert Shields, “The R.P. Congregation of Ramsay, Canada,” *Our Banner* 4 (15 February 1877): 38.
11. “First Report of the Missionary Society in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Adopted February 28, 1833,” *Scottish Presbyterian Magazine* 2 (September 1850): 1-7. The Missionary Society (later called the Committee on Missions) published an annual report. The following are extant: First (1833), Second (1834), Sixth (1838), Report of the Synod’s Committee on Foreign Missions, July 9th, 1845, Report of 1846-47. Efforts to locate the following have not been successful: Third (1835), Fourth (1836), Fifth (1837); no reports for 1839 to 1844; and none for 1848 onward.
12. Minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, 1820. There it was resolved “that a minister and a layman attend the next meeting of the regular Synodical Committee for the purpose of forming themselves into a Missionary Society for the sending of the Gospel to places destitute of the same, and that Society to be called ‘The Missionary Society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland,’” (cited by Adam Loughridge, *The Covenanters in Ireland: A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* [Belfast: Cameron Press, 1984], 5).

13. Letter from Rev. Alexander McLeod (leading American RP minister visiting Ireland and Scotland, written from Aberdeen) to James R. Willson (fellow leading American RP clergyman in America), dated 4 May 1830: “The Scottish Synod have formed a Missionary Association for England & the Canadas. The Irish will cultivate Nova Scotia & New Brunswick, both in union with our American exertions. We will, thus, have our three churches in the neighbourhood of each other” (this paragraph in a letter from Professor David Carson of Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA, to author, 7 November 1988).
14. See the *Statement of the RP Home and Foreign Missionary Society* (Belfast, 1828), 15.
15. “From the first formation of the Society . . . the views of the Synod were directed to Canada, as a most inviting field for missionary labour” (Stewart Bates, *Address to the Reformed Presbyterians and Other Christians in British America* [Edinburgh: 1834], 8).
16. Bates, 9-11.
17. Glasgow, 187.
18. Rev. Robert Shields, “A Historical Sketch of the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Lochiel in the County of Glengarry Ontario Canada under the care of the Rochester Presbytery of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America,” 1876, 5-10, United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto. Shields names the various ministers and licentiates who came to Glengarry County.
19. Shields, “A Historical Sketch of the RP Congregation of Lochiel,” 3-4.
20. For this paragraph on M’Lachlan, I am largely indebted to Glasgow, 606-07. The name M’Lachlan is variously rendered, by Glasgow as “MacLachlane,” by others as McLachlan, etc. I have used “M’Lachlan” because the Scots RP Reports use it, and apparently it was the way the man signed his own name.
21. *Second Report of the Committee on Missions in Connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland* (May 1834), 1-2, where M’Lachlan’s response to the invitation, written on 2 July 1833, is cited.
22. *Second Report of the Committee on Missions in Connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland* (May 1834), 1-2.

23. *Second Report of the Committee on Missions in Connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland* (May 1834), 3. Resolutions and a petition were “passed at a meeting held 13 January 1833, subscribed by thirty-eight individuals . . . residing in the County of Megantic, Lower Canada.” Part of the documents are cited in the Report. The petitioners “are settlers principally from Scotland, are scattered over the face of the forest of Canada, to the extent of three hundred square miles, and completely shut out from access to gospel ordinances, being placed at the distance of between fifty and sixty miles from any regular Presbyterian congregation; that they are in general attached to the doctrine, worship and discipline contained in the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, having been instructed in these things from their early years.” They also state that “they are unable, from their present circumstances, to propose any fixed stipend, being all new settlers, but expect, under the favour of divine Providence, in a year or two, to make a suitable provision for a regular gospel ministry among them.” A few of the petitioners, “while in this country [Scotland], were in communion with the Reformed Presbyterian Church.”
24. *Second Report of the Committee on Missions in Connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland* (May 1834), 3.
25. *Second Report of the Committee on Missions in Connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland* (May 1834), 3.
26. M’Lachlan gives an account of his labours just completed in Megantic County, in a letter written from Quebec, 29 August 1833, found as Appendix II in the *Second Report of the Committee on Missions in Connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland* (May 1834), 7-8.
27. “Reformed Presbyterians in Canada,” 27.
28. “Reformed Presbyterians in Canada,” 27.
29. Cited in “Reformed Presbyterians in Canada,” 27.
30. M’Lachlan is also mentioned in William Bell’s Diary: under the entry for 5 January 1835, Bell writes, “Mr. McLaughlin, the Cameronian minister from Carleton Place favoured us with a call, and spent a great part of the day with us. I was happy to see him, but was somewhat disappointed to find that he was not so liberal as I expected. I proposed that he should assist me at the sacrament, and I would do the same for him; but this he

declined, because, he said, it would *interfere with the reformation work to which they had attained*" (in Skelton, *A Man Austere*).

31. Letters and extracts of letters by Rev. James M'Lachlan are found in various issues of the *Scottish Presbyterian* from 1835 to 1848.
32. *Sixth Report of the Committee on Missions* (April 1838), 2.
33. "Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Scotland [24 April 1838]," *Scottish Presbyterian* 2 (May 1838): 55.
34. "Foreign. Canada," *Scottish Presbyterian* 1 (January 1836): 114.
35. "Meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Scotland," *Scottish Presbyterian* 1 (July 1837): 287.
36. "Ordination of Mr. Geggie, as a Missionary to Canada," *Scottish Presbyterian* 1 (July 1837): 290.
37. "Letter from the Rev. James Geggie, Missionary, Lower Canada," *Scottish Presbyterian* 2 (January 1838): 18. The date of the letter was 13 October 1837.
38. There is a section entitled, "Lower Canada," 5-6.
39. "The Rev. James Geggie," *Scottish Presbyterian* 2 (January 1839): 140. Excerpts are from the letter dated 11 October 1838.
40. "Meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Scottish Synod [Glasgow, 11 May 1840]," *Scottish Presbyterian* 2 (June 1840): 336. The actual minutes of the meeting give more detail "As to the expediency of continuing the mission in Lower Canada. On this point the Court gave the following deliverances: That under all the circumstances of the case, it seems expedient to the Synod to discontinue for the present their Missionary efforts at Leeds, and the neighbouring townships in Lower Canada, for this, among other reasons, the Missionary has reported that there is no prospect of his being able to organize a congregation there. It was also agreed that after the expiration of the third year of Mr. Geggie's labours, his relation to the Synod as a Missionary should terminate" (provenance: Scottish Record Office).
41. "Meetings of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in Scotland [Edinburgh, 10 May 1841]," *Reformed Presbyterian* 5 (November 1841): 274.

42. "Geggie, James. 1793-1863," mss, n.d., United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto.
43. "Geggie, James," in Joseph M. Wilson, *The Presbyterian Historical Almanac, and Annual Remembrancer of the Church for 1866* (Philadelphia: 1866), 8:371.
44. See "Geggie, James," in D. Walkington, "Presbyterian Ministers in Upper and Lower Canada Prior to the Formation in 1875 of the Presbyterian Church in Canada," n.d., 21. The entry reads as follows: "1841-44 Valcartier, Que.; Joined Free Church; Kingston Presbytery: 1846-1847. Edwardsburgh, 1848-1855 Spencerville; Brockville & Ottawa Presbytery: 1856-1858. Dalhousie; Died. January 3, 1893."
45. M'Lachlan went to Sorel, Lower Canada, in the summer of 1844, He wrote about this and other matters in a letter from Ramsay, dated 16 September 1844 ("Canada – Letter from the Rev. James M'Lachlan," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 2 [March 1845]: 88-89).
46. Shields, "The RP Congregation of Ramsay," 69.
47. "Extracts from a Letter, addressed to the Synod's Committee on Missions, by the Rev. J. M'Lachlan, Missionary in Upper Canada, dated Ramsay, 25 December 1839," *Scottish Presbyterian* 2 (September 1840): 358-60.
48. "Missionary to Upper Canada," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (March 1843): 88-89.
49. "Ordination of Mr. Thomas M'Keachie," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (July 1843): 187-88.
50. "Letter of Instructions to the Rev. Thomas M'Keachie," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (September 1843): 199-200. The letter is dated 13 June 1843, and is signed by Andrew Symington, convenor of the Committee on Missions.
51. "Meeting of Reformed Presbyterian Synod," Glasgow, 3 August 1843, *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (September 1843): 230.
52. "Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (October 1843): 292.
53. "Canada," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (January 1844): 343.

54. "Reformed Presbyterian Missions," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 1 (May 1844): 439.
55. "Report of the Synod's Committee on Foreign Mission 9 July 1845," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 2 (November 1845): appendix, 2.
56. "Canada Mission. – Extract Letter from Rev. James M'Lachlan, dated Nov. 7th, 1845," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 2 (January 1846): 328. Speaking for himself, M'Lachlan was also grieving: "Though the distance between me and my late fellow-labourer was great, yet it was consolatory to know that there was another labourer in the same cause and testimony." The same Scots RP paper had already published "Fragment of a Discourse, Delivered . . . on occasion of the death of Rev. Thomas M'Keachie, Missionary, Toronto," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 2 (November 1844): 542-50. The sermon was delivered 29 September 1844 in the "very house" in Scotland in which M'Keachie "was ordained to the office of the holy ministry."
57. "Canada Mission. – Extract Letter from Rev. James M'Lachlan, dated Nov. 7th, 1845," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 2 (January 1846): 328.
58. "Report of the Synod's Committee on Foreign Mission 9 July 1845," *Scottish Presbyterian* ns 2 (November 1845): appendix, 2.
59. *Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, Report of Committee from 1846-47, read in Synod, 6 July 1847, 6 (provenance: Scottish Record Office).
60. Cited in *Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland* [1846-47], 6. The quoted letter was written 20 May 1847.
61. *Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland* [1846-47], 8.
62. "Report of the Committee on Foreign Missions," *Scottish Presbyterian Magazine* 2 (June 1849): 204.
63. See "Cameronian Fasti," in "Reformed Heritage: Studies in Presbyterian Church History" (unpublished mss compiled in Edinburgh, 1977), 19. The entry "M'Lachlan, John" reads as follows: "b. Kilbrandon, about 1805; s. of Archibald M., farmer, and Catherine McDonald; ed. Aberdeen U., G.U. and R.P. Div. Hall; lic. 15 Apr. 1834; ord. as miss. to Canada 26 Oct. 1846; preached at Galt and Guelph; joined Presby. Ch. of Canada [1851]; ind. Acton, Toronto Presb.; trans. Feb. 1861 to Beaverton, Lake Simcoe;

died there 3 Jun. 1870.”

64. “Twenty-First Report of the Synod’s Committee on Foreign Missions,” *Scottish Presbyterian Magazine* 3 (June 1851): 208-09.
65. See J.C.K. Milligan, “Covenanter Ministers of Half a Century,” *Our Banner* 11 (February 1884): 58-73. Entry No. 66 reads as follows: “JAMES McLACHLANE. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, June 1798; Glasgow University, 1816; licensed and ordained by Burgher Presbytery, Scotland, as Missionary to Africa, 1826; joined Reformed Presbyterian Church, Scotland, 1834, and sent to Ramsay and Perth, Can.; received by Rochester Presbytery, October 7, 1851; Lisbon, July, 1855; died November 19, 1864.”
66. Glasgow, 607-08.
67. Shields, “A Historical Sketch of the RP Congregation of Lochiel,” 1-12; Shields, “The R.P. Congregation of Ramsay, Canada,” *Our Banner* 4 (15 February 1877): 33-39; (15 March 1877): 68-71; (16 April 1877): 107-10. Shields was pastor of Ramsay when he wrote the following account, “Sketch of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Eastern Ontario, 1872,” copy of handwritten document, United Church Archives, Toronto.
68. See Robert M. More, Jr., “Almonte Reformed Presbyterian Church” (unpublished mss, 1974), Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh; and More, *Aurora Borealis*.
69. *Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Pittsburgh, PA), 70-77, 121-129 (Synod held at Beaver Falls, PA, 17ff June 1967).
70. In addition to “Glengarry” and “Lochiel,” the names “Brodie” and “Dalkeith,” have also been assigned to the Glengarry County RP congregation.
71. See H.B. Harrington, “Ottawa Theological Hall: A History and Report,” *Covenanter Witness* (November 1988): 8-9. Ottawa Theological Hall is an instrument for the revival and expansion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America in Canada. There are several reasons why a Reformed Presbyterian theological seminary in Canada is useful and needed.
72. See “Committee to Report on Paper 82-11, relating to the Ottawa Theological Hall,” in *Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Pittsburgh, PA), 94-96 (Synod held at Grand Rapids, MI, 1982);

“Paper 82-11 from four members of the Court,” in *Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Pittsburgh, PA), 150-51 (Synod held at Grand Rapids, MI, 1982); “Response to Synod Paper 82-11 Relating to the Ottawa Theological Hall,” in *Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Pittsburgh, PA), 43-45 (Synod held at Beaver Falls, PA, 1983).

73. See Sharon Nault, “Smiths Falls, Ontario RPC – An ‘Older’ New Work,” *Covenanter Witness* (February 1993): 13, 15.
74. “Ordination examinations for Matthew Hadwen were conducted on Sept. 5 [1991]. He was ordained and installed pastor of the Kingston Mission Church, Kingston, ON, on Oct. 8 [1991]” (“Report of St. Lawrence Presbytery,” in *Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* [Pittsburgh, PA], 140-41 [Synod held at Northfield, MN, 1992]).
75. “The work in Kingston ran into problems and has been officially closed by Presbytery this spring [1993]. A few of the members retain membership in the Smiths Falls congregation” (letter from Rev. Kenneth McBurney to the author, Almonte, 27 May 1993).
76. See Christian Adjemian, “O Canada! Reclaiming Christ’s dominion from sea to sea,” *Covenanter Witness* (November 1988): 4-7. The article contains a photograph with this caption: “Richard Ganz, pastor of the Ottawa RPC, addresses the National Rally for Life on the steps of Canada’s Parliament Building last September [1988].”
77. “Our Churches in Canada,” *Covenanter Witness* (November 1988): 7, 14. A 1987 Membership Application of the Christian Heritage Party of Canada outlined its Party Principles “based on these biblical ethics [which] are unalterable: (a) We believe there is one Creator God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ; (b) We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, written Word of God and the final authority above all man’s laws and government; (c) We believe civil government to be under the authority of God; (d) We believe the purpose of civil government is to ensure freedom and justice for the nation’s citizens by upholding law and order in accordance with biblical principles; (e) We believe that decision-making processes by civil government must not in any way contravene these biblical ethics.”

78. See Richard L. Ganz, ed., *Thou shalt not Kill: The Case against Abortion* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1978); Richard L. Ganz, *You Shall be free indeed!* (Nepean, ON: GSG Group, 1989); and Richard L. Ganz, and William J. Edgar, *Sold Out! How the Evangelical Church is abandoning God for self-fulfilment: A Warning* (Ontario: Onward Press, 1990).
79. "Statistics of St. Lawrence Presbytery," *Minutes of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* (Beaver Falls, PA), 218 (Synod held at Northfield, MN, 1992). The statistics refer to December 1991 totals: 246 total members; 265 attend worship; 190 in Sabbath Schools.
80. See Philip Choinière-Shields, "Covenanters Target Montreal," *Covenanter Witness* (December 1992): 16-17. Rev. Ken McBurney writes that "there are now two families in Montreal who are seeking to start a church there. Presbytery has designated it the Montreal Mission and they have weekly worship services" (letter from Rev. Kenneth McBurney to the author, Almonte, 27 May 1993).

