UNITED AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF MANITOBA

An Architectural History Theme Study

Neil Bingham
Historic Resources Branch

Manitoba
Culture, Heritage and Tourism

On the cover:

Illustration for a church. Published in the Reverend James Robertson's *Presbyterian Church and Manse Building Fund -Manitoba and the Northwest Report*, 1886.

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PREFACE

This booklet has been adapted from a larger publication developed in 1987 by the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism. That report, *A Study of the Church Buildings of the Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Churches o Canada*, should still be available in public libraries.

That original study was intended to assist interested Church authorities to gain a better understanding of their architectural heritage, and thus to undertake better educational, tourism, designation and conservation programs. To that end, this original work also contained a substantial inventory of 452 buildings in the province. A pdf copy of the original study and another of the inventory are available by contacting the branch:

Historic Resources Branch
Main Floor, 213 Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1N3
Email: hrb@gov.mb.ca

This present extract from the 1987 report contains the contextual essay that was developed after a close review of the inventory results, and an examination of documents and information from Presbyterian and United Church archives. This essay presents the many important and interesting themes that have attended the development of these faith groups' church architecture in Manitoba, and will be useful for anyone interested in this important story.

THE DENOMINATIONS

The United Church of Canada was created in 1925 by the union of the Congregational, Methodist and the majority of Presbyterian congregations. By this merger, the new United Church inherited more church buildings in Manitoba than were in the possession of any other religious group. Moreover, although members of the continuing Presbyterian Church lost much of their property and many of their buildings, they still maintained and went on to build many fine structures.

The Congregational Church

The Congregational Church was a Protestant denomination which evolved out of the English Puritan strain of the l7th century. In Canada, the Church sprang from two distinct strands. Congregationalists first arrived during the l750s in Nova Scotia via New England. The American War of Independence isolated the Acadian Congregationalists from their American brethren with the consequence that their members declined severely. Further to the west, however, in Upper Canada, English Congregational immigrants became well established.

The Congregational Church was not one of Canada's major denominations. A stoutly independent church, its loosely knit structure reflected the individual nature which Protestantism can take. The central organization of the Church was not strong; rather, congregations depended upon the authority of their preacher. The Congregationalists were thus slow in entering the missionary field in Western Canada and did not arrive in Manitoba until l879, well behind the major denominations. Even then, they were principally an urban ministration, performing poorly in the country away from their middle class base.

In the decade preceding the First World War, Congregationalism in Manitoba peaked. But the War, financial burdens and personality conflicts signalled a dramatic change in the Church's fortune. The Congregational Union of Canada, the official name for the body formed by the major consolidation of Congregational sects in l906, limped into the United Church in l925.

The Methodist Church

Methodism began as a part of the established church. John Wesley (l703-9l), a Church of England clergyman, found himself unwillingly at odds with the Church hierarchy. Having experienced a religious rebirth, the "heart strangely warmed" sensation which characterizes Methodist faith, Wesley set about to organize classes and societies in order to propagate a disciplined, or as detractors said, a methodical Christian way of living. Barred from church pulpits, Wesley eventually ordained his own ministers and set up, through an Act of Parliament, a legal religious denomination. It proved a most popular movement.

Methodism established itself in North America during its founder's lifetime. Following the American Revolution, the Church took on a democratic form in the United States, with elected bishops - an episcopacy - acting as administrators for a distinctly American church body. Meanwhile, during the l770s, a strong group of English Methodists had arrived in Nova Scotia. Although for a time tinged by American influences from arriving Methodist Loyalists, the Maritime Methodists remained tied to the Wesleyan Conference in England. In the Canadas, however, a more independent Canadian form of Methodism arose; a mixture of the conservative English tradition and the American evangelical approach.

When Methodism entered what is today Manitoba, it arrived bearing John Wesley's overpowering faith in the gift of conversion. Wesley himself spent more than half of the l8th century travelling endlessly around Great Britain, preaching that God bestowed His grace upon the repentent. Missionary work was a significant condition of the Methodist Church. Interestingly, it was the English, not Canadian, Wesleyan Missionary Society who considered the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Métis and the Native Indians in need of a Methodist mission.

The Rev. James Evans arrived at Norway House in l840; and although recalled six years later under thin criminal evidence, he left an indelible mark upon the West with his development of a Cree syllabic for translating the Bible.

Canadian Methodists from Ontario finally took over responsibility for Indian missions in Rupert's Land in l854. And with the founding in l868 of a mission for the white settlers of Red River by Rev. George Young from Toronto, Ontario-based Methodism became firmly entrenched in the Canadian West. Young was responsible for two significant acts. Shortly after his arrival at Fort Garry, he set out to minister to the furthest edge of the settlement; an eagerness characteristic of Methodist preachers on the whole who, fired by devotion to the Gospel, doggedly pursued the scattered settlers no matter how great the challenge. These travels were to set the pattern for prairie Methodist ministering. Young's second achievement was the construction of Grace Church in Winnipeg during l87l, the mother church of prairie Methodism.

During the first decades of Methodism in Manitoba, two important unions strengthened the Church in Canada by bringing together various denominational groups. The first, occurring in l874 between the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada and a number of smaller bodies, resulted in the so-named Methodist Church of Canada. The second, in l884, was an even greater alliance, involving the Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, the Bible Christian Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada and the Methodist Church of Canada.

The new organization simply was called The Methodist Church. Meanwhile, in 1882, George Young had received the appointment of Superintendent of Missions for the newly created, and fairly independent, Conference of Manitoba and the North-West. As such, Young directed the efforts of the new Methodist preachers who were being sent to minister to the great throng of immigrants advancing with the railway across the Canadian West. Conversion, organization and church building were amongst Young's primary objectives.

The Methodist Church in Manitoba, until the Union of 1925, retained a steadily increasing membership which maintained it as the fourth largest denomination in the province, following the Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians. As a church open to many opinions - a consequence of an emphasis on pragmatism rather than theology - Methodism in Manitoba attracted a diverse, and at moments, seemingly contradictory membership. Amongst Manitoba's most prominent Methodists were the social activist and superintendent of All Peoples' Mission J.S. Woodsworth, businessman and hardwareman James Ashdown, railway builder Donald Mann, the historian Rev. Dr. J.H. Riddell, politician and newspaper owner Clifford Sifton, and feminist Nellie McClung.

There is, incidentally, one Methodist denominational survivor, the Free Methodist Church, an American organization based in Indiana which entered Canada through Ontario in the early 1870s, not arriving officially in Manitoba until 1898. The Free Methodists never joined in the great Methodist unions of 1874 and 1884, and thus were not affected greatly by the formation of the United Church in 1925. In recent years, the Free Methodist Church in Canada has been making strenuous moves to gain a greater independence from their American affiliations and to create an historical link with the Canadian Methodist tradition. But it is a very small body in Canada, the majority of its members residing in Ontario. And with only four church buildings in Manitoba today, all built in the last 30 years - in Grandview, Killarney, Roblin, and Winnipeg - the Free Methodist influence on Manitoba church history and its architecture may be said to have been minimal.

The Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is an offshoot of the Calvinist tradition of the Church of Scotland as established by John Knox (l5l5-72), the spiritual leader of the Scottish Reformation. During the late l8th century, Presbyterianism, in its various forms, arrived in the Maritimes and Central Canada with Scottish and Ulster immigrants and with Empire Loyalists from America. The factionalism which characterized Canadian Presbyterianism, especially following the Free Church Disruption in Scotland during the l840s, was healed by the great union of Presbyterian denominations in l875. Thus, by l89l, the Presbyterian Church formed the largest Protestant denomination in Canada.

Presbyterianism flourished in Manitoba. Many of the Selkirk settlers were from the Church of Scotland fold, as were the hardy men from the Orkney Islands who comprised the main workforce of the Hudson's Bay Company. But not until the arrival of the Rev. John Black in l85l did the Canadian West receive its first permanent Presbyterian minister. The erection of Kildonan Presbyterian Church between l85l and l854 and the departure in l866 of the Rev. James Nisbet from the Red River Settlement to found the Presbyterian mission of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, marked the visible establishment and dissemination of Presbyterianism on the Canadian prairies.

When the great settlement of Manitoba began in the early l880s with the coming of the railway, the Presbyterian Church was well ready to cope with the new arrivals. In l870, the formation of the Presbytery of Manitoba and the North-West spelt a great measure of independence from the Home and Foreign Missions Committees in Toronto. Decisions could be made locally. But even more critically astute was the appointment of the Rev. James Robertson in l88l as Superintendent of Home Missions for the Presbytery.

Dynamic, fervent, foresighted - Robertson was responsible for everything from organizing new arrivals into congregations, to supplying them with simple plans for church buildings. Across the vast plains he distributed his legion of preachers, often sending them to the very edge of the frontier so as to be ready to welcome the new settlers. In no small way due to Robertson's active labours, the membership of the Presbyterian Church rose l68% in the Canadian West during the last decade of the l9th century; a substantial figure when compared to the population increase of 83% over the same period. Upon his death in l902, the Presbyterian Church was the strongest denomination in Manitoba.

As with the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in Manitoba exhibited an enthusiasm for tackling moral and social issues rather than for grappling with theological debate. The Methodists and Presbyterians thus found that they had many goals in common: from the desire to tame an irreverent frontier by establishing theological centres (in Winnipeg, the Presbyterians founded Manitoba College in l87l [Figure l] while the Methodists established Wesley College in l877 [Figure 2]) to the addressing of social ills by running rescue-mission houses.

But the Presbyterian Church has always displayed a fiercely independent streak. Thus, when in l925 the United Church of Canada was formed by the union of the churches of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian faiths, a minority of Presbyterian congregations opted out and regrouped as the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada. The post-l925 Presbyterian Church had to struggle: it lacked ministers, suffered from financial difficulties, and found itself with little church property. Today, however, the Presbyterian Church is much healthier, and stands as the fourth largest denomination in Canada. In Manitoba, because only a small percentage of Presbyterians remained out of union, the Church today ranks eighth.

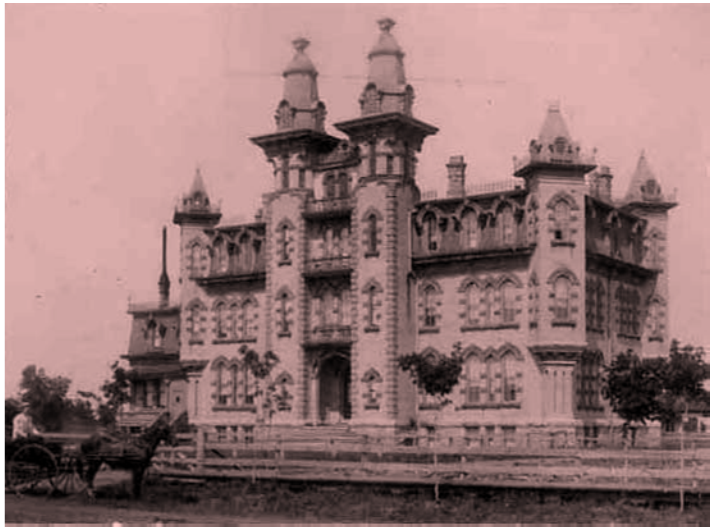

Figure 1.
Manitoba College, Winnipeg, by Barber and Bowes, 1881-82, photographed c.1895. Demolished. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 2.
Wesley College, now University of Winnipeg, by S.F. Peters and George Brown, 1896, photographed in 1900. It is the finest Richardsonian Romanesque building in Manitoba. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

The United Church

Dr. George Bryce, the Presbyterian historian, formally broached the subject of a merger between the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of Canada at the l902 Conference gathering of the Methodist Church in Winnipeg. The motion to study the possibility of union was favourably met.

At the time "church union" was a popular proposition. The three Churches had much in common. Historically, they all sprang from the British Protestant movement. Morally and socially, they were attempting to meet the same challenges, especially in the advocation of prohibition, in the nurturing of overseas missions, advancing Sunday schools, and the cultivation of new immigrants into good Canadian citizens. In their governments, the three Churches were similarly organized. No oligarchies existed. Ecclesiastical decisions lay in the hands of members; a circumstance which therefore would allow the administrative transformation to proceed smoothly.

Optimism tempered by pragmatism spurred church union on. The decade before the First World War was an economically prosperous one for Manitoba and the Canadian West. The Presbyterian and Methodist churches - the dominant denominations in the union negotiations - had forcibly established themselves on the plains. In fact, they had been at first too competitive in forming congregations. By around l9l0, town and country alike were over-churched: there were too many churches and often not enough ministers for the number of attending members. The passing of the Basis of Union in l908, and the l9ll agreement by the Methodists and Presbyterians not to compete in new territory or to place new congregations within six miles of one another, informally allowed existing congregations to unite in local unions. Ministers, services and church buildings could thus be shared.

Negotiations for Union, which slowed during the War, were dramatically resumed in l92l with the discovery of a sharp split in the Presbyterian Church. Nevertheless, following heated Parliamentary debate, the United Church of Canada Act received Royal Assent in l924. All Congregationalists and Methodists, and approximately two-thirds of the Presbyterians entered the new church. At a service in Toronto on l0 June l925, the United Church of Canada was inaugurated.

Upon its creation, the United Church formed the country's largest Protestant church. It still maintains this position. The religious historian, John Webster Grant, has termed the United Church "the most self-consciously Canadian of all churches, in principle it includes all ethnic groups". In character, it is a liberal body; a church, in following its antecedents, exhibiting a great social consciousness. Women have been included in the ordained ministry since l936.

Responsibility for making national policies within the United Church of Canada lies with the General Council which meets approximately every two years. The administration, however, is largely regional, with the country divided into l2 Conferences. The province of Manitoba falls within the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Its headquarters are in Winnipeg. In the l98l Canada Census, 240,395 persons claimed an affinity with the United Church in Manitoba; that is approximately 24% of the province's population.

THE BUILDINGS

Architecturally, it is difficult to distinguish between church buildings constructed by Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations in Manitoba. A common historical background and a relatively similar theological viewpoint allowed these denominations to borrow freely from one another in the field of architectural style and design. Moreover, the Anglicans (Church of England), Baptists and Lutherans - being from a common Protestant pool - raised church buildings that fall within the same, wider tradition. But in a more narrow sense, the architecture of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, as in their faiths, formed the closest of all Protestant ties.

The history of the Methodist and Presbyterian denominations in Manitoba - and the Congregationalists, too, although playing but a small role - can for the sake of convenience be divided into chronological units reflective of growth and change. The architecture of these church bodies are best studied within these historical periods. The assignment of dates to these stages must be considered only as approximate.

l. Early Settlement: l8l2-l880. Very few church buildings survive from this period of the Red River Settlement, pre-boom immigration, and isolated missionary outposts.
2. Establishment: l88l-l899. With the arrival of the railway came the great wave of immigration and church building.
3. Consolidation: l900-l924. In the prosperous years before the First World War, the Methodists and Presbyterians built many of the Province's largest churches. The aftermath of the War and the approach of Union spelt a slowdown in church construction.
4. Post-Union: l925-l945. A period of struggle for the Presbyterians who remained out of Union and were obliged to rebuild. Members of the new United Church continued, on the whole, to worship in the better of the pre-Union buildings. Merging congregations, however, spelt the demise of redundant structures, especially in the rural areas.

5. Modern: l946-the present. A re-evaluation with the past led to a new expression in church architecture. Many of the earlier church buildings disappeared in the wake of dwindling membership, high cost of building maintenance and a desire for the new and modern.

Early Settlement: 18l2-1880

The fifth Earl of Selkirk's settlement on the banks of the Red River in l8l2 marked the establishment of the first Presbyterian congregation in the Canadian West. But half a century was to pass before the Presbyterians received a minister and built a church. As they awaited the arrival of a preacher of their own faith, the Presbyterians joined the growing number of Anglican settlers in worshipping at St. John's Church, built in l823.

In l85l, the Presbyterian Church of Canada sent out from the East the Rev. John Black (l8l8-82) to be the first resident Presbyterian minister in the West. Kildonan Presbyterian, the church raised by John Black's congregation between l85l and l854, today still serves faithfully as a Presbyterian Church [Figure 3]. Located in present-day Winnipeg, it is a landmark building, both for its importance as the mother church of Western Canadian Presbyterianism and for its architectural value.

Kildonan Presbyterian Church is a Red River church, and thus shares much in common with its contemporaries St. Andrew's Anglican (l845-49) and St. Peter's Anglican at Dynevor (l853). All three churches were executed under the direction of the Hudson's Bay Company's mason, Duncan McRae, and are constructed of large, roughly cut limestone blocks, although the exterior walls of the Kildonan church have since been stuccoed over.

Figure 3.
Kildonan Presbyterian Church, Winnipeg, 1851-54.Photographed before the stone walls were stuccoed. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

The plan of Kildonan Presbyterian is a simple rectangle, enclosed by a gable roof and pierced along its side walls by pointed Gothic windows. So basic and uncomplicated is this plan - one derived from the humbler parish churches of Britain - that it formed the most common arrangement for rural churches in Manitoba until about l945.

The interior appearance of Kildonan Church follows Presbyterian, and for that matter, Methodist precedent. Focus is directed upon the pulpit. For John Calvin and John Knox, the power of the word was considered of the greatest importance. At Kildonan, as in the majority of Presbyterian and Methodist churches, the pulpit was placed front and centre of the raised platform. On either side of the pulpit platform are arranged pews for the choir; singing was considered an integral part of the service of worship, a further emphasis upon the appeal to the ear.

The appeal to the eye, however, in the history of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, has played a less important role. Calvin and Knox were both wary of architectural ornament because of its connotations with the Roman Catholic Church. By the time Methodism and Presbyterianism reached Manitoba, the taste for austere church interiors still lingered; although in Manitoba this plainness also had much to do with the austerity which comes from living on the frontier of civilization. In Kildonan Church, the walls are therefore plainly plastered, broken only by a few, later, memorial plaques. The stained glass windows, too, are later decorations; one of the few iconographic features that the Presbyterians and Methodists delighted in.

Kildonan Church houses the oldest Presbyterian congregation in present-day Manitoba. The oldest United Church congregation within the same territory is of Methodist origin and worships at James Evans Memorial Church, Norway House. The original church building raised by the Rev. James Evans in about l84l at this northern Manitoba Indian mission - a journey of more than 425 km north of Winnipeg - has long disappeared. In its stead, the l932 Memorial Church building also serves as a museum in tribute to the founder of the Cree syllabic.

Manitoba was created a province in l870. During the ensuing decade, the prairie grasslands began to be transformed into agricultural fields. It was a period of settlement, but one of scattered subsistence, waiting in intense anticipation for the coming of that great lifeline to the outside world, the railway. Methodist and Presbyterian preachers followed the new Manitobans out onto the barely tamed landscape, usually drifting between settlements, dispensing comforting services to those who wanted to hear the gospel, and issuing haranguing sermons to those who did not. Irreverent bar rooms and settlers' front parlours alike were pressed into service as meeting places.

By the mid-l870s, the Presbyterians could claim twelve church buildings in Manitoba: Kildonan, Knox in Winnipeg, Little Britain, Mapleton, Headingley, High Bluff, Portage la Prairie, Burnside, Palestine (now Gladstone), Springfield and Rockwood. Today, only Kildonan and Little Britain (now United) survive. And Little Britain is the community's second church: an l872-74 stone replacement of an earlier log meeting house. Again, Duncan McRae supervised the erection of this, one of the last substantial buildings from the Red River Settlement period [Figure 4]. As a result, it bears a striking resemblance to Kildonan, both within and without: chunky fieldstone walls, rectangular plan - the tower was added in l920 - simple pointed windows, and a plain but vigorous interior. Moreover, the Little Britain Church is of considerable historical importance as it serves the oldest United Church congregation of Presbyterian origin in Manitoba and the Canadian West.

By the late l870s, only the few, principal centres of Manitoba could support substantial church buildings. And this primarily meant Winnipeg. Selkirk, down the Red River about 30 km, appeared for a time as a potential rival, manoeuvering to lure the approaching main railway line coming from the East away from Winnipeg. An indication of Selkirk's optimism at the time may be measured by the size and quality of its first churches.

Figure 4.
Little Britain United, originally Presbyterian, 1872-74. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Knox Presbyterian, Selkirk dates from about l876. Although much enlarged in l904, the original sanctuary is of brick, making it amongst the oldest brick churches in Manitoba still extant. Selkirk Wesleyan Methodist was built in l877. Although superficially altered on the exterior by a portico of columns when it later served as a Roman Catholic Church, it is a standard, rectangular wood frame building. Together, these two churches constitute Manitoba's oldest surviving urban churches built by the Presbyterians and Methodists in the l870s. Winnipeg can claim no such survivors.

Establishment: 188l-1899

With the arrival of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway in l882, the population of Winnipeg soared. The charm of the almost rural, wooden churches, such as the l87l Grace Methodist [Figure 5], was considered unsophisticated and, of course, much too small. All three denominations were quick to build large Winnipeg churches. The second Grace Methodist [Figure 6], dedicated in l883, was an American-style meeting house: a flat-roofed, brick building, with all the Victorian architectural flair that could be mustered including cupolas, finials and over-sized cornice brackets. The l88l-82 First Congregational Church (later Central United, Joseph Greenfield, architect) [Figure 7] presented a more conventional, ecclesiastical appearance with a body pierced by long Gothic windows and a gable roof dotted by triangular clerestory dormers. The congregation of Winnipeg's Knox Presbyterian (Barber & Barber, architects) had by l884, raised their third church building [Figure 8], a spectacular High Victorian Gothic work. This structure, boasting no less than three corner spires and two rose windows, succeeded a plainer, but nevertheless large and handsome brick church [Figure 9] built only five years previously, in l879, to the designs of Kenway & Parr.

A further significance of these three early l880s churches lay in their adaptation of the auditorium plan. It would appear that almost all earlier Manitoba churches had followed the traditional British plan of straight rows of pews broken either by a central or side aisles and, when a balcony was required, having it placed at the rear of the sanctuary. The auditorium plan, generally considered of early l9th century American origin, was designed to draw laity and clergy closer together. Although presenting a conventional appearance on the exterior, the interior of the church was horseshoe, or U-shaped, with pews curved and set on a sloping floor on the main floor. Often a gallery followed the same wraparound shape. And, in the auditorium-planned church, the service-platform instead of being set back in a chancel or apse, projected forward into the body of the church either from the front centre, or from a corner which set the auditorium seating at a diagonal [Figure 10].

Figure 5.
Grace Methodist, Winnipeg, 1871. Demolished. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

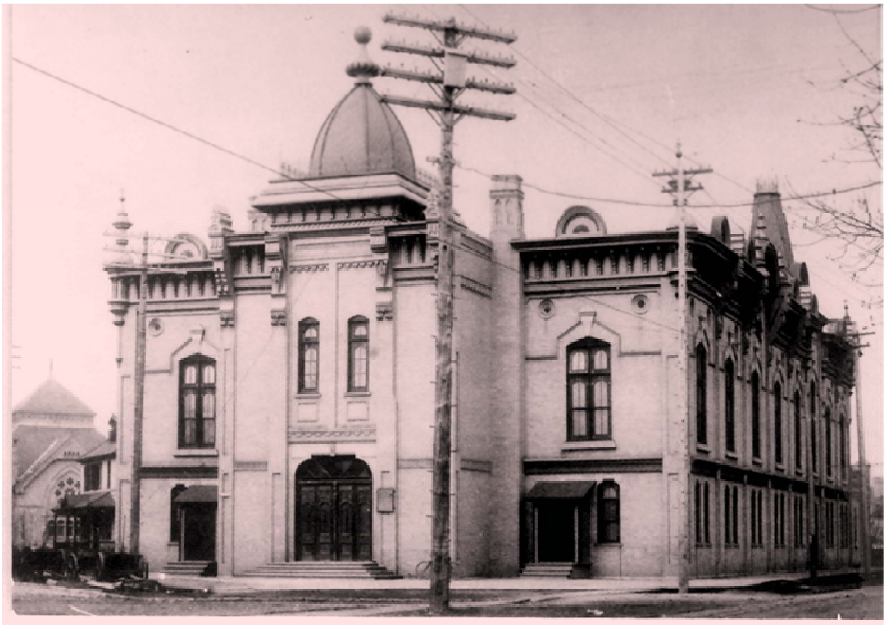

Figure 6.
Grace Methodist, later United, Winnipeg, by James Chisholm, 1883. Demolished 1957. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 7.
Central Congregational, later United, Winnipeg, by Joseph Greenfield, 1881-82. Demolished 1936. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 8.
Knox Presbyterian, Winnipeg, by Barber and Barber, 1884. Demolished c.1914. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 9.
Knox Presbyterian, Winnipeg, by Kenway and Parr, 1879. Demolished in the 1880s. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

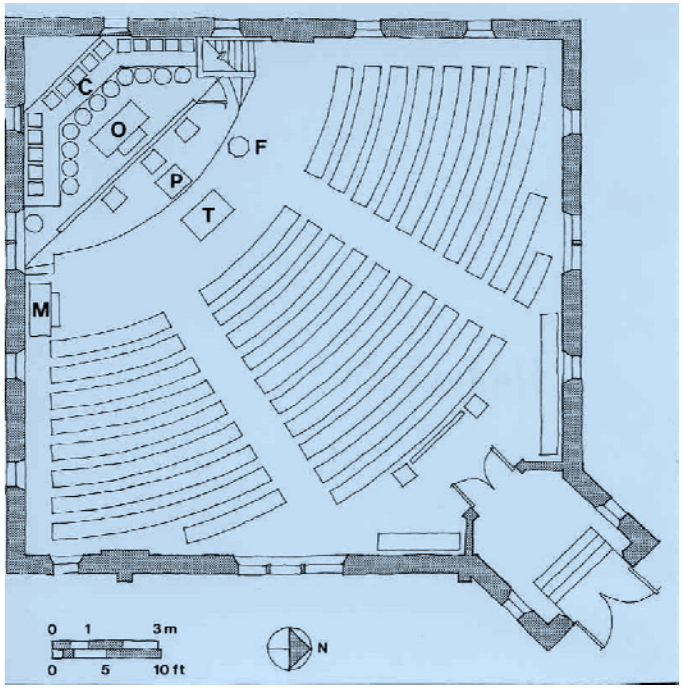

Figure 10.
Plan of St. Paul's United, Boissevain, originally Methodist, by Edward Lowry, 1893, illustrating a corner pulpit=-platform auditorium plan.
C=choir, F=baptismal font, M=piano, O=organ, P=pulpit, T=communion table.

Figure 11.
The sanctuary of Trinity United, originally Presbyterian, Portage la Prairie, by Smith & Gemmel, 1897.

These platforms were virtually concert stages, approached by side stairs, often with a backdrop of soaring organ pipes, tiers of choir stalls, and a prominent pulpit usually backed by a couch or three large chairs for the ministers. Down below rested the communion table. It was also common practice to place a lectern and baptismal font at the base of the platform for easy accessibility by members of the congregation.

The auditorium plan became de rigueur for larger Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Manitoba until around l930. It is not possible, however, to illustrate an auditorium planned church in Winnipeg from the l880s or l890s because, astonishingly, no Congregational, Methodist or Presbyterian churches of the period remain to serve the Presbyterian and United communities. Almost all of Winnipeg's early churches were removed to make way for larger premises as the city grew. McDougall Memorial Methodist Church, Winnipeg (l89l, Lowry & Lowry) is the only ecclesiastical survival, and this building has been altered externally by the addition of Eastern domes and internally by its required adaptation to meet its new role as an Orthodox Church.

But excellent auditorium planned churches from before the turn of the century continue to serve the province's larger towns. Fine examples of substantial auditorium planned buildings from before l900 include St. Paul's United, Boissevain (originally Methodist, l893, Edward Lowry), Knox Presbyterian, Neepawa (l892, James White), Neepawa United (originally Methodist, l892), Trinity United, Portage la Prairie (originally Presbyterian, l897, Smith & Gemmel [Figure 11], and Knox United, Souris (originally Presbyterian, l897-98, now an Elk's Lodge).

As prestigious symbols of faith, and the growing prosperity of the Canadian prairies, these churches also boast richly appointed interiors; although in keeping with Methodist and Presbyterian tradition, emphasis was placed upon dignity of materials and design rather than on ornamentation. For example, the ceiling of Trinity United, Portage la Prairie, is covered in stained wooden planking; and the barrel-vaulted ceiling of Neepawa United is a glistening pattern of pressed tin.

As for architectural style, all these churches looked to the medieval character that was fashionable in church architecture during the later l9th and early 20th centuries. In fact, classically styled Methodist and Presbyterian churches are extremely rare in Manitoba, with Zion United, Winnipeg (originally Methodist, l904, James Chisholm) [Figure 12] very much an exception to the rule. The picturesque qualities of the Gothic and Romanesque were more to the tastes of Manitoba's early church designers. Thus, with Knox Presbyterian at Neepawa, the architect James White chose to light his church interior by elongated Romanesque windows emphasized by rusticated stone arches set in contrast to the smooth surface of brick walls [Figure 13]. Similarly, this use of bold building materials to accentuate the Gothic style is also noticeable at St. Paul's United, Boissevain, with its walls of roughly hewn blocks of local fieldstone thrown in juxtaposition to the expansive Gothic windows; and also at Trinity United, Portage la Prairie, with its playful marriage of brick and stone geometric patterning [Figure 14].

In Manitoba, Congregationalism proved an urban religion. Of the six church buildings erected by the Congregationalists in the province - and five of these were built before l900 - four were in Winnipeg, one in Portage la Prairie, and one in Brandon. Unfortunately, all these Congregational structures have fallen under the wrecker's hammer.

The Methodists and Presbyterians, in contrast, flourished in the rural Manitoba of the l880s and l890s. Both denominations were highly organized and ready to meet the challenge of creating congregations and erecting new church buildings. The Methodist superintendent, the Rev. James Woodsworth Sr., and especially the Presbyterian superintendent, the Rev. James Robertson, were both instrumental in bringing ministers out from Eastern Canada, in lobbying and cajoling their respective General Assemblies into supporting church and mission extension in the Canadian West, and in nurturing the most isolated of congregations.

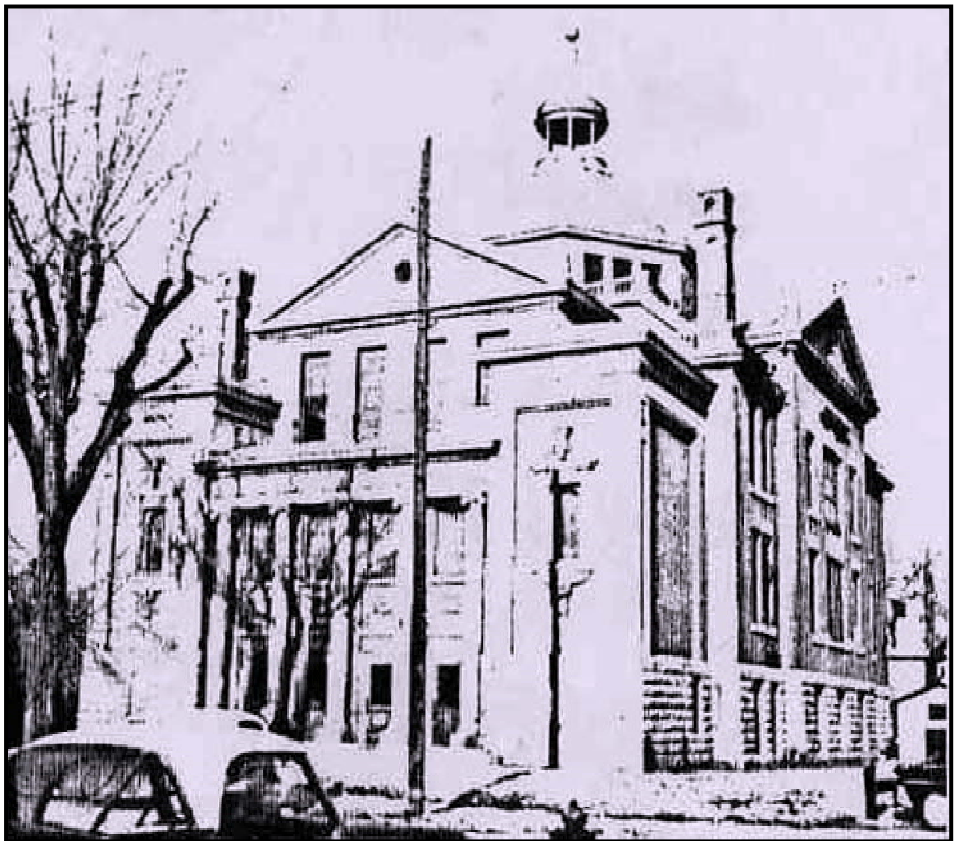

Figure 12.
Zion Methodist, later United, by James Chisholm, 1904. Destroyed by fire in 1970. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 13.
Knox Presbyterian, Neepawa, by James White, 1892.

Figure 14.
Detail of arches above the front doors of Trinity United Presbyterian, Portage la Prairie, by Smith & Gemmel, 1897. (HRB)

In the new settlements of Manitoba, it was almost inevitable to find the Presbyterian missionary and the Methodist missionary holding services in friendly competition. In the first years of settlement, small congregations of both denominations often would combine in building a church for separate, and in some cases, joint services. For example, Brandon Hills United - an architectural gem built in l896 to the designs of well-known Brandon architect Walter H. Shillinglaw, and modelled on the Picturesque Gothic style of a Nova Scotian church in Durham - served both Presbyterians and Methodists, who held Sunday services at different hours.

The majority of the first rural church buildings, however, were erected by a singly formed congregation, without the aid of an architect, and in a style as simple as the prairie landscape itself. In his autobiography, *Breaking Prairie Sod*, the Methodist preacher, Rev. Wellington Bridgman, recalled the raising of the first Methodist church outside Brandon, at Chater, (now gone) during the winter of l882-83.

> The Methodist church officials in Brandon secured the site, and by means of a subscription list sufficient funds were secured to pay for the lumber and other material, all of which were purchased in Brandon and sent to Chater by freight. All material on the site, the next thing to do was to appoint a foreman carpenter to lay out the work. The word was sent to all the homesteaders and ranchers. This was a building everybody could work on. The church building was perfectly plain, 24 x 36 in size, three plain windows in each side, l0 feet to the plate, and half pitch roof. The nationality of the workers was English, Irish and Scotch, and from Huron and Bruce [Ontario]. The homesteader is a most adaptable man. He is handy with tools of any kind. Brought up on a farm, he comes by the best technical education of any class of boys. These men had built their own houses and stables and granaries. There was no lack of life or jollity or fun. Someone always had some joke or story to tell, or some witticism to contribute, and the spirit of the enterprise seemed to give impulse to

> everything. With ten or twelve men such as we had there every day we soon had the siding on and the roof covered and the floor laid. The shingling was the coldest job. I remember we heated the shingle nails in a tin pan, and this helped to warm our numb fingers.

The circumstances surrounding Chater's first Methodist church were typical of the period. The builders were of British stock, and brought with them the basic building skills and traditions of their origins. These simple structures of wood, or perhaps of brick or brick veneer where the congregation was larger or wealthier, were well constructed and well crafted. And sometimes, when a local settler or groups of settlers possessed special skills, the resulting church was of an exceptional character. The few remaining fieldstone churches from the establishment period, for example, display the talents of the stonemason's art. Particularly outstanding are Breadalbane Presbyterian, near Lenore (l897) [Figure 15] and Griswold United (originally Presbyterian, l898) [Figure 16]. Nearly identical in design, these structures are unique in Manitoba: Gothic in spirit, with thick fieldstone walls strengthened by small buttresses, deep inset pointed windows, and gable ends decorated with geometric laid shingles and wooden bargeboards and crosses.

Presbyterians settling in Manitoba during the establishment period had the added advantage of being able to draw upon the "Church and Manse Building Fund for Manitoba and the North-West". This fund was the creation, and the great undertaking, of the Rev. James Robertson. Robertson, a Scotsman trained at Knox College, Toronto, arrived in Manitoba in l874 to find that Presbyterian ministers were forced, in the words of his biographer the Rev. Charles Gordon (Ralph Connor), to worship in places "often redolent of other than the odour of sanctity."

Figure 15.
Breadalbane Presbyterian Church, near Lenore, l897.

Figure 16.
Griswold United (originally Presbyterian) Church, l898.

As Superintendent of Western Canada, Robertson solicited money for the fund by travelling and preaching in Eastern Canada and Britain. His battle cry during his campaigns was "visibility and permanence." Once the subscriber had pledged his amount, as Manitoba's first Chief Justice, Alexander Morris had done in l883, not even death released the amount due. When Morris died in l903, owing the fund $500, the Building Fund chairman demanded, and received, the overdue payment from the executors of the deceased's estates.

The Church and Manse Building Fund, instituted in l883, allowed congregations to receive grants up to one-fifth the amount of the building cost and to borrow loans up to 50%. As well, the church property was often held in trust by the fund. And, Robertson, a man of great persuasiveness, secured from the Canadian Pacific Railway the right to transport all building materials at two-thirds their ordinary rate.

Every opportunity was afforded Presbyterian congregations the chance to build a church. Robertson even went so far as to commission simple plans and perspective drawings from Winnipeg architects [Figures 17, 18, 19]. And congregations did employ these designs. Knox Presbyterian, Stonewall [Figure 20] was built in l883, and replicates the designs that Robertson had secured from architects Chesterton and McNicol of Winnipeg. Here, again, is the simple rectangular plan. But with vertical, horizontal and diagonal strips of wood siding, the decorative quatrefoil motif in the gable end, and the little belltower on its ridge, it is a church of much distinction. Other churches deviated further from the pattern-book examples, but retained the same character. St. Paul's Presbyterian, Hartney, built in 1896, is such an example.

It is safe to presume that almost every Presbyterian church built in rural Manitoba during the establishment period, and even many in the larger urban centres, received assistance from Robertson's fund. When Robertson died in l902, the fund had administered the erection of 4l9 churches, 90 manses, and 4 schoolhouses across Manitoba and the Canadian West.

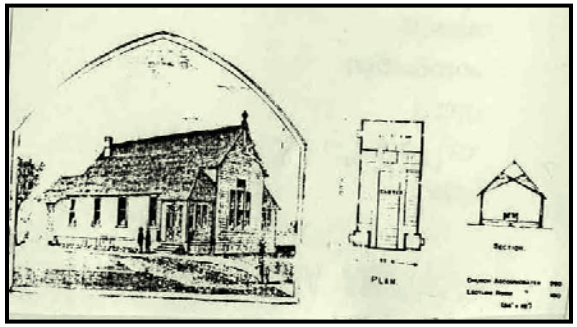

Figure 17.
Perspective and plans for a church. Published in the Reverend James Robertson's *Presbyterian Church and Manse Building Fund - Manitoba and the Northwest Report*, 1886. The church design was prepared by G.W. Stewart.

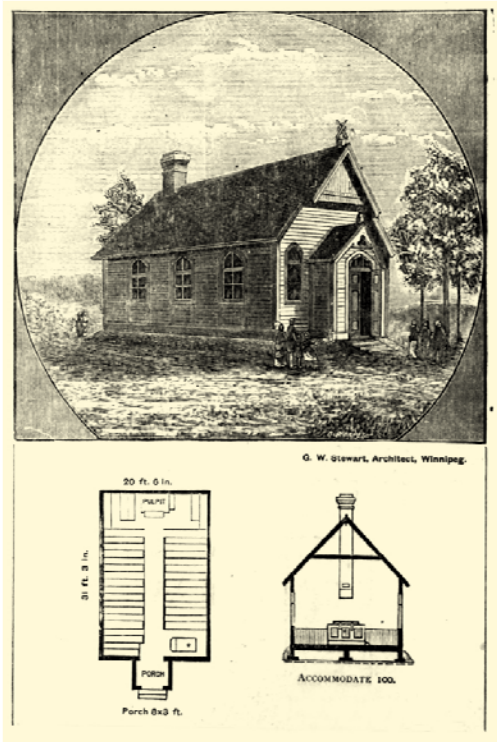

Figure 18.
Perspectives and plans for a church. Published in the Rev. James Robertson's *Presbyterian Church and Manse Building Fund - Manitoba and the Northwest Report*, 1886. The sketch, plan and section was done by Chesterton & McNicol.

Figure 19.
Perspective and plans for a church. Published in the Reverend James Robertson's *Presbyterian Church and Manse Building Fund - Manitoba and the Northwest Report*, 1886.

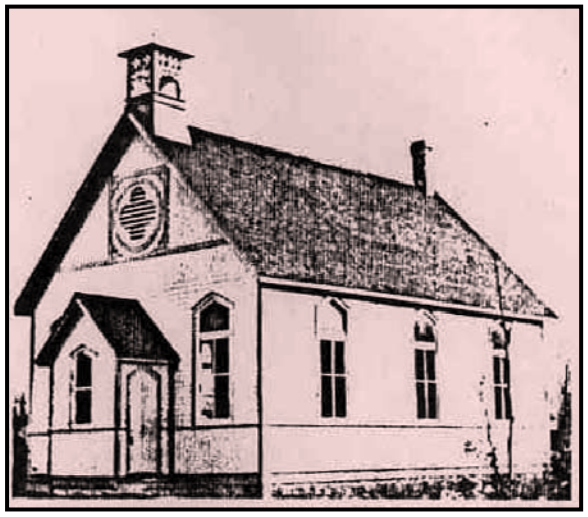

Figure 20.
Knox Presbyterian, Stonewall, by Chesterton & McNicol, 1883.

During the l880s and l890s, simple rectangular wood frame churches dominated Manitoba rural church plans. But as rural and small town congregations grew and prospered, they often replaced their first buildings with larger premises. That is what happened to Bridgeman's l882-83 Chater Methodist (later United). In l899-l900 it was superceded by a much more substantial structure. Although originally built of wood frame construction, the church assumed an L-shape plan, dominated at its inner corner by an entrance tower. This design, presumed to be from the drawing board of the prolific Brandon architect, W.A. Elliott, was repeated in several instances, as for example at Justice Methodist (later United) in l9l0 [Figures 21 & 22]. And it reappeared in l9l3 for the Sparling Presbyterian (now St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Virden), but this time attributed to John Chisholm & Son, well-known Winnipeg church architects. A brick version also exists at Shiloh Methodist (now United), near Kenton, built in l903. This L-shape plan was a small church variation upon the so-called Akron plan; a mid-l9th century American Methodist practice of church layout in which the Sunday School room was placed adjacent to the sanctuary and made so it could be partitioned off by sliding doors or folding screens. To find the Akron plan being used in these instances, especially when it was associated with large city or town churches, makes these churches, and such other examples as Kenton United (originally Presbyterian, l903), of particular interest.

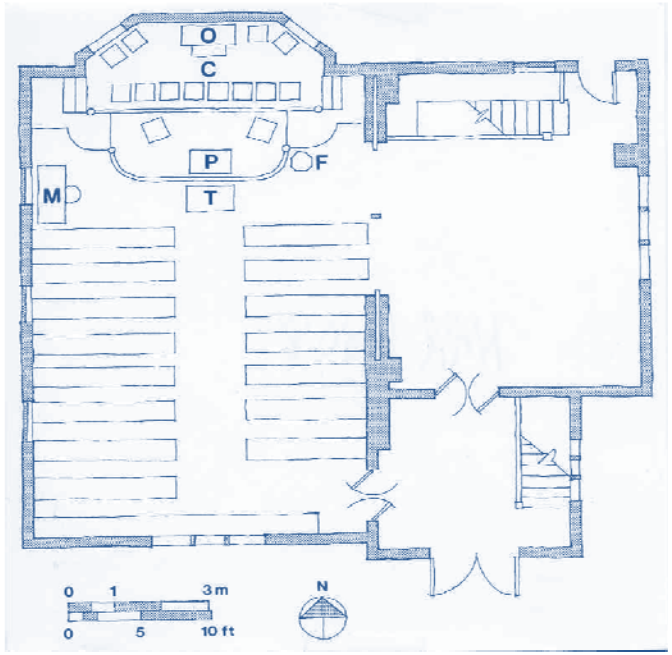

Figure 21.
Interior of Justice United, originally Methodist, attributed to W.A. Elliott, 1910. The sliding doors on the right in the photograph led to the Sunday School room.

Figure 22.
Plan of Justice United, originally Methodist, attributed to W.A. Elliott, 1910, illustrating a variation to the Akron plan by placing the Sunday School room alongside the sanctuary, divided by sliding doors. C=choir, F=baptismal font, M=piano, O=organ, P=pulpit, T=communion table.

Consolidation: 1900-1924

Manitoba, on the whole, prospered in those years from the turn of the century to just after the First World War. And Winnipeg positively flourished. The business, political and community leaders of the city were predominately of Anglo-Saxon origin. Many of them, and their families, were also the leaders of the larger Methodist and Presbyterian congregations. It was these congregations, riding high on the boom which preceded the War, who erected many of Winnipeg's largest and finest churches.

J.H.G. Russell (l862-l946) was the undisputed premier church architect in Winnipeg during this century's first years. His church buildings, which dominated the skyline of the city's more affluent section south of the Assiniboine River, are mature statements of a master architect. In each of his four major churches, he successfully employed a different architectural style, although none of them may be said to be of a pure revivalist nature. Augustine United, Winnipeg (originally Presbyterian, l903-04) [Figure 23], with its commanding tower and spire, is Gothic in tenor but, with its textured limestone facing and squat corner tower, owed much to the Richardsonian Romanesque. With Crescent-Fort Rouge United, Winnipeg (originally Methodist, l906-ll), Russell changed not only style but materials; incorporating the rounded arches of the Romanesque Revival into the straight edges of bright red brick walls. Westminster United, Winnipeg (originally Presbyterian, l9ll-l2) [Figure24] marked a return to a rough limestone dressing. For its design, the architect turned to the cathedrals of Europe. The front façade of Westminster is punctuated by a large rose window, opened by a pair of central doors with Tudor arches, and flanked by pinnacled towers of unequal height. With the fourth, Knox United, Winnipeg (originally Presbyterian, l9l4-l7) [Figure25], Russell gathered all his designing and structural knowledge to produce a magnificent Gothic Revivalist work. By using a modern, steel frame skeleton, Russell was able to break the massive stone walls with large Decorated Gothic windows and thus avoid the necessity of cumbersome buttresses.

Figure 23.
Augustine United, originally Presbyterian, by J.H.G. Russell, 1903-04, photographed in 1904 as the tower nears completion. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 24.
Westminster United, originally Presbyterian, by J.H.G. Russell, 1911-12.

Figure 25.
Knox United Church, originally Presbyterian, by J.H.G. Russell, 1914-17.

Of course, Russell was not the only architect of Winnipeg's larger Methodist and Presbyterian churches. James Chisholm & Son's Young United, Winnipeg (originally Methodist, l906-11) bears a striking resemblance to Russell's Crescent-Fort Rouge; although as both architects registered their designs on the same day, it would be difficult to accuse either firm of plagiarism. S.R. Badgley and James McDiarmid's St. Stephen's Presbyterian, Winnipeg (today Elim Chapel, l903 and l9l0, remodelled l974 following a fire) is a most refined Gothic limestone church from the century's first decade. McDiarmid was also responsible for Point Douglas United, Winnipeg (originally Presbyterian, l905, now a Catholic Church); a robust and compressed work.

Purpose-built mission buildings were also a feature of Winnipeg's post-War years building scene; the majority of which still survive. The most well-known mission of the period was undoubtedly the Methodist's All People's Mission which had begun simply in l889 when Dolly Maguire had gathered groups of immigrant children together to teach them English and to read them stories from the Bible. The great social reformer, Rev. J.S. Woodsworth was named superintendent of All People's in l907, and within three years had erected two centres in Winnipeg's North End: Sutherland Avenue Mission (l908, James Chisholm) and Stella Avenue Mission (l909, James Chisholm). In plan and design, the All People's buildings served as models for the Presbyterian's Robertson Memorial Institute (l9ll, J.H.G. Russell), the Congregationalist's Pilgrim Institute (l9l4, now the Ukrainian Catholic Centre), and the Methodist's post-war Maclean Mission (l92l).

Commonly, a gymnasium was placed in the basement of the mission buildings, and a hall for church services and rooms for adults and children to gather occupied the upper two storeys. Stylistically, these were unpretentious buildings: constructed of brick, with the majority of windows plain and rectangular, and entered through a door with prominent surrounds. These were functional, well-used structures.

Outside Winnipeg, too, most of the major towns were erecting substantial churches in the years leading up to the War. In Brandon, Walter Shillinglaw designed the largest building of his career, Central United, Brandon (originally St. Paul's Presbyterian, l90l) [Figure 26]; a Romanesque Revival building whose great sweeping interior was planned, as were all of Manitoba's Methodist and Presbyterian churches of any size, in the auditorium arrangement. Brandon's other major architect of the period, W.A. Elliott, drew up the plans for Victoria Avenue Methodist, Brandon (l909-l0; today Christian Reform Church), which cleverly incorporated a skylight over the auditorium.

Many of the streetscapes of Manitoba's towns are still dominated by substantial brick churches from the pre-War boom period. For example, architect James White designed both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches at Carberry: Carberry United (originally Methodist, l903) being in a Romanesque style, while as not to compete Knox Presbyterian (l909) was fashioned in the Gothic [Figures 27 and 28]. Or, James McDiarmid's St. Andrew's United, Manitou (originally Presbyterian, l90l) [Fig 29], an excellent building, sitting high on a fieldstone foundation, and decoratively enhanced by a polygonal tiered tower of shingles and brackets.

Larger wood frame buildings also were built during the consolidation period; although brick remained the favoured material for the town church. Isabella United (originally Presbyterian, l9ll) is a very fine wooden church. It is a simple rectangular frame building with a charming tower and steeple placed at the centre front; more the exception than the rule as the years passed, for towers were positioned at the building's corner in the majority of Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

Figure 26.
the sanctuary of Central United, originally St. Paul's Presbyterian, Brandon, by Walter H. Shillinglaw, 1901. The church was destroyed by fire in 1986. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Figure 27.
Carberry United (originally Methodist, l903), by James White.

Figure 28.
Knox Presbyterian in Carberry (l909) by James White.

Figure 29.
St. Andrew's United, Manitou (originally Presbyterian, l90l), by James McDiarmid.

The first decade of the century also witnessed the development of new building materials and techniques. Steel frame construction incorporated, for example, by Russell in Knox United, Winnipeg, was one such lasting innovation. Concrete blocks, on the other hand, enjoyed but a brief popularity. Manitoba has few examples. Zion United, Birnie (originally Presbyterian, l906) is the only survivor from this period.

But the simple wooden, rectangular box churches, with a few pointed windows along the side walls continued to find favour during the consolidation period, just as they had during the settlement years. Tamarisk United, near Grandview (originally Methodist, l907) - unique in that its walls were originally of concrete block, but later replaced by a wood frame - has been fortunate not to have met the modernizing trend of so many of its contemporaries and serves as a fine illustration of the pioneer church with a simple but expressive interior [Figures 30 and 31]. The inside walls and ceiling are covered in richly stained wood planking; there are no pews, just chairs; heat radiates from an iron stove whose pipe snakes across the ceiling; a choir platform, complete with pump organ, presses against the front; while on a lower platform stands the pulpit with, below this, the communion table. Even the faded scriptorial proclamations "GOD IS MY STRENGTH", "IN HIM WILL I TRUST" still speak to the congregation.

The War, and the immediate depression it left in its aftermath, did not halt church construction in Manitoba. But, for Methodists and Presbyterians, it was a period of definite building slow down and re-evaluation. One reason, of course, was that congregations were not as financially solvent as they had been in the pre-War years; especially in the rural areas, where there simply were enough church buildings. In fact, there were too many. Church enrolment had been shifting since before the War. In l9l4, the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches jointly published a report on the state of Manitoba rural churches in the District of Turtle Mountain, and another on the District of Swan River Valley. The studies concluded that many of the pioneering farmers were retiring to urban centres and out-of-province.

Figure 30.
Interior of Tamarisk United, near Grandview, 1907, showing the use of chairs rather than the usual pews.

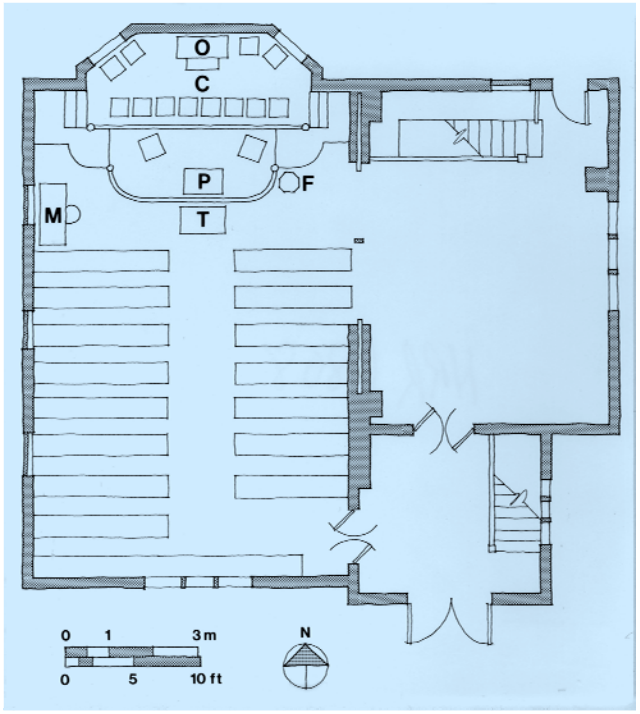

Figure 31.
Plan of Tamarisk United, originally Methodist, near Grandview, 1907. C=choir, O=organ, P=pulpit, S=stove, V=vestry.

The new population resisted church going; and, if they did attend, supported the churches erected by the latest wave of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants. Statistically in the Turtle Mountain region- which included the municipalities of Whitewater, Morton and Winchester- membership figures stood at 22% stationary, 34% gaining, 44% losing.32 As a result, although Methodist and Presbyterian churches were not being closed down wholesale, resources were being stretched to the limit. Ministerial circuits, for example, were being combined. Such circumstances were important considerations in favour of church union.

Even with union pressing in, Methodists and Presbyterians alike still continued to build churches in the few remaining areas in which they were needed. In Winnipeg, which felt the membership pinch less sharply than the rural districts, the Presbyterians pressed ahead with two major commissions in the early l920s, both by Russell: the present St. John's United, Winnipeg (originally Presbyterian, l923) and Riverview United, Winnipeg (originally Presbyterian, l925). In the country- where many united congregations had been calling themselves Union Churches since l9l3- Charles Bridgman's Cypress River United, which opened in l92l, was built specifically as a Union Church.

Post-Union: l925-l945

The creation of the United Church of Canada in l925, and the resultant shrinkage of the remaining Presbyterian Church, had a mixed effect on the church buildings of these now two distinct denominations. In Manitoba, the great majority of Presbyterian and all the Methodist congregations went into union. Only two Presbyterian congregations in Winnipeg retained their church buildings: Kildonan Presbyterian and Calvin Presbyterian, the latter whom have since rebuilt their church. Those Presbyterians in Winnipeg who chose to opt out, organized themselves into several congregations. They built four churches. The principal of these was First Presbyterian, Winnipeg; a stone church, designed by the architects Pratt & Ross in a refined Gothic manner, opened in l927 [Figure 32].

The other three new Presbyterian churches were Norwood Presbyterian, Winnipeg (l927), St. James Presbyterian, Winnipeg (l928) and St. John's Presbyterian, Winnipeg (l928). The striking feature about these new Presbyterian churches was in their interior arrangements; all signalled a turning away from the auditorium seating plan, a reaction against the dominant stage effects of the pulpit platform, and a return to the traditional nave with its straight rows of pews. First Presbyterian even went so far as to sprout transepts; and St. John's flourished an English-style beamed ceiling and a divided chancel.

In Brandon, the Presbyterians regrouped and commissioned Shillinglaw to design his fresh-looking First Presbyterian, Brandon (l927-28). And at Portage la Prairie, the continuing Presbyterians erected First Presbyterian, Portage la Prairie (l927); a church of most peculiar design, with its squat entrance tower topped by a pyramidal spire and windows sporting ogee arches.

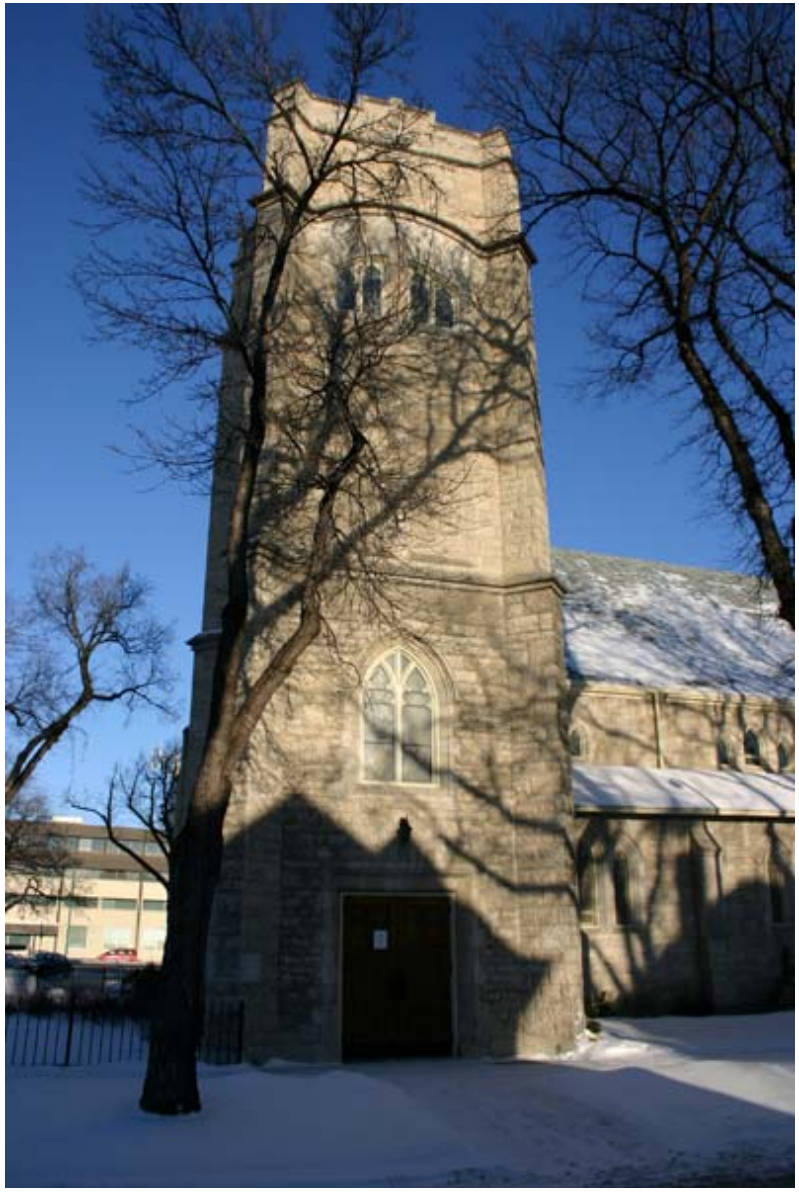

Figure 32.
First Presbyterian, 1927, by Pratt & Ross.

Following Union, there was a spate of new United Church buildings in Winnipeg. None of these church buildings, however, approached anything in size and architectural quality to those Methodist and Presbyterian churches that had been erected before the War. Only Gordon-King Memorial United, Winnipeg, completed in l927, came close with its great brick massing. The scale of the newly-built United churches were now more modest, as with Edgar Prain's pretty Tudor Gothic John Black Memorial United, Winnipeg of l927. As with the new Presbyterian buildings, the interior arrangements of the new United churches were conscious of their new role: less theatre, more community worship. As Claris Edwin Silcox wrote in l933:

> The very process of the fusion itself, although instinct with superlative difficulties, has released certain raw energies of a spiritual character, and has led to an eagerness for experiment, a liberality in temper, an open-mindedness to new forms of service, new types of architecture, new responses to religious suggestion.

In the towns of Manitoba, and especially in the rural areas, consolidation of Methodist and Presbyterian congregations solved the problem of too many church buildings, but spelt the abandonment of those church properties no longer required. Many church buildings were left to weather into decay. Others found new uses. For example, Minnedosa Methodist, an early brick building from l884, found itself a Masonic Hall. (In l963 it was returned to its original use when bought by the Calvary Church.) Hartney Methodist (l890) became the hall for the new l928 Hartney United. But service clubs, community centres and farm buildings were the most common reincarnations for most of these old buildings.

The depression of the l930s halted the spree of post-union church construction. The Presbyterians struggled on to maintain the few churches they had retained, and even managed to erect simple, new buildings, such as MacBeth Presbyterian, East Selkirk (l93l-32), by the efforts of their faithful and hardworking members.

There were few new United church buildings raised during l930s. The larger urban centres can claim no distinctive church buildings from this decade. And when county churches did appear, they were, on the whole, architectural reworkings of earlier successes. Eriksdale United (l936), one of the best of the period, is a wood frame, rectangular box, entered by a large corner tower, and dominated by a large Gothic end-window; a popular design even before the turn of the century.

One of the last of the period, built on the eve of the Second World War, was Union Point United (l939) [Figure 33]. It stands peaceably alongside Highway 75, near Morris, in the autumn surrounded by the coloured fields of ripened grain. The church is no longer used for services, and its interior has been cleared of all its furnishings. Its appearance is almost dateless: a rectangular wooden box, gable roof, a neat rooftop steeple, little pointed windows along the side walls, and a large end-window dominated by a bursting rosette. Travellers stop to admire Union Point United; and some leave thank-you notes stuffed under the inside windowsills, in gratitude of the tranquil moment the little chapel has given them.

Figure 33.
Union Point United, 1939.

Modern: 1945 - The Present

The Second World War extended the period of reduced church construction. When building did commence, however, members of the United and Presbyterian Churches in Manitoba found themselves caught up in the throes of two seemingly unrelated discussions: the liturgical question in theology and the new face of architecture. When it came to new church buildings, however, these topics merged.

The mood of experimentation which Silcox had experienced in the l930s gained rapid ground following l945. The Liturgical Movement explored new forms of worship and the changing role of laity to clergy. As a result, the service was made a less formal occasion; the minister often acting more as moderator than as a foreman, and with members of the congregation making a greater contribution. How then, it was asked, could the designers of new church buildings interpret this new sense of spiritual freedom?

Architects like Moody & Moore responded with such superb ecclesiastical works as St. Andrew's River Heights United, Winnipeg (l946-50). As architecture, it is very much a transitional piece: a melding of the traditional with the modern. In plan and form, the church harkens back to the earliest examples of Roman Christian architecture: a long nave, low side aisles with sloping roofs, an extending chancel apse, rows of clerestory windows, and a beautiful cross-beam ceiling.

But St. Andrew's River Heights throws a highly visible nod to the stylistic currents of the Modern Movement. Clear, sharp angles are to be seen everywhere; none of those pointed Gothic windows here, but rather the cool flatness of rectangular and square openings. Unadorned posts rather than ornate columns. And instead of banks of choir stalls and the intimidating central pulpit, there are discreetly placed choir pews on either side of the chancel and a pulpit to one side.

Winnipeg was the first locale in Manitoba to feel the effects of modern forms of church architecture. The new rural churches built after the War tended to be extensions of the vernacular churches nearby. Westminster United, Foxwarren, for example, was constructed in l95l and proudly displays a crenellated entrance tower and modified Tudor-style windows. Similarly, when the l928 Pine Falls United structure burned down in the late l950s, the congregation obviously felt the neo-Tudor image of the original fully met their needs, and proceeded to build a picturesque replica.

As the Modern Movement became firmly entrenched, however, historical associations disappeared. Just as the simple rectangular box with a tower or steeple once dominated Manitoba church architecture, so its modern offspring, the now ubiquitous A-frame, began to appear in the l950s. This architectural form, with its steeply pitched roofs that often slip down almost to the ground, have become synonymous with church buildings, although not with any particular Christian denomination. The United and Presbyterian Churches have erected many variations of the A-frame type, from the double-jointed roof of Dominion City United (l963) to the sleek silhouette of Westwood Presbyterian, Winnipeg (l964, Pratt-Lindgren & Associates).

It was during this period that Northern Manitoba came to play an increasingly important role in the province's development. Presbyterian, but especially United churches appear in all of the sizeable northern communities. Moreover, the United Church concentrated much of its efforts upon providing newer church buildings for Native Indians. Usually, these churches were of the standard rectangular box type, gable-roofed, and either crowned by a shining metallic steeple- as with Cross Lake United (l957) - or marked by an entrance tower- as with Poplar River (l947). These northern structures are easily identifiable as being in the historical stream of Manitoba's ecclesiastical tradition.

Falling enrolment in the United and Presbyterian Churches has also been a fact of the modern period. For a great many of the older church buildings, the result has been all too obvious. In a few fortunate cases, the buildings have found new uses. But the usual fate of the redundant church is closure, abandonment and destruction. Often there appears no other solution.

There is, however, much latitude for optimism. The current renaissance in the appreciation of Canada's heritage has led Manitobans on the whole to a greater respect of their architectural inheritance. While in the past certain United and Presbyterian congregations undertook unsympathetic changes, or worse, the demolition of their historic churches, this retrogressive trend has now considerably weakened. Many members of Manitoba's United and Presbyterian Churches, like the congregation of Westminster United, Winnipeg, are now painstakingly doing all within their power to retain the architectural integrity of their historic church buildings.