LED OUT INTO A LARGER PLACE

REV. ERNEST CROSSLEY HUNTER AND THE PREACHING OF JEWISH~CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD INTO CANADA, 1928-1939

by

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Dr. Dora A. Stinson, Clerk of Session at St. Matthew's United Church, whose father Rev. John Stinson was a student intern of Crossley Hunter's in 1937 and remained his lifelong friend. Dora was thrilled to learn that Crossley Hunter, of whom she had many happy memories from her childhood and youth, was the subject of this thesis, and she looked forward to reading it. She died suddenly on July 25, 2020, only a few weeks before it was completed.

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Abstract

Between 1933 and 1939, as Jews sought to escape the expanding Third Reich, Canada leveraged immigration policy, already shaped to bolster the nation's relative racial and cultural uniformity, in order to bar admission to all but a few thousand Jewish refugees. While Canada's Protestant churches remained virtually silent, mounting little protest as the humanitarian crisis unfolded, scholars in recent decades have parsed church records more carefully in order to offer a more nuanced understanding of the degree and nature of this relative silence, and have further called for a deinstitutionalized approach that attends to Christian activism at the personal and local level. This thesis responds to that call with close examination of the contribution of one United Church clergyman, Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter, to pre-war efforts to open Canada's borders to Jewish refugees. Moving beyond Hunter's nominal mentions in the historiography of this field, which present him as a valued colleague of Rev. Claris Silcox and Senator Cairine Wilson on the Canadian National Committee on Refugees, this thesis explores instead the archived sermons and addresses he delivered primarily in Hamilton, Ontario between 1928 and 1938, in order to uncover and highlight the singularity and significance of a specifically theological contribution to the refugee cause that has not received previous attention.

No obvious theological radical and deeply rooted in traditional evangelical and revivalist Christianity, Hunter nevertheless anticipated theologian Rosemary Ruether's 1974 *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* in understanding anti-Semitism as a Christian theological sin requiring Christian theological repair. Working closely with local Rabbis, including initiating the first church-synagogue pulpit exchanges in Canada fully five years before Hitler's rise to power, Hunter preached to his congregation and addressed local community groups, deliberately deconstructing the Christian supercessionist theology that had engendered anti-Semitism and entrenched it in Canadian society, and replacing it with the radical new theological content of Jewish-Christian brotherhood. This singular theological contribution to United Church efforts on behalf of Jewish refugees would eventually provide the theological foundation for a restored United Church-Jewish relationship in Canada. This thesis examines Hunter's surviving preached theology within a broader context that includes analysis of the immigration policy which enforced the closed border, reference to United Church documents and Records of Proceedings of the General Council, reference to articles printed in the United Church periodical *The New Outlook,* and *The United Church Observer* that followed it, as well as a survey of contemporaneous newspapers from cities across Canada in the 1930s.

List of Abbreviations Used

BESS	Board of Evangelism and Social Service (of The United Church of Canada)
CNCR	Canadian National Committee on Refugees
GC	General Council (of The United Church of Canada)
Ibid	Ibidem (Latin): "in the same place". Used to indicate "from the same source".
United Church	The United Church of Canada
Viz to Wit	Videre licit (Latin): "it may be seen" – to wit: "as follows". Used to point to an illustrative example

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Chapter One
Introduction

At its meeting in Camrose, Alberta in August of 1997, the 36th General Council of The United Church of Canada offered the first of a series of church-wide interfaith studies designed for use in congregations. Entitled *Bearing Faithful Witness,* the document invited United Church members into serious consideration of Christianity's legacy of implicit and overt anti-Semitism, the denomination's historic relations with the Canadian Jewish community, continued anti-Semitism in Canada and in United Church theology and praxis, and new policies to enable and promote a more just United Church-Jewish relationship going forward.[1] Six years later, after the "people of the United Church [had] responded thoughtfully and prayerfully to the study document and [its proposals],"[2] *Bearing Faithful Witness* was overwhelmingly and enthusiastically approved by the 38th General Council in Wolfville, Nova Scotia as the denomination's comprehensive appraisal of its legacy of anti-Semitism and as a historically and theologically grounded roadmap for building a new and healed relationship with the Jewish community.[3] United Church members across the country were urged to undertake the educational program the document's study materials had engendered, engaging the scholarship in small-group discussions and workshops. As the denomination sought the seeds of a more faithful future in repentent acknowledgement of its contribution to and complicity with Canadian Christian anti-Semitism, *Bearing Faithful Witness* explicitly rejected the traditional Christian supercessionism in which the Jewish covenant with God

[1] "Interfaith Relations," The United Church of Canada, accessed August 2, 2020. https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/interfaith-relations
[2] "Bearing Faithful Witness," The United Church of Canada, accessed August 2, 2020. https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/What%20We%20Believe%20and%20Why/Ecumenical%20and%20Interfaith%20Relations/Bearing%20Faithful%20Witness%20-%20United%20Church%E2%80%93Jewish%20Relations%20Today.pdf
[3] *Ibid*.

was nullified by the revelation in Christ, and Jews condemned to damnation without conversion. Instead, and for the first time at an institutional level, The United Church of Canada officially articulated in *Bearing Faithful Witness* a clear understanding of the Christian-Jewish relationship as an interfaith siblinghood grounded in shared heritage.[4]

It had been seventy years since Germany's Jews, shocked by Adolf Hitler's seizure of power, had begun efforts to escape that would grow increasingly frantic as the Nazi regime stripped them of their livelihoods, citizenship, freedom of movement, and basic human rights. Desperate for the visas that would secure them safe haven, they battled with bureaucrats, sold their belongings for passage and landing fees, and pleaded for help from family abroad, while waiting in vain for admission to countries that responded to their plight not with welcome but instead with harsher restrictions.[5] If no western nation acquitted itself admirably in the face of the mounting refugee crisis, however, the nation with the worst record by far in this regard – due to its conscious and deliberate barring of Jewish immigration throughout the 1930s – was Canada.[6]

Canada's rejection of responsibility for European Jews seeking to escape the Nazi regime has been recorded by Irving Abella and Harold Troper in their formidable work *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948.* Detailing not only the specific pre-war decisions taken by the period's federal government of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and by his Immigration Director Charles Frederick Blair,

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[4] *Bearing Faithful Witness* also attends in its Appendix B to the distinction made in current discourse between anti-Judaism – the hateful stereotyping and disparagement of Jews and Jewish beliefs – and the racialized hatred of anti-Semitism. In the context of the period of Canadian history covered in this thesis, the distinction is difficult to parse; moreover, both the primary and secondary source materials cited here use "anti-Semitism" to identify both forms of hatred. Although I recognize that some of what is described in this paper might more properly be called anti-Judaism, I will therefore follow my source material in the use of "anti-Semitism" throughout.

[5] Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (New York: Random House, 1983), 4.

[6] *Ibid*, vi.

but also the limited degree to which those decisions were challenged, *None Is Too Many* delivers a searing condemnation of Canadian anti-Semitism in the early twentieth century as perhaps most malignant when casual or unacknowledged.[7] Without minimizing the overt anti-Semitism of Blair,[8] nor the vicious anti-Semitism promulgated by ultramontane and nationalist Roman Catholic leaders in Quebec,[9] nor even the ultimate responsibility of King's government for its conscious concessions to both,[10] Abella and Troper nevertheless firmly place moral responsibility for Canada's ignoring of the refugee crisis squarely on the shoulders of the Protestant churches that had reflected and perpetuated an implicit anti-Semitism essentially expressed as xenophobia, and had remained "virtually silent" throughout the 1930s.[11]

For Abella and Troper the indictment of the Protestant Churches for this moral failure is justified given their claim to both jurisdiction and influence over Canadians' moral development and behaviour.[12] As a leading Church historian Phyllis Airhart has noted in *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, examining the moral culpability of The United Church of Canada is particularly warranted given the denomination's own missional claim from the time of its establishment in 1925 as the country's largest Protestant church. A nation-spanning uniting of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists, church union had been pursued precisely in order to provide Canada with the spiritual and moral foundation necessary to its development as an orderly,

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[7] Abella and Troper, *None Is Too Many*, 284.
[8] *Ibid*, 7-9.
[9] *Ibid,* 18.
[10] *Ibid*, 9.
[11] *Ibid*, 65, 284.
[12] *Ibid,* 50-51; Alan Davies and Marilyn F. Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches? Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight during the Nazi Era* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997), 172. Google Ebook.

peaceable, and just society, serving Canadians in their spiritual and moral growth. What its members sought was a prominent voice in Canadian affairs which would articulate the Christian message in relation to social and political developments and in the interests of the common good.[13]

As even the most cursory examinations of early and post-Confederation Canadian History, early and post-Confederation Canadian Church History, and general Church History make clear, the quest for prominence in the public life of the nation was hardly new among Canadian Churches. The colonial enterprise that became Canada had developed and established clear and circumscribed parameters of a Canadian identity and social ethos, and the churches had been enthusiastically instrumental in that development, willingly reflecting, endorsing, and promoting those parameters both before and after Confederation in a deliberate conflation of Canadianness with "Christian". The argument is made compellingly by leading Church historian Phyllis Airhart.[14] Fueled outside Quebec by a curious combination of an establishment Anglicanism leveraging in Canada the opportunity for perfecting Britishness,[15] and a Dissenting Protestantism no less devoted to taming Canada's wilderness into an orderly approximation of the Kingdom of God,[16] this Canadian Christian cultural ethos emphasized, demanded, and aspired to a national identity characterized by uniformity in the heritage, or at least the values, of White, Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Racialized incursions on this uniformity had at times

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[13] Phyllis Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation ~ Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014), 7-8.
[14] *Ibid*, Introduction. Airhart necessarily reflects the ubiquity in her primary source material of the verb Christianize and its gerund Christianizing as the United Church's chosen descriptors of its essential missional stance in relation to Canada. In this document, I will follow her lead and that of other scholars in using these words without quotation marks: they were embraced with sincerity and employed without irony, and need to be read with this import.
[15] Airhart, *Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 5.
[16] N. Keith Clifford, "Religion and the Development of Canadian Society: An Historiographical Analysis," *Church History* 38, no. 4 (1969): 508.

been prevented or sharply limited, and ethnic and religious incursions tolerated only in service of achieving economic or political goals.[17] The extreme instability brought about first by the Great War and then by the Great Depression exacerbated racist and xenophobic hostility and refreshed the rhetoric of uniformity in the 1930s with an even deeper fervour.[18] In a tumultuous world, Canada's very future might perhaps depend on protecting the purity of the Canadian values embodied in White, Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, and if government clearly had a legislative responsibility for this protection, Canada's Protestant churches readily redoubled their own efforts in this regard as self-appointed keepers of “the soul of the nation”. As the churches continued to model and promote wariness of and discomfort with alien cultures, particularly when stark racial, ethnic or cultural differences suggested assimilation was unlikely, Canadian Protestant messaging into the 1930s deliberately deepened a racism and xenophobia in Canada already so entrenched that it was essentially casual, manifesting in othering of minority peoples, often with unquestioned and unparsed reference to prevailing stereotypes.[19]

For Canada's Jewish community, solidly established in major urban centres and in fewer numbers in rural and small communities across Canada, the racism and xenophobia of this specifically Canadian Protestant messaging had long translated into an experience in Canada of equally casual and axiomatic anti-Semitism,[20] in which their

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[17] Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-2015, 4th Edition* (Toronto: Dundern Press, 2016), 105, Google Ebook.
[18] *Ibid,* 137.
[19] Airhart, *Church with the Soul of a Nation,* 7-8.
[20] The phrase "casual anti-Semitism" is often used by Jewish writers and speakers to describe the unflustered ease with which people can reflect and use patently anti-Semitic stereotypes, assumptions, and tropes in their regular discourse and interactions. I use it throughout this thesis in that sense, in an effort to convey the degree to which the majority of Canadians in this period were perfectly comfortable with anti-Semitic language and attitudes, and manifested both with no particular concern.

marginalization was largely justified by their racial, ethnic, and cultural differentness and presumed unassimilability.[21] At the same time, Canadian Protestant messaging was Christian messaging, grounded in the same foundational Christian doctrine of supercessionism that had begun rationalizing and sacralizing Christian anti-Semitism from Christianity's first century. Christian supercessionism, implicit in much of the Newer Testament content, explicitly identified Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah – the Christ – in whom the promise of God's covenant with the Jews as God's Chosen People was fulfilled, and apart from whom the covenant ceased. All who accepted Jesus as the Christ either entered into that covenant (if they were Gentile) or remained within it (if they were Jews): to reject Jesus as the Christ was simply to fall away from salvation, as the New Covenant in Christ had superceded and therefore nullified the first covenant made by God with the Jews through Abraham.[22]

Not content to merely relegate Jews to the ranks of the misguided or benighted for whom conversion to Christ might yet secure salvation in the New Covenant, Christian supercessionist rhetoric additionally and purposefully characterized the Jews' rejection of Christ as deliberate and willful, and therefore malevolent. They were not merely superceded but were Enemies of God and Instruments of Satan, who, in this construct pervasive in centuries of Christian doctrine, had not simply rejected Christ but had crucified him.[23] This supercessionist Christian theology, established orthodoxy in Europe, transplanted as such into Canada, and preached weekly from Canadian Christian pulpits,

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[21] Abella and Troper, *None Is Too Many, 51.*; Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 27, Google Ebook.
[22] Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth Livingstone, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 747, Google Ebook.
[23] Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 30-31, 246.

thus implicitly perpetuated disparagement, distrust, and even hatred of Jews as an acceptable and natural element of Christian faithfulness, even if good manners or Christian kindness might perhaps preclude overt expressions of hostility.[24] Although in Quebec Roman Catholic churches had long magnified supercessionist anti-Semitism in order to bolster and enflame nationalist fervour, it remained no less fundamental to and implicit in the theological messaging of Canada's Protestant churches. Their moral failure, whether in staying virtually silent or at best not notably vocal in response to the plight of those they had learned to disparage and distrust, was entirely predictable.[25]

The degree of that silence has been queried by Alan Davies and Marilyn Nefsky, whose *How Silent Were the Churches? Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight During the Nazi Era* began the process of examining the churches' responses more closely. The failure of Canadian Protestant churches to muster a concerted challenge to King's pre-war closure of the border to Europe's Jews is not in dispute. What scholars such as Davies and Nefsky seek are more critical studies more sensitive to the context within which Church leadership and lay persons focused their endeavours.[26] Further scholarship by Haim Genizi and, Kyle Jantzen have built on the work of Davies and Nefsky in more carefully parsing the Canadian churches' actions on behalf of Jewish refugees, also challenging the accusation of silence with infinitely more useful – because more critically nuanced – examinations of institutional actions that were manifestly not silence, but were either essentially or even willfully ineffectual, or merely ineffective. Genezi has examined virtually all the source material already mined by Davies and Nefsky, but with special attention to the pervasiveness of latent anti-Semitism in the

[24] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 18-21, Google Ebook.
[25] *Ibid,* 21-23. Google Ebook.
[26] *Ibid*, 10. Google Ebook.

rhetoric and advocacy of many Protestant leaders.[27] Jantzen has expanded the pool of source material by attending specifically to the ways in which news media reflected and shaped Canadian and Christian attitudes during the refugee crisis.[28] Finally, in his "Silence and Outrage: Reassessing the Complex Christian Response to Kristallnacht in English-Speaking Canada," Jonathan Durance has additionally argued that any full understanding of Canadian Christian response to the Nazi threat to Europe's Jews must be deinstitutionalized: reoriented in focus away from the official denominational statements which historians too often conflate with the stances and actions of individual churchgoers, and grounded instead in local church and public records.[29] This challenges the limited parameters of assessments of the Canadian Christian response to the refugee crisis by recognizing the contributions of individual clergy and laypeople that would ultimately prove ineffective but were undertaken passionately and even righteously,[30] to varying degrees. These individuals, few in number though they may have been, were not silent.[31]

Reorientation away from an institutional approach is particularly germane in relation to any study of The United Church of Canada. As a strictly non-creedal and conciliar denomination, the church neither expected nor demanded members' agreement or compliance with denominational statements, which were often formulated merely to offer church members a considered position on issues-arising for their own contemplation

[27] Haim Genezi, *The Holocaust, Israel, and Canadian Protestant Churches* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002), xii. Google Ebook.
[28] Kyle Jantzen and Jonathan Durance, "Our Jewish Brethren: Christian Responses to Kristallnacht in Canadian Mass Media," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. 46, no.4 (Fall, 2011): 538.
[29] Jonathan Durance, "Silence and Outrage: Reassessing the Complex Christian Response to Kristallnacht in English-Speaking Canada." *History of Intellectual Culture*. 10, 1 (2012/2013): 7.
[30] I am using the word 'righteous' here in the sense it is used in Holocaust Studies to describe selflessness, purity of heart, and instinctive action to save Jews in peril.
[31] Durance, "Silence and Outrage," 7-8.

and to provoke broader awareness and discussion, and should not be read uncritically as either reflective of or directive of the attitudes and beliefs of the majority of ordinary church members.[32] Scholarship that specifically delves into the work of individual Church members, activists or clergymen working at the local level is therefore able to provide a much fuller understanding of the breadth of faith-informed viewpoints held, articulated, and discussed in United Church communities, often to a degree not reflected in official denominational documents. It was in the course of such an examination of the archived papers of prominant refugee activist Claris Silcox, seeking evidence of smaller scale activism by United Church members at a local level, that a news clipping Silcox had carefully pasted into a scrapbook was discovered mentioning the stalwart and note-worthy preaching against anti-Semitism of one United Church clergyman in Hamilton, Ontario.[33]

This one United Church clergyman was Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter, whose sole memorializing in the United Church Archives is a file of his typewritten sermons and addresses.[34] Later active with Silcox in efforts to open the Canadian border to Jewish refugees, he had embarked in the late 1920s on an intentional campaign to deconstruct in his preaching the supercessionist Christian theology that he identified as the fundamental source of anti-Semitism. Not until 1974 would theologian Rosemary Ruether electrify Christian scholarship with her compelling argument that healing the anti-Semitism that Christian theology had purposefully engendered and entrenched was an intrinsically

[32] Don Schweitzer, ed., *The United Church of Canada: A History*, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2012), Google Ebook.
[33] The United Church of Canada Archives, Claris Silcox Fonds F3199.
[34] The United Church of Canada Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137.

theological endeavour.[35] Not until seven decades later would The United Church of Canada finally acknowledge and address Christian anti-Semitism and its legacy of harm in *Bearing Faithful Witness*, integrating at long last this precise theological deconstruction of Christian supercessionism that Hunter had preached doggedly from his Hamilton pulpit from the late 1920s into the refugee crisis. At a time when his denomination had been virtually silent, Hunter was not. He believed it was possible to heal Christian anti-Semitism, one sermon at a time.

At first glance, Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter, minister at Carlton Street United Church in Hamilton, Ontario, was no obvious theological radical. The son and godson respectively of noted Canadian revivalist preaching team John Hunter and Hugh Crossley,[36] Hunter's faith and ministry was deeply grounded in his childhood experience of the impassioned Crossley-Hunter evangelical revivals that inspired audiences with live dramatizations of biblical stories and urged them to accept Christ's invitation to repent and embark on a new path of committed discipleship.[37] Steeped in this traditional evangelicalism and within the broader Social Gospel Movement's understanding of discipleship as building God's Kingdom on earth, Hunter deepened these emphases in his own preaching and ministry, first as a Methodist clergyman and following Church Union in 1925 as a minister in The United Church of Canada. Throughout his long tenure as a clergyman, he remained thoroughly traditional in theology and doctrine, and comfortable with the language and theology of evangelical revivalism and its invitation to turn toward Christ and embrace Christian discipleship.

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[35] Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide,* 30-31, 246.
[36] UCC Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137*,* Biographical Information.
[37] George Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997), 323-324.

At the same time, and notwithstanding this traditional evangelical and Social Gospel orientation, Hunter had landed firmly by the mid-1920s on one piece of theological ground that set him starkly apart from his colleagues. Rejecting not only the Christian supercessionism that nullified Judaism, he had further come to believe that the Jews' relationship with God continued full and complete in and of itself, quite apart from the subsequent revelation in Christ. For Jews, in other words, Hunter considered conversion to Christianity to be absolutely unnecessary: the covenant relationship achieved with God through Christ for Gentiles had already been achieved directly with God for Jews through Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets. Jews and Christians, Hunter believed, ought therefore to be understood as 'brothers of one family,'[38] and any implicit or explicit anti-Semitism arising from either Christian supercessionism or Christian disdain or loathing was therefore not only morally wrong but theologically wrong. On this basis, and in response to the malignant European anti-Semitism that exacerbated Canada's more latent, though pervasive, anti-Semitism, Hunter set to work repudiating and repairing this anti-Semitic theology through his preaching and pastoral ministry in Hamilton, beginning in 1928 with a pulpit exchange with Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. The first such collaboration between a synagogue and church in Canada, and possibly the first in the British commonwealth, the two services drew large congregations as the two clergymen invited listeners to join them in working toward a new Jewish-Christian brotherhood in Canada. From Jews, Isserman observed,

[38] Hunter uses this language of brotherhood throughout his preaching to describe a familial relationship of kinship which might now be rendered siblinghood, with Jews and Christians understood as siblings in one family: equivalent and equally-beloved children of God. This usage is entirely consistent with other male-as-default language in his preaching, with the language of the English translation of the Bible to which he would have had access, and with common usage at the time. While it reflects the androcentrism of Canadian life in this period, there is no indication that it was meant to be either deliberately misogynist or purposefully exclusionary. I have therefore used it throughout this thesis, reflecting the primary source material, under the assumption that its purpose was to speak of people collectively.

this would require trust. From Christians, on the other hand, as Hunter noted, it would demand much more: first humility, then listening, learning, and repentance for past and continued anti-Semitism, all within a new understanding of the Jewish relationship with the Christian God.[39]

Hunter understood that many Christians would not be up to the challenge. His campaign spoke into the complex mixture of strains of anti-Semitism transplanted over generations from Europe and refined in North America. Variously grounded in simple suspicion of difference, xenophobic assumptions about inherent criminality, pseudo-racialized loathing, Christian supercessionism, and medieval religious polemic, it was particularly malignant in the early decades of the twentieth century in Roman Catholic Quebec. It was also pervasive across the country, manifesting in easy stereotyping and default prejudice and in restricted or limited access to schools, professions, clubs, and neighbourhoods.[40] While few Gentile Canadians outside of urban centres had on-going relationships with Jewish people, most would have been familiar with the broad characterization of Jews as treacherous in their avarice and capacity to accumulate wealth, dangerous in their crowded tenement poverty, unsettling in their insularity, suspiciously associated with Bolshevism, and best avoided if possible.

These unchecked manifestations of widespread anti-Semitism grew increasingly alarming as the 1920s shifted into the Depression years of the 1930s, as Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany and seized dictatorial power, and as Hunter brought his preached theology to bear on the the pre-war refugee crisis and his advocacy for the opening of the Canadian border to Jews. As this thesis will demonstrate, Hunter was no

[39] UCC Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137.
[40] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews,* 27. Google Ebook.

more effective in achieving sanctuary for Jewish refugees in Canada than any of his colleagues or fellow activists, either within or outside the church. Canada's rejection of Jewish refugees in the 1930s was the predictable result of decades of settlement and immigration practice and policy shaped to reject challenges to British and French racial and cultural hegemony except when essential to specific social, political, or economic goals. Nonetheless Hunter was singular in bringing to his activism a perspective not merely humanitarian but specifically theological. One sermon at a time, he repudiated and deconstructed Christian supercessionism as an unfaithful theological construct and preached Jewish-Christian brotherhood as biblically-sound and biblically-mandated, placing radical new content at the heart of traditional Evangelical Revivalist Protestantism that urged Canadian Christians beyond a humanitarian papering-over of their anti-Semitism and instead toward its healing at its source. As one of a number of Protestant clergymen and laypeople who initiated, led, and participated in purposeful advocacy efforts, Hunter is invariably listed by scholars of this period as having significantly contributed to this work.[41] As a United Church clergyman, Hunter was highly regarded by his colleagues, receiving an honorary doctorate from Victoria College in 1934 and nominated as Moderator after the war.[42] At the same time, however, no scholarship has focused on Hunter specifically and no attention has been paid to the specifically and singularly theological nature of his contribution. This is the project of this thesis. Turning instead to uncovering and exploring a contribution that was

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[41] *viz to wit:* Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 146, footnote 18, Google Ebook. Haim Genezi, *Holocaust,* also notes Hunter's leadership role, with Maurice Eisendrath and Claris Silcox, with the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews, formed in 1934 and reorganized in 1940 to promote improved relations between the two communities. Both Catholic and Protestant Christians were involved.

[42] "Honorary Degrees Conferred by Senate," Victoria College, University of Toronto, accessed August 2, 2020. https://vicu.utoronto.ca/about-victoria/honorary-degrees/honorary-degrees-conferred-by-senate/

deliberately grounded in the theological deconstruction of anti-Semitism itself, while equally attentive to the particularity of the presenting moment, becomes not only worthwhile but an important addition to better grasping the complexity of the Canadian response to the Jewish refugee crisis.

Apart from a brief article entitled "The Marks of Anti-Semitism", written in 1941 and distributed widely by The United Church of Canada,[43] the record of Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter's theological deconstruction of anti-Semitism from 1928 into the pre-war period and the refugee crisis is limited to a file of roughly forty typewritten sermons and addresses held in the Archives of The United Church of Canada in Toronto.[44] These betray the patterns and propensities of the busy working clergyman: not all are properly dated, many bear signs of editing for re-use, and Hunter clearly only kept and carefully filed those sermons and addresses he felt were worth keeping. They also bear witness to the built theology of a working preacher, for whom broad theological reflection unfolds week upon week in discrete portions, grounded in biblical study and contemplation. Many of the archived sermons and addresses speak directly to Hunter's deconstruction of Christian supercessionism and the anti-Semitism it fostered. Others reveal more subtextually the centrality of the concept of Jewish-Christian brotherhood to his understanding of the nature and will of God. All were written and preached as public expressions of his theological convictions and therefore serve collectively as a superb source for exploring a theological contribution to The United Church of Canada that has until now been hidden behind brief, if invariable, references to his activism alongside Rev. Claris Silcox and Senator Cairine Wilson on the Canadian National Committee on

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[43] Ernest Crossley Hunter, "The Marks of Anti-Semitism," *The United Church Observer* (March 15, 1941): 10, 28.
[44] UCC Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137.

Refugees. The archived sermons and addresses will be set in their immediate Canadian and United Church context with attention to contemporaneous newspaper coverage, institutional records of The United Church of Canada, and articles printed in the denomination's magazine *The New Outlook.*

Chapter Two begins the attention to Hunter's response to the refugee crisis by surveying the context in which he preached as the engineered result of decades of Canadian immigration policy and practice. Deliberately regulated to serve the express goal of approximate racial and cultural uniformity in the population, Canada's borders had never been entirely open and free from socially, politically, and economically motivated restrictions, and were barricaded even more rigidly during the Depression due to devastating drought and widespread unemployment. Opening the border even minimally or briefly to offer sanctuary to Jewish refugees would have required sufficient political will to withstand not only these Depression anxieties but also the internal pressure of a rising Canadian anti-Semitism notably distilled by an unnamed federal official into the observation "none is too many". Humanitarian appeals, let alone appeals for a new relationship between Christian and Jew, were unlikely to prevail in such a context at such a time.

The third chapter explores the ways in which the radical theological content Hunter developed and preached was at once grounded in and a departure from the traditions of Evangelical Revivalist Protestantism in which he had been raised. It will also introduce the early years of his campaign beginning with the 1928 pulpit exchange with Holy Blossom Temple and continuing into the early years of the Depression. Finally, the fourth chapter analyzes Hunter's preaching activism in the pre-war period of the Nazi

regime, 1933-1939, setting it within the broader context of Canadian and United Church responses to the threat of Nazism to German and European Jews and to the refugee crisis as it unfolded. The thesis concludes with attention to Hunter's brief article *The Marks of Anti-Semitism,* published in *The United Church Observer* in 1941. Although only a few hundred words long, *The Marks of Anti-Semitism* did represent the sole distillation of his message and his theology of Jewish-Christian brotherhood prepared for a national audience, and it sowed the theological roots finally brought to fruition seven decades later in *Bearing Faithful Witness.*

Chapter Two
The Careful Construction of Canada

On the evening of June 7, 1939, "a group of prominent Canadians"[45] urgently telegraphed Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, pleading with him to offer sanctuary to the 907 Jewish-German passengers fleeing Nazi Germany aboard the transatlantic ship *St. Louis.* Their request was not ignored. King did rouse his ministers to contemplate the possibility, but the response was swift and negative: notwithstanding the desperation of the *St. Louis* passengers, nor the uncertainty of their future, Canada's immigration policy would not be circumvented to ensure their safety. Conceding landing to the *St. Louis* would open the floodgates, King's immigration officials warned him. Canada could not risk being swarmed by Jewish refugees from Hitler's Germany. The border must remain closed. It did. The *St. Louis* returned its beleaguered passengers to Europe, where they were parcelled out to various countries, most of which were occupied by Germany within a year. Nearly a third perished in Nazi concentration camps.[46]

Eighty years later, the Canadian government offered to survivors and their descendants a formal apology acknowledging the egregious moral failure of this decision.[47] The decision was not, however, merely one regrettable instance of moral failure. Rather it was emblematic of the breadth and complexity of Canada's moral culpability in relation to the Jewish refugee crisis that arose in the 1930s. The story of the *St. Louis* highlights Canada's harshly restrictive Depression Era immigration policy and

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[45] Steve Schwinghamer, "Canada and MS *St. Louis,*" Pier 21 Immigration History, accessed February 4, 2019. https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canada-and-ms-st-louis.

[46] Sarah A. Ogilvie and Scott Miller, *Refuge Denied : The St. Louis Passengers and the Holocaust* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006). The authors attempted to trace what happened to each passenger on the ship.

[47] Justin Trudeau, "Statement of Apology on Behalf of the Government of Canada to the Passengers of the MS St. Louis," accessed February 4, 2019. https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/11/07/statement-apology-behalf-government-canada-passengers-ms-st-louis.

the racism and anti-Semitism which had shaped it. The Depression and its economic suffering merely hardened policy that had long been explicitly racist, anti-Semitic, and utilitarian, deliberately allowing only white and Christian northern European immigration except when other groups were necessary to secure crucial labour for farming and industry.[48] The story of the *St. Louis* also reveals not only King's awareness of a growing moral imperative to soften Canadian immigration policy, but also his unwillingness to override his intransigently anti-Semitic senior staff and to defy popular opinion as he interpreted it. At the same time, the story of the *St. Louis* provides a window into the relentless efforts of at least some Canadians during the 1930s to force attention toward the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Germany and to pressure the Canadian government to provide sanctuary to Jewish refugees.

This chapter will survey the shaping of Canada's immigration policy with particular attention to two elements that would become critical to the context of the

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[48] An understanding of this wider context, as well as its specific anti-Semitism, has been developed thanks to the following sources: Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Stephanie D. Bangarth, "Religious Organizations and the "Relocation" of Persons of Japanese Ancestry in North America: Evaluating Advocacy," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 34:3 (2004); Simon Isaiah Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates: A Review of Jewish Immigration, Colonization and Immigrant Aid Work in Canada (1840-1940),* (Toronto: Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Colonization Association, 1966); Heidi Bohaker and Franca Iacovetta, "Making Aboriginal People 'Immigrants Too': A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s–1960s." *The Canadian Historical Review* 90:3 (September 2009); Kornel Chang, "Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity: Asian Migration and the Formation of the U.S.-Canadian Boundary," *American Quarterly* 60:3 (September 2008); Henry F. Drystek, "'The Simplest and Cheapest Mode of Dealing with them': Deportation from Canada before World War II," *Histoire sociale- Social History,* Vol. XV, No 30 (novembre- November 1982); David Gouter, "Drawing Different Lines of Color: The Mainstream English Canadian Labour Movement's Approach to Blacks and the Chinese, 1880 –1914," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, Volume 2, Issue 1 (2005); Kurt Korneski, "Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s‑1910s," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, Volume 41, Number 2 (Spring 2007); Alison R.Marshall, "Chinese Immigration to Western Manitoba Since 1884: Wah Hep, George Chong, the KMT, and the United Church," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, Volume 42, Number 3 (Fall 2008); Scott W. See, "'An Unprecedented Influx': Nativism and Irish Famine Immigration to Canada," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* (Winter 2000).

Jewish refugee crisis of the 1930s to which Crossley Hunter and others sought to respond. First, attention will be given to the way in which Canadian immigration policy until the early 20th century facilitated the building of a complex and diverse Jewish Canadian population in which earlier settled Sephardic Jewish immigrants found themselves contending with the overwhelming task of welcoming the sudden arrival of a vast number of Ashkenazi Jewish newcomers from Eastern Europe.[49] Producing class and cultural conflicts comparable to those evident in the population as a whole, this complexity would have ramifications in the 1930s, as the impoverished urban enclaves in which most Ashkenazi Jews had settled exacerbated the simmering anti-Semitism of a Canadian population already deeply xenophobic and disinclined to protest restrictive immigation policy. Restrictive immigration policy had been delivered to Canadians in the Immigration Acts of 1906 and 1910, and the second area of particular attention in this chapter will be the intent with which these Acts were engineered and employed by successive governments, thanks to a clause allowing unhindered power to issue Orders in Council whenever it was deemed necessary to bar particular groups, in order to secure and enforce relative racial and cultural uniformity in Canada's population.[50]

In fact, by the time Jewish refugees were facing a closed border into Canada, the Canadian border had been closed to virtually all immigration for nearly five years. The amount of "landing money" required had been raised ever higher to discourage all but the most affluent from immigrating, and even agricultural immigration – which might theoretically have allowed entry to the less well-to-do – had been discouraged as the

[49] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 146, Google Ebook.
[50] Knowles, *Strangers*, Chapters 5 and 6, 85-110. Google Ebook.

Prairies withered in drought.[51] Although this extant immigration policy was interpreted and enforced by the King government during the refugee crisis in ways that were deliberately anti-Semitic,[52] the restrictions on immigration that Hunter and others would protest against in advocating for sanctuary for Jewish refugees were therefore neither new nor particularly disturbing to most Canadians. They had been constructed with intent to sustain Northern European Whiteness and Christianity as inherent to Canadian identity, and they would prove impossible to dislodge.

Colony to Confederation: Invitations and Arrivals

The vigour with which the King government enforced the barring of Jewish immigration to Canada in the pre-war years was not merely tragically consequential but also unprecedented. Jews had been crossing the Atlantic to settle in Canada since the earliest European incursions on the land, and Jewish communities had been established within settlements in Newfoundland, Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia by the mid-1760s.[53] Augmented by the migration of Jewish Loyalists from the New England states during the American Revolution, these early Jewish communities laid down strong roots, contributed to the development of the colonial mercantile economy, and even included a member of the Nova Scotia legislature in the person of Samuel Hart, elected to that body in 1791, before he converted to Anglicanism.[54] Comparable Jewish communities in Montreal and Toronto soon followed, as British and American Jews settled in these urban centres, built industries and wealth, and established the synagogues and Jewish service

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[51] Abella and Troper, "'The Line Must Be Drawn Somewhere': Canada and Jewish Refugees, 1933-39," Canadian Historical Review, LX, no. 2 (1979): 182-183.
[52] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many,* 54-56.
[53] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 31-32
[54] D. A. Sutherland, "Hart, Samuel," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003.

groups that sustained them in community. As Gerald Tulchinsky emphasizes in his *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey,* these early Jewish communities were almost unilaterally Sephardic Jewish communities, grounded in the traditions of Sephardic Judaism that had developed in Spain and Portugal, and had been carried first to Britain and then to North America by these earliest immigrants. Together with the prosperity of these early communities as they developed, despite experiencing the casual and latent – though periodically malignant – anti-Semitism of exclusion from social and political arenas of power,[55] the stage was set for the class division within the Jewish community that would flourish in the late nineteenth century and prove consequential to the Depression-era immigration struggle.

By the 1890s, the waves of Jewish immigration into Canada that had produced the relatively settled, organized, frequently affluent communities of conservative Sephardic traditionalism in Canada's urban centres was overwhelmed by a surge of Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia.[56] Initially, these newcomers, along with Orthodox, Mennonite, and Catholic Russians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Italians, largely settled in discrete and culturally-specific agricultural pockets that appeared to pose no theoretical threat to Canada's prevailing self-understanding. These pocket settlements attempted little incursion into the dominant culture and therefore initially provoked therein neither a broad sense of instability nor a reactive hardening of boundaries.[57] At the same time, each of these communities deepened the grooves running from eastern and southern parts of Europe by virtue of continued ties to former

[55] *viz to wit*, the battle over the election of Ezekiel Hart: Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews,* 48-52.
[56] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 146, Google Ebook.
[57] Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy, 2nd Edition,* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 12-13. Google Ebook.
Knowles, *Strangers*, 76-80. Google Ebook.

homelands, manifest demonstration of emigrating as viable, and the provision of a soft-landing amongst kinsmen and a welcome spoken in the newcomer's mother tongue.[58] In subsequent decades, as more and more of their former compatriots followed these same grooves to Canada to escape famine and oppression, internal migration simultaneously pulled many in these communities away from rural farmlands and into urban centres, where they were often relegated by prejudice into an entrenched urban poverty that bred desperation, anger, and still more prejudice.[59]

These Ashkenazi Jews, fleeing not only poverty but also violent pogroms in their homelands, flooded into Montreal and Toronto, raising local Jewish populations exponentially and taxing even the impressive charitable infrastructure with which the extant Jewish community cared for them. Having themselves left the urban cores for more affluent leafy enclaves, the Sephardic Jewish community of earlier migrations hustled the new arrivals into crowded downtown tenements, where their own homeland patterns and the traditions of Ashkenazi Judaism took root on a much larger and more intense scale. Again, economic and social development was subsidized by Jewish credit and charitable grants, both local and international, and again new arrivals progressed through stages of self-organization toward sustainability.[60] If the journey of earlier generations of Jewish immigrants to Canada had unfolded relatively smoothly, the late-19th century threw a wrench in the proceedings even for the settled Jewish community. The newcomers were so poor, so desperate, and arrived so swiftly in such vast numbers

[58] This image of 'grooves' that facilitated orderly mass migrations is taken from the work of scholar Adam McKeown, who describes Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans crossing the ocean in search of work for decades as creating highly organized "grooves... within which the precedents and assistance of relatives and fellow villagers [were] institutionalized [into] associations and businesses that provided the support and opportunities that made migration possible." Adam McKeown, "Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas", *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 58, No. 2 (May, 1999), 317.
[59] Valerie Knowles, *Strangers,* 101. Google Ebook.
[60] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 146. Google Ebook.

that it was simply overwhelming.[61] Whatever solidarity might have been assumed or expected or depended upon in earlier decades, religious and class differences, intricately intertwined in the Jewish community with country-of-origin, fuelled conflict and discontent, seen most clearly in the expanding and economically important garment industry.

Previously the purview of self-employed tailors and dressmakers, garment making's industrialization in the late-19th century offered a superb entrepreneurial opportunity to urban businessmen from a variety of ethnic backgrounds eager to take advantage of a profitable 'ready-to-wear' industry requiring little capital investment. It was, however, Jewish entrepreneurs in Montreal and Toronto who would come to dominate the industry, leveraging not only their significant mercantile experience but also, and crucially, their unique access to the perfect labour force: the wave of impoverished Jewish immigrants newly arrived from Eastern Europe.[62] Crowded tightly into ramshackle tenement neighbourhoods, isolated and dependent on the Jewish charitable organizations assisting them, the new arrivals became the backbone of a contracted labour system designed to exploit their desperation and their limited options. Competition in the industry was intense. As owners pressured contractors to keep labour costs as low as possible, the men, women, and even children who were employed worked longer and longer hours for a pittance, with neither recourse nor job security. Sweating was a dehumanizing labour system in which owners flourished, corrupt contractors enriched themselves, and workers suffered. In the garment industry in Montreal and Toronto in this period it was also a system that further divided a Jewish community

[61] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 159. Google Ebook.
[62] *Ibid*, 148. Google Ebook.

already beset by sectarian and class divisions.[63] This was not, as Tulchinsky notes, merely the exploitation of workers by owners. This was the exploitation of poor, newly arrived, Eastern European, Ashkenazi Jews by their affluent, settled, Western European, Sephardic-tradition kindred. While Royal Commissions delved into the abuses of sweating generally, the *Jewish Times* newspaper focused its anger on garment industry owners and contractors whose craven greed apparently allowed them to betray even their own people. Oppression from outside forces was one thing, as Jews who had fled Eastern Europe were only too aware. Oppression by their fellow Jews was quite another. If no one imagined that the Jewish community in Canada must necessarily be wholly unified, it ought at least, the *Jewish Times* observed, not undertake to eat its own young.[64]

By the first decade of the 20th century garment workers were organizing and fighting back.[65] The class divisions within the Jewish community continued troublesome as lingering anger in poorer Jewish neighbourhoods alarmed wealthier Jews, whose hopes for quiet integration into middle- and upper-class Canadian society were threatened by both the radical politics and the juvenile delinquency issues of urban areas.[66] The *Jewish Times* attempted to tidy up the manners of the unfortunate masses in a column "As Others See Us" which endeavoured to teach its readers how to blend in with polite society so as not to "bring discredit on Jews as a whole," warning that failure to blend in would mean all Jews would "have to suffer for their sins."[67] Labour disputes, strikes, and public protests exacerbated not only class divisions but also a Canadian anti-Semitism

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[63] Ruth Frager, *Sweatshop Strife: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Jewish Labour Movement in Toronto*, 1900-*1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
[64] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 152-153. Google Ebook.
[65] Frager, *Sweatshop Strife*.
[66] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 182-85. Google Ebook.
[67] *Ibid*, 167. Google Ebook.

increasingly characterized by the paradoxical rhetoric of European anti-Semites, with Jews blamed both for wealth and control of high finance, and for radical Bolshevik socialism. Particularly virulent in Quebec, where it coincided with the already-ugly anti-Semitic streak in ultramontane nationalist Catholicism, this *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* fueled rhetoric also found sufficient fertile soil in the period's academic discourse that its influence would later prove politically significant in the immigration debates of the 1930s. If most Canadian Jews were still experiencing a more casual cultural anti-Semitism in their daily lives, serious malignancy was looming.[68]

For those Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe who had settled outside of Toronto and Montreal in the late 19th century, the experience had unfolded differently. In the smaller towns and cities across the country in which Eastern European Jewish immigrants had been the first Jewish families to settle and to organize themselves, those who might have found themselves an Ashkenazi underclass in Toronto or Montreal were able instead to leverage their communal spirit of mutual dependence into the same formidable organizing and relatively swift stability that the earliest traditional Sephardic communities had enjoyed.[69] This expansion into smaller towns, notwithstanding earlier shaky attempts to expand via farming communes into the Prairies, represented a major shift for the Canadian Jewish community. Ashkenazi Jews brought to bear their not insignificant numerical influence on the national Jewish discourse.[70] Across Canada, however, the arrival of these thousands of Eastern and Southern European immigrants, both Jews and Gentiles, had begun to place immense pressure on the dominant Canadian culture, forcing new and continuing political and economic interests to be carefully

[68] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 192-207; also 162-166, specifically with reference to the Dreyfus affair.
[69] *Ibid*, 171-172. Google Ebook.
[70] *Ibid*.

weighed against an increasing social interest in retrenching a community stability predicated on shared identity. Increased regulation of trans Atlantic immigration was at hand.[71]

Quantity versus Quality: the Laurier Years

In *Strangers Within Our Gates*, historian Valerie Knowles identifies the two prevailing perspectives that shaped and reshaped Canadian Atlantic-oriented immigration policy in the years immediately approaching and following the shift into the 20th century. Each arose in turn under the Liberal government of Sir Wilfred Laurier. Each represented an attempt to leverage the push factors of civil unrest and poverty that were besetting a Europe beginning to suffer imperial collapse. Each sought to promote the ongoing interest of expanding Prairie agriculture. Each also reveals the degree to which Canadian immigration policies were vulnerable, and would continue to be vulnerable, to engineering by individual men with strongly held views.[72]

Both Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver, in their respective tenures in the Laurier Cabinet, were clear in articulating the interests of Canadians each considered paramount. Sifton, as Laurier's first minister responsible for immigration, remained committed to Canada's broad need for a larger population as the top priority, as it had been under previous governments. He sharpened this focus decisively to leverage the new agro-technologies that had at long last better positioned the Prairies for viable farming. Certain

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[71] Donald Avery explores growing fears of these "dangerous foreigners" and the reflection of these fears in Canada's immigration policy. Donald Avery, *"Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979); *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1995), Section 1.
[72] Knowles, *Strangers*, Chapters 5 and 6, 85-110. Google Ebook; These two chapters survey the work of Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver.

that "stalwart peasants in sheepskin coats"[73] would eventually assimilate into Canadian society by virtue of approximate racial and cultural affinity for Canadianness, Sifton concentrated his efforts almost exclusively on encouraging agricultural immigrants from Europe and pushed back against pressure to continue openness to British immigration in order to mitigate the Eastern Europeans' 'differentness' when this would only overpopulate urban centres.[74] As Knowles notes, Sifton was in fact extraordinarily successful in securing this primary interest of expanding Canadian agriculture. At the same time, however, he failed to recognize the degree to which his conviction "that the only good immigrant was an agricultural immigrant"[75] would exacerbate not only social concerns but also labour concerns. By expanding and entrenching ethnic population pockets, particularly in the western provinces, Sifton's policies had fueled fires only too ready to burn when internal migration inevitably drew thousands from farms into urban centres. As labour leaders decried the excess of immigrant labourers willing to work for a pittance, and muttering arose about criminality, filth, and moral turpitude in impoverished ethnic neighbourhoods, Sifton's single-minded commitment to prioritizing the economic interests of expanded agriculture became untenable. Urged to shift his government's immigration policy toward balancing this economic interest with greater attention to competing political and social interests, Laurier recognized that such a shift – in relation to a portfolio so subject to the personal views of the minister responsible – would demand new leadership. In 1905, he replaced Clifford Sifton with Frank Oliver.[76]

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[73] Knowles, *Strangers,* 92, quoting Sifton. Google Ebook.
[74] David J. Hall, "Sifton, Sir Clifford," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003).
[75] Knowles, *Strangers,* 102. Google Ebook.
[76] *Ibid*, 92; 102-3. Google Ebook. See also: David Hall, "Oliver, Frank," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16 (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003).

Oliver had long been one of Sifton's most impassioned critics, characterizing Sifton's single-minded focus on agricultural immigration as "filling up of the North-west with settlers... of such class and character as will deteriorate rather than elevate the conditions of our people and our country at large."[77] No less cognizant of the need for population expansion and farmers for the Prairies than Sifton had been, Oliver nonetheless refused to concede to serving this interest as primary when doing so would merely hang more Slav "'millstones' around the necks of Western Canadians."[78] While earlier immigration plans, including that of Sifton, had sought to minimize Eastern European immigration to the Prairies by instead maximizing, through promotion and incentives, immigration from Britain, Ireland, and the United States as well as internal migration westward, Oliver was unwilling to leave "the building up of a Canadian nationality so that our children may form one of the great civilized nations of the world"[79] so vulnerable to failures in advertising and unexpected global crises. In short, Sifton's tenure had convinced Oliver that pull factors were simply inadequate to the task of serving the social interests of cultural homogeneity and stability as long as push factors remained so treacherously ungovernable. As the new minister responsible for immigration, he therefore moved decisively to counteract problematic push factors by making entry to Canada wholly contingent on selection.

Vastly increasing the number of categories of would-be immigrants who were simply automatically barred from being selected for entry, Oliver's 1906 Immigration Act additionally barred entry without possession of requisite "landing money," established a detailed and uncompromising process for deportation of new arrivals who "within two

[77] Knowles, *Strangers*, 105, quoting Oliver. Google Ebook.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] *Ibid*.

years of their arrival became a charge upon public funds" (including those jailed, hospitalized, and dependent on charity), and enshrined in law the government's power to draw up whatever regulation was deemed "necessary or expedient for this Act according to its true intent and meaning for the better attainment of its objectives".[80] While the power to deport was immediately leveraged and its exercise would become increasingly significant in subsequent decades, particularly in service of political interests and not merely social interests, it was the latter element of Oliver's 1906 Act that paved the way for the additional and sweeping regulatory powers he would present to Parliament four years later. Adamant that the "true intent and meaning for the better attainment of [the] objectives" of Canada's immigration policy required that government be granted the flexibility "should occasion arise... to exclude people whom we consider undesirable,"[81] Oliver included in the subsequent Immigration Act of 1910 a clause "conferr[ing] on the Cabinet virtually unlimited discretionary powers... to issue orders-in-council to regulate the volume, ethnic origin, or occupational composition of immigration destined for Canada."[82] Only such flexibility, he informed Parliament, could ensure that social interests would be firmly and continuously upheld as paramount:

> If this power is given to the government, then the Government can be held responsible should there be a sudden influx of an undesirable class of people. We cannot tell at what time, or under what circumstances, there may be a sudden movement of people from one part of the world or another, and we want to be in a position to check it, should public policy demand such an action.[83]

Alongside enshrining this discretion to regulate admission according to "the requirements of Canada," Oliver's 1910 Immigration Act also accorded specific authority to Cabinet to

[80] Knowles, *Strangers*, 106, quoting the 1906 Immigration Act. Google Ebook
[81] *Ibid*, 109, quoting Oliver. Google Ebook.
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] *Ibid*.

bar admission when necessary on racial grounds, concomitantly enshrining in Canadian immigration policy until 1978 that particular races could simply be "deemed unsuited to the climate."[84] Having set these parameters for 'desirability' in immigrants, and ensured government's capacity to act swiftly to define and redefine 'desirability' in service of the social, political, and economic interests of the moment, Oliver further expanded on the foundations of the 1906 Immigration Act by introducing in his 1910 Act new powers to deport immigrants "on the grounds of political or moral instability" that would prove particularly consequential in subsequent decades. Stretching far beyond overt acts of treason to include "creat[ing] or attempt[ing] to create – by word or act – riot or public disorder in Canada,"[85] these expanded grounds for deportation were aimed specifically at securing the political interest of a social order protected from popular dissent and labour protest. Not even the most careful regulation of 'desirability' for admission, in Oliver's view, could preclude the continued watchfulness necessary to sustain Canada's best interests. All admission to Canada must be effectively probationary.[86]

As Knowles notes, "the act of 1910 did not provoke a heated and prolonged debate in the House of Commons:" Oliver's vision of highly selective immigration, a robust deportation policy, and a government positioned to act swiftly and decisively in response to world events was clearly consistent with the views of most of his parliamentary colleagues.[87] After decades of active promotion of immigration to serve the political interests of sovereignty and nation-building, and the economic interests of adequate labour, expanded farming, and resource export and development, Canada's

[84] Knowles, *Strangers*, quoting Section 38 of the 1910 Immigration Act.
[85] *Ibid*, 110, quoting Section 41 of the 1910 Immigration Act. Google Ebook.
[86] *Ibid*.
[87] *Ibid*.

orientation toward immigration was thus firmly shifted by the 1910 Immigration Act toward upholding as paramount the social interest of stability grounded overtly in approximate ethnic and racial homogeneity and subtextually in compliance with cultural mores.[88] In addition, the 1910 clause granting the federal Cabinet the power to swiftly issue protective orders-in-council pre-emptively ensured a border secured against even unexpected incursions by specific groups of immigrants seeking refuge. While not even impeccable ethnic Britishness could escape appraisal for 'desirability' in relation to the capacity for self-support, as Britons actually formed the majority of those returned across the Atlantic in this period due to vagrancy, unemployment, and simple poverty,[89] the Laurier Government's 1910 Immigration Act established the defensive infrastructure that would later be leveled against Jewish refugees escaping Hitler. Nevertheless, although 'desirability' was the watchword of the day and a concept heavily laden with cultural and racial expectations, economic and political interests did remain weighty as the 1910s began. Within a few short years, however, the question of the ethnic origin of newcomers would establish itself firmly as most critical. The Great War was looming.

Shaped as they were at the height of interest in eugenics in the Atlantic world and the interior of the European continent, it is not surprising that Canadian immigration policies immediately prior to World War One reflected a world of racial hierarchies and hegemony in which both whiteness and Britishness were considered the most perfected manifestations of humanness. Whiteness studies, with their focus on how closely ethnic groups were able to approach the white Anglo-Saxon ideal, have noted that Jews – and

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[88] Knowles, *Strangers,* 123, referencing United Church clergyman and founder of the Co-operative Commonwealth Foundation (CCF), J.S. Woodsworth, whose *Strangers Within Our Gates* promoted the 'Canadianization' of newcomers. Google Ebook.
[89] Knowles, *Strangers,* 109. Google Ebook.

particularly the Ashkenazi Jews who arrived in increasing numbers in the late 19th century – were ranked just above Blacks and Asians as racially desirable immigrants by governments in this period.[90] Studies emphasizing the importance of community dynamics to nation building, measuring the affinity of an immigrant group's values, customs, beliefs, and heritage with those of the Canadian majority, have also found Jewish immigrants ranked in this period among the least appealing – because the least assimilable – potential members of the collective or nation.[91] Finally, studies focused on socio-economic divisions and tensions have had little difficulty identifying why poor and working class Jews, who could displace extant workforces with a willingness to work for lower wages, did not receive a warm reception as they moved about in the Atlantic world and continental Europe.[92] Whatever their approach, scholars of this period agree that Jewish immigrants were clearly identified as undesirable, if tolerable under some conditions. Those conditions were about to weigh ever more heavily against them.

Us and Them: The Great War's Legacy

Britain's declaration of war against Germany in August of 1914 aroused both patriotism and alarm in Canada, as the neighbours made by several decades of intense immigration from central and eastern Europe suddenly found themselves regarded with

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[90] See for example: Kornel Chang, "Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity"; Paula Hastings, "'Our Glorious Anglo-Saxon Race Shall Ever Fill Earth's Highest Place': *The Anglo-Saxon* and the Construction of Identity in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada," in eds. Phillip Buckner and Doug Francis, *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, November 2006), 92-110.

[91] See for example: Ninette Kelley, and Michael Trebilcock. *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*. In building a model for understanding immigration policy as reflecting *ideas* about liberty and community, as well as the weighing of social, cultural, political, and economic *interests* of a nation, the authors particularly highlight Michael Walzer's theories about the effect of minority pressure on community identity: minority groups established in discrete 'pockets' are more easily tolerated by the majority, with anxieties rising and immigration policies becoming more restrictive as integregation increases.

[92] See for example: Gouter, "Drawing Different Lines of Color"; Kurt Korneski, "Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race"; Frager, *Sweatshop Strife*.

suspicion and recast as enemies or, as the war continued, Bolshevik revolutionaries. While harassment, internment, disenfranchisement, and deportation were unleashed on many as the remedy to the perceived danger within,[93] the war years crystallized concerns for many Canadians about immigration's dilution of British identity and British values across the country. As a result, beginning in 1919 in the midst of the Winnipeg General Strike and continuing throughout the 1920s, a series of further restrictions placed on immigration sought to respond to increasingly virulent anti-foreigner sentiments with exclusion of those with "peculiar customs, habits, modes of living and methods of holding property"[94] and, in 1923, virtually all immigrants from Asia.[95] New powers were also established by amendment to allow deportation on ideological grounds:

> Every person who by word or act in Canada seeks to overthrow by force or violence the government... or who is a member of or affiliated with any organization entertaining or teaching disbelief in or opposition to organized government... such a person [is] liable to deportation.[96]

Few post-war refugees from Europe were admitted. Even as the economy rebounded after the war and attempts to lure new immigrants from Britain and United States to expand the workforce faltered, discomfort with the notion of further influxes of foreigners remained firm. Government and employers feared Bolshevik-inspired labour uprisings, churches and charities bemoaned the degree of poverty and lack of assimilation in urban centres, and Canadians refused to countenance the employment of wartime enemies while even a single Canadian veteran might be struggling to find work. Already operating with a 'desirability' measure based on a "descending order of ethic preference... at the bottom

[93] Knowles, *Strangers,* 125-126. Google Ebook
[94] *Ibid,* 130, quoting 1919 amendment to Section 38, Immigration Act.
[95] *Ibid*, 131. Google Ebook.
[96] *Ibid*, 130, referring to 1919 amendment to Section 41, Immigration Act.

[of which] were the Jews, Orientals, and blacks,"[97] the first King government gradually increased restrictions against immigration by those deemed less desirable in the mid-1920s and then acted decisively in 1928 to cut immigration from Eastern Europe by two-thirds.[98] Immigration to Canada during the 1920s did continue, but at a far lower rate than in previous decades. When the Depression descended, it essentially ground to a complete halt, with two more orders-in-council introduced by the new Bennett government to that purpose. The first, in 1930, required immigrants to prove possession of sufficient wealth "to establish and maintain themselves on farms."[99] The second, in 1931, "effectively banned all non-agricultural immigrants who were of non-British or non-American stock."[100]

None is Too Many: Depression Barriers and Barricades

Given the catastrophic levels of unemployment and poverty the Depression unleashed across the country, particularly in the Prairie provinces already deep in an extended drought, the closing of the Canadian border to virtually all immigration in the 1930s was hardly surprising. Indeed, the utter absence of such alluring pull factors as opportunity in the shape of either employment or arable land might well have rendered any restrictions moot had Hitler not risen to power in Germany in 1933 and driven Jews desperate to escape his expanding regime to plead for refuge in Canada. As we have seen, however, neither the promotion nor the regulation of immigration to Canada had ever, from the earliest ocean crossings, made provision for admission based on simple compassion. Whether the interests served were French, British, or eventually Canadian,

[97] Abella and Troper, "'The Line," 182.
[98] Abella and Troper, "The Line," 182.
[99] *Ibid*, 183, referring to PC 1957 (1930).
[100] *Ibid*, referring to PC 659 (1931).

any expansion of Canada's population via immigration was understood, undertaken, and deliberately engineered solely in service of these national and collective interests. At no time were invitations to immigrate issued solely to secure for would-be newcomers their individual need for safety and well-being. While groups suffering oppression in Europe like the Doukhabors and Mennonites had been granted what amounted to sanctuary in Canada in prior decades, the attendant alleviating of their existential plight had been incidental: they had quite simply been welcomed because of their value as farmers.[101] In effect, although Canada's practice in relation to immigration had long included recognizing the individual need of potential newcomers as leverageable, the purpose of immigration was its delivery to the collective of social, economic, or political value.

During the Depression years, of course, virtually nothing save investable wealth could carry sufficient value to warrant admission, although a willingness to farm hovered theoretically for any would-be immigrant prepared to attempt to scrape a living from the land. Conscious of the unlikelihood for success at the latter, however, with migration into already impoverished urban centres inevitable as a result, the Canadian government had by 1930 already increased the amount required as "landing money" and defaulted strongly toward circumspection in assessing admissibility.[102] Still wholly predisposed to the extant understanding of immigration as the delivery of value to the collective, the government would be challenged by the refugee crisis occasioned by Hitler's rise to power to contemplate a new understanding of immigration as the deliberate delivery of value solely to the new arrival. Tragically for Europe's Jews, Canada did not meet this challenge.

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[101] Knowles, *Strangers,* 76. Google Ebook.
[102] *Ibid*, 106, quoting the 1906 Immigration Act. Google Ebook.

It is impossible to assess whether a Depression-era refugee crisis that had caused thousands of Britons to desperately seek sanctuary in Canada might have been met with a different response from Canada's government. What is certain is that a Depression-era refugee crisis that caused thousands of Jews to desperately seek sanctuary in Canada not only provoked no softening of existing restrictions on immigration, but also caused the governments of R. B. Bennett and William Lyon Mackenzie King – the latter most notably under Immigration Director Frederick Charles Blair – to enforce those restrictions with a degree of suspicion that rendered their import effectively moot. When Jews presented themselves for consideration with proof of adequate wealth to meet Canadian requirements, the provenance of this wealth was questioned, they were accused of being assigned and claiming false bank accounts created by Jewish organizations, and their request for immigration was rejected.[103] When Jews presented themselves for consideration as ready to undertake agricultural work, even with records proving long experience of prosperous farming, the legitimacy of these records was questioned and they were simply dismissed as liars on the basis of assumptions that Jews were inherently urban-dwellers and not fit for farming.[104] Even Jews whose unique professional expertise inspired prominent Canadian individuals and institutions to specifically request their admission as providing clear and unquestionable value to Canada's scientific and intellectual communities were summarily refused entry.[105] In short, an immigration policy already predicated on the delivery of value to serve the specific interests of the fraught Depression era was deliberately interpreted and enforced more restrictively in relation to Jewish refugees from Europe. If the regulation of immigration to Canada

[103] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many*, 56.
[104] *Ibid*, 54.
[105] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many*, 54.

during the Depression years was harsh, it was also specifically and intentionally anti-Semitic.

This represented a decisive shift in the interpretation and enforcement of Canadian immigration policy. While Canada's Jewish community was not large in the 1930s, representing only 1% of the Canadian population,[106] and while it was heavily concentrated in Montreal and Toronto with smaller pockets in smaller urban centres, Jews had freely immigrated to Canada from colonial times and indeed were welcomed especially as peddlers and merchants as the Canadian population grew.[107] Early arrivals had laid down grooves along which Jews later escaping Russia and Eastern Europe traveled, joining existing communities and the workforces of the Jewish-established needle industries in Montreal and Toronto in particular, and planting deep roots nurtured by community and religious institutions. Certainly Canadian Jews contended with the prejudice, ostracism, and even harassment of the cultural and casual anti-Semitism that had crossed the Atlantic to embed itself in Canadian society, but at no time prior to the 1930s was Jewish immigration to Canada officially limited or prevented on cultural, religious, or pseudo-racial grounds.[108]

Manifestations of more virulent and racialized anti-Semitism in Canada, however, had begun to emerge in decades prior – most explicitly in Quebec, but across the country – as waves of the propaganda of European ethnic nationalism and anti-Bolshevism drifted across the Atlantic. These had taken root predictably in urban centres with larger communities of Russian and Eastern European Jews, but also betrayed and exacerbated

[106] Abella and Troper, "The Line," 186.
[107] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 31-32; see also Hasia Diner, *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 27-28. Google Ebook.
[108] Knowles, *Strangers*, 101. Google Ebook.

the casual anti-Semitism of Canada's mainline Protestants who proved no less capable than their European counterparts of blaming the Jews not merely for the crucifixion of Christ but also for the inexplicably-paired conspiracies of controlling capitalism and inciting Bolshevik revolution. But it would be in Quebec that virulent anti-Semitism established itself most firmly in the interwar period, finding fertile soil in the province's fervent ultramontane Catholic nationalism and fuel in the writings of priest and scholar Lionel Groulx.[109] By the time Hitler had seized power in Germany and the question of the admission of Jewish refugees into Canada began to be raised quietly by Canadian Jews, many of whom were fearful of inflaming extant anti-Semitism in Canada any further, the fevered anti-Semitism in Quebec in particular would prove tragically consequential.

Although it was Prime Minister R. B. Bennett who presided over these first few years of the Depression and of the Jewish refugee crisis, the response to the latter as it intensified would fall to the government of William Lyon Mackenzie King and to the oversight of his Immigration Director Frederick Charles Blair. Granted virtually unlimited jurisdiction over a policy already harshly restrictive in response to the economic collapse, Blair interpreted and enforced that policy in relation to Europe's desperate Jews not merely with uncompromising rigidity but with a blatant anti-Semitism that – as noted above – rejected even allowable immigration applications made by Jews simply by declaring them falsified.[110] Presenting yet another example of the degree to which Canadian immigration policy and practice could be wholly shaped by the intent and biases of individual men, Blair operated as an immovable bulwark against Canadian

[109] Phyllis M. Senese, "Catholique d'abord: Catholicism and Nationalism in the Thought of Lionel Groulx." *Canadian Historical Review* 60 #2 (1979): 154-177; Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, ed. *Abbé Groulx: Variations on a Nationalist Theme* (1973), Introduction; Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*, 192-207; also 162-166, specifically with reference to the Dreyfus affair.
[110] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many,* 54-56.

concessions to the plight of European Jews for the remainder of the 1930s and throughout the war, deliberately exploiting King's fear that any admission of Jewish refugees would irreparably harm the Liberal Party's future in Quebec in order to deflect pressure or protest.[111] Blair's own entrenched anti-Semitism aside, however, the policies he enforced so vigourously were the policies of King's government, and King himself told his Cabinet that he feared that "allowing Jewish refugees into Canada... might cause riots... would create an internal problem in an effort to meet an international one... [and] would undermine the unity of the nation."[112] In effect, it was precisely Blair's conspicuous intransigence that allowed King to maintain the illusion of compassionate consideration of the plight of Jewish refugees in the mid to late 1930s, secure in the knowledge that his government's policies were being enforced unchanged. No pressure to open the border would be enough pressure, no matter how well-organized. And initially, at least, the pressure from Canadian Jews was rather more tentative than well-organized.[113]

By the time Hitler's seizure of power in Germany in 1933 provoked the beginning of what would become the Jewish refugee crisis, Canada's Jewish community reflected much of the class, cultural, and ideological diversity present in the broader Canadian society. Struggling alongside their fellow Canadians through the economic and labour unrest of the interwar period, Jewish workers had embraced and strengthened Canada’s rising labour movement, while Jewish owners sought to protect their own affluence and fretted that their working class kin were fomenting Bolshevik revolution, exacerbating anti-Semitic stereotyping, or both. Ashkenazi Jews newly arrived from Eastern Europe and crowded into impoverished tenements fell into petty criminality while their urbane

[111] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many,* 42.
[112] Abella and Troper, "The Line," 188.
[113] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many, 10-14.

Sephardic neighbours observed them with distaste from Montreal and Toronto's leafier enclaves, and equally urbane Ashkenazi Jews enjoying prosperity in smaller cities and towns also distanced themselves from these working class kin and focused instead on Zionist hopes.[114]

This diversity notwithstanding, all Jews in Canada were increasingly aware that the casual anti-Semitism of exclusion from social and athletic clubs and residence in particular neighbourhoods, as well as restricted admission to schools, universities, and the professions, was giving way to a more malignant anti-Semitism in Canada, already entrenched in Quebec and seeping in with worrying intensity from Europe. What prominant refugee activist and Protestant clergyman Rev. Claris Silcox would later identify as the "latent anti-Semitism" of Canadian society[115] had begun to crawl to the surface in "anti-Jewish sentiments... voiced regularly and with impunity... by many respectable newspapers, politicians, businessmen, and churchmen"[116] and news of the violent confrontation between Jews and anti-Semites at Christie Pits in Toronto in August of 1933 raised a fearsome spectre for Canada's Jews of clear and present dangers to come.[117] While attempts to achieve a unified voice with which to advocate for immigration to Canada for Germany's terrified Jews would be necessary, Jewish leaders additionally wrestled with an inescapable irony: at just over 1% of the Canadian population, their community was at once not large enough to exert successful political power,[118] and too large for even minimal advocacy to avoid provoking anti-Semitic

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[114] Tulchinsky, Canada's Jews, 182-185. Google Ebook.
[115] United Church Archives, Silcox Papers, Speeches, 'Canadian Post-Mortem on Refugees,' Toronto, 21 March 1939, quoted by Abella and Troper, "The Line," 206.
[116] Abella and Troper, "The Line," 205-206.
[117] *Ibid,* 206.
[118] *Ibid,* 186.

reactivity in Canadians suffering under Depression conditions. Finding allies outside the Jewish community would be critical.

In fact, neither pressure nor protest gained significant traction across Canada until late 1938, when the state-engineered pogroms across German-held territories that came to be referred to as *Kristallnacht* forced even comfortably anti-Semitic Canadians to recognize the existential threat being faced by Europe's Jews. The few prominent Canadian activists who since 1933 had lent their support and voice to the Canadian Jewish community saw their efforts strengthened at last by public outcry. The Jewish community which had been navigating its own divisions and wary of exacerbating its own vulnerability by pleading the cause of sanctuary for Jews found reason to hope and to become more visible and vocal. Mainline churches could not remain virtually silent and were finally shaken out of complacency.[119] Senator Cairine Wilson reacted swiftly, co-convening the Canadian National Committee on Refugees with the above-mentioned Claris Silcox, and the two redoubled efforts to convince the King government – and the Canadian public – of Canada's responsibility to receive "her share" of European Jews seeking sanctuary.

Quebec clerics in response sent King a furious petition signed by 128,000 Quebeckers rejecting outright the admission of any Jews to Canada, and King kept the border closed.[120] Canada began and ended the 1930s with an immigration policy explicitly formulated to serve the economic interests of a country devastated by drought and unemployment, but deliberately exploited over the course of the decade to serve political purposes. While Canadian compassion for European Jews had been slow to arise

[119] Abella and Troper, None is Too Many, 41-44.
[120] *Ibid*, 18.

under the weight of Depression fears and entrenched xenophobia and anti-Semitism, many Canadians had ultimately recognized the need of Jewish refugees for safe haven and the responsibility of Canada to participate in its provision, even in the absence of apparent value delivered to the collective in exchange. As they gathered in rallies across the country following *Kristallnacht* to articulate this message to their government, implicitly promoting a political interest to compete with King's fear of losing support in Quebec, they hoped for a decisive reorientation of Canada's immigration policy toward compassion in a moment of crisis. Newspaper headlines spoke to a groundswell of support for admittance of refugees: vast throngs gathered and 20,000 voices protested.[121] The necessary tools were in place. The precise powers purposefully enshrined in the Immigration Act to allow for swift and reactive restrictions on immigration when deemed necessary could enable instead a focused opening of the border to Jewish refugees, and existing requirements to prove sustainability in Canada could be enforced through sworn community sponsorship. Canadian immigration policy as shaped over the previous six decades could meet the challenge of the refugee crisis. All that was required was for Prime Minister King to act.

[121] Toronto Daily Star, "Vast Throng of Toronto Citizens Fills Maple Leaf Gardens To Protest Nazi Persecution of Jews" and "Jews Sob at Gathering as 20,000 Voice Protest" (Monday, November 21, 1938): 3; Winnipeg Free Press, "Canadians Protest Horrors" (Tuesday, November 22, 1938); Globe and Mail, "Canadian People Protest" (Tuesday November 22, 1938); Halifax Herald, "Theatres Filled by Citizens: Church and Civic Leaders Join in Condemnation of Campaign" (Monday, November 21, 1938; Ottawa Citizen, "Big Canadian Meetings Urge Aid to Refugees" (Monday, November 21, 1938); also Abella and Troper, None is Too Many, 41.

Chapter Three
One Sermon at a Time

On November 11, 1938, as Canadians gathered around local cenotaphs to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Armistice that had ended the Great War, newspaper coverage of their solemn assemblies appeared alongside fearsome reminders of the new threat simmering in Germany.[122] Just two nights earlier, in a pogrom engineered by the ruling Nazi party, German forces and civilians had ransacked and burned Jewish synagogues and businesses across Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland, terrorizing the Jewish population, arresting over 30,000 Jewish citizens, and leaving behind a trail of wreckage in Jewish neighbourhoods that prompted the night's being memorialized as *Kristallnacht*: the night of broken glass.

For many in Canada, the violence of *Kristallnacht* finally laid bare not merely the oppression but the existential threat posed by Nazi anti-Semitism to Europe's Jews. In towns and cities across the country, tens of thousands rallied in community halls and hockey arenas in the weeks following to urge Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to immediately open Canadian immigration to Jews escaping from Germany.[123] Town councils passed resolutions offering support to refugees. Telegrams flooded into Ottawa demanding swift humanitarian action. Prominent citizens wrote personal letters to King pleading admittance for scientists and scholars, while others sent letters and telegrams begging him for intervention on behalf of family members and friends. One

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[122] Globe and Mail, "Reich Swept By Anti-Jew Terrorism: Destruction, Looting and Burnings Throughout Country Unequalled Since Red Revolution" (November 11, 1938): front page.

[123] Toronto Daily Star, "Vast Throng of Toronto Citizens Fills Maple Leaf Gardens To Protest Nazi Persecution of Jews" and "Jews Sob at Gathering as 20,000 Voice Protest" (Monday, November 21, 1938): 3; Winnipeg Free Press, "Canadians Protest Horrors" (Tuesday, November 22, 1938); Globe and Mail, "Canadian People Protest" (Tuesday November 22, 1938); Halifax Herald, "Theatres Filled by Citizens: Church and Civic Leaders Join in Condemnation of Campaign" (Monday, November 21, 1938; Ottawa Citizen, "Big Canadian Meetings Urge Aid to Refugees" (Monday, November 21, 1938); also Abella and Troper, None is Too Many, 41.

town council in Saskatchewan even expressed on behalf of its own citizens and other rural Canadians a particular plea for welcoming Jewish medical doctors, whose safe resettlement in small towns on the Prairies would -- not incidentally -- also solve the local doctor-shortage.[124] It had taken nearly six years for the import of Hitler's Nazi program of systematically disenfranchising, impoverishing, isolating, and eliminating the regime's Jewish population to fully register in the minds of many Canadians, but *Kristallnacht*'s violence finally sufficiently shocked them into overriding not only their Depression-era economic anxieties but also their essential anti-Semitism with calls for the clear humanitarian response of opening the border to Jewish refugees.

Like Senator Cairine Wilson and Rev. Claris Silcox, with whom he swiftly joined in the work of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees,[125] United Church clergyman Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter applauded this shift in Canadian consciousness as the positive development that might finally force King's government into action. At the same time, however, while the Jewish refugee crisis had propelled him into activism, Hunter was primarily a pastor and a preacher, for whom the greater hope was a Canada healed of anti-Semitism in which Canadian Christians would reach out to Jews in a time of trial, wanting to welcome them with safe sanctuary not as *useful*, not even as objects of charity, but as *family*. While he rejoiced in evidence that many Canadians had begun to change their minds about opening the border to Jewish refugees, his focus for more than a decade of ministry as a United Church clergyman in Hamilton, Ontario, had been changing *hearts*: deliberately deconstructing in his preaching the inherent anti-Semitism of traditional Christian supercessionism. A fundamental tenet of Christian theology from

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[124] National Archives of Canada, William Lyon Mackenzie King Correspondence: C3737-C3738.
[125] Knowles, *Cairine Wilson,* 195-196. Google Ebook.

its earliest decades, the doctrine of supercessionism understood the covenant of God with Abraham – with Israel, with the Jews – to have been fulfilled in the coming of Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Christ, in whom the covenant was renewed. This new covenant in Christ thus superceded and nullifed the old covenant with Abraham: those Jews who accepted Christ continued in covenant with God, while those who rejected Christ simply fell away, that first covenant having ceased.[126] This was the construct that Hunter sought in his preaching to repudiate, not least because inherent in much of its manifestation in Christian rhetoric was the characterization of the Jews' rejection of Christ as purposeful and malevolent, and the crucifixion of Christ as proof of their alignment with forces of evil.[127] Rejecting this characterization, and rejecting the supercessionism that fueled it, Hunter preached instead a radical non-supercessionist reframing of the theological relationship between Christians and Jews as one of parallel brotherhood, grounded in parallel covenants with God – one through Abraham and one through Christ – and guided by the same essential principles of faithful living.

Like many sons of clergymen in the early twentieth century, Ernest Crossley Hunter proceeded directly from grammar school to Victoria University and was himself ordained as a Methodist minister in 1911 at the age of twenty two.[128] Few new ordinands, however, carried into their ministries the weight of legacy his name reflected. For twenty five years, John Hunter and Hugh Crossley had been Canada's pre-eminent evangelical revivalists, preaching to thousands in tents and churches with their particular brand of

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[126] Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth Livingstone, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 747, Google Ebook.
[127] Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 30-31, 246.
[128] UCC Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137, Biographical Information.

showmanship, story-telling, and altar-calls for converts to Christ.[129] Only with John Hunter's early death from Parkinson's disease in 1910 had this famous partnership ceased, but it had shaped his only son's life and lived on in his given name: the young Hunter always used his middle name, personally and professionally. It was a bold choice, at a time when southern Ontario boasted not one but two Crossley-Hunter Methodist churches:[130] Crossley Hunter clearly embraced his legacy and his continued friendship with his godfather. When Hugh Crossley retired, he found a permanent home with Hunter and his family.[131]

Hunter did not merely parrot his forebears in his preaching and ministry. Though deeply steeped in their populist evangelical tradition, he was equally steeped in their sensitivity to the changing needs of changing times. As Canada crashed into the Great War, recovered through the 1920s, and then faced the devastation of the Depression, Hunter developed his own evangelical theology at once influenced by newer revivalists like Frank Buchman[132] yet also unique in its recognition of Judaism as a *parallel* to Christianity rather than a mere precursor. At a time when the Christianizing of Canada was the overt and primary goal of most clergymen and many political leaders,[133] Hunter both fully shared this goal and rejected its implicit marginalization of Canadian Jews, whom he did not consider in need of conversion. It was a fine and fascinating line to walk in early twentieth century Canada, and it would make his later contribution to the cause of providing safe haven to Jewish refugees in the 1930s singular and significant.

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[129] Kevin Kee, *Revivalists: Marketing the Gospel in English Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 9, Google Ebook.
[130] Kee, *Revivalists*, 39. One was in South Dorchester and the other in St. Thomas, both in Ontario.
[131] Kevin Kee, "Hugh Crossley," *Online Encyclopedia of Canadian Christian Leaders,* accessed August 2, 2020. http://www.canadianchristianleaders.org/leader/hugh-crossley/
[132] Don Schweitzer, Rob Fennell, Michael Bourgeois, eds., *The Theology of The United Church of Canada,* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2019), 169, Google Ebook.
[133] *Ibid*.

This chapter examines the theological context in which Hunter began his ministry and shaped the evangelical theology that he would bring to bear on Christian-Jewish relations in Canada in the interwar period, and to the fight against Canada's restriction of Jewish immigration in the 1930s. Particular attention will be given to the period's competing understandings of how and to what purpose evangelism could Christianize the young nation, and the ways in which Hunter reflected and departed from these understandings as he developed his own practice of ministry. Because Hunter was less a scholar and activist than a pastor and preacher, the vast majority of his archived writings are his speeches and sermons, and date only from 1928 with his arrival in Hamilton. Conclusions will therefore be drawn from his words not only directly but also extrapolatively, with reference when necessary to the Reformed Christian doctrine in which his congregations were firmly embedded. The chapter concludes with an examination of Hunter's early engagement with the Jewish community, his earliest efforts to break down Canadian cultural anti-Semitism and repair Christian-Jewish relations, and his historic first pulpit exchange with Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, before turning in the final chapter of this thesis to his contribution with others to the fight to provide safe haven in Canada for Europe's Jews.

The Crossley-Hunter Legacy: Living Up To and Beyond the Name

By the time John Hunter and Hugh Crossley sent letters that crossed in the mail, each inviting the other to join him in a town-to-town revival campaign that would stretch from 1889 until Hunter's death in 1910,[134] the evangelical revival movement was already entrenched in the United States and gaining popularity in Canada. A century earlier, Henry Alline had captivated audiences and won souls for Christ in Nova Scotia and what

[134] Kee, *Revivalists*, 15.

is now New Brunswick, and others had followed in his wake as the revival spirit of repenting and seeking an intimate and transformative relationship with Christ as one's personal Saviour captured imaginations and filled tents and meeting houses.[135] Always as much engaging entertainment as religious gathering, the revivals of this period framed conversion and salvation in entirely positive terms: turning toward Christ as Saviour was not insistently urged as essential protection from damnation but was presented instead as an invitation into a fuller and holier and spiritually richer life.[136]

It was into this tradition that Hunter was born, with his early faith formation developed not only in the local Methodist church and Sunday School but also in the colourful revival meetings led by his father and godfather. At a time when Darwinian evolution theory, the scientific advances flowing from the Enlightenment, and a new interpretive stance toward the Bible were retrenching many evangelicals into an anti-science Biblical literalism that would come to be called fundamentalism, Hunter's experience of the evangelical preaching of the Crossley-Hunter revivals instead grounded him in a faith that rejoiced in scientific discoveries as expanding humanity's understanding of the nature and capacity of God. If God's infallibility was accepted without question, this faith position embraced apparent contradictions between the Bible and a scientific understanding of the natural world without fear: the ineffable mystery of God was merely being further revealed.[137] It was a remarkably expansive theological position, and one which laid the groundwork for Hunter's own openness to continued revelation through experience and learning.

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[135] Phillip A. Buckner and John G. Reid, *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 347-348, Google Ebook.
[136] Kee, *Revivalists*, 23.
[137] *Ibid,* 24-25.

More conventional, though still significant to Hunter's faith development, was the Crossley-Hunter emphasis on Christ as intimately knowable and personally (at least, spiritually) available. A hallmark of evangelical revivalism generally, this Christology was consistent with a God broadly understood as immanent: deeply involved in the world and in human life, and neither threatening nor prone to anger but instead loving and caring.[138] Hunter's implicit acceptance of this concept of God and Christ and their shared nature, however, was significantly further shaped by one particular element of the Crossley-Hunter revivals: his father's dramatic story-telling.[139] Ironically, given the Crossley-Hunter preaching against the perfidious soul-threatening danger of visiting theatres and movie houses,[140] their revivals centred around striking and dramatic reenactments of Biblical stories, and it was here that John Hunter particularly shone.[141] As a result, his son's Biblical knowledge was acquired not only through reading but also through living experience. As Jesus' words and actions came to life on stage before him, Hunter's conception of Jesus as a human being, a man of his time and place, took firm root. To this was added, when his father dramatized Older Testament stories instead, a living experience for Hunter of a God whose character was not threatening but loving, just as surely in the Older Testament as in the Newer Testament. Taken together, these elements of theology and Christology that Hunter experienced in the Crossley-Hunter revival dramas seem to have communicated to him a Christ whose full humanity included his identity as a Jew, beloved by a God whose character as God of the Jews was indistinguishable from the God of Christians. Certainly, although it is impossible to

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[138] Kee, *Revivalists*, 22-23.
[139] Kevin Kee, "John Hunter," *Convivium: Faith in Common Life, a*ccessed August, 2, 2020. https://www.convivium.ca/voices/154_john_hunter/
[140] Kee, *Revivalists*, 32.
[141] *Ibid*, 35

confirm this direct connection, Hunter's theology as it developed did escape both the tendency of Christianity in this era to downplay Jesus' Jewishness, and the familiar trope that pitted the loving Christian God against the vengeful Jewish God. In both regards, his faith developed instead in ways unlikely to easily default to the cultural and Christian anti-Semitism so pervasive at the time, even as it remained firmly grounded in the evangelical revivalist tradition.

This Crossley-Hunter revivalism was Hunter's formative experience of biblical inquiry, the theology it engendered, and the preaching it inspired: intellectually curious, compatible with science and social science, grounded in the storytelling of both Older and Newer Testaments as reflecting God's immanence and engagement with the world, and above all focused on conversion – personal embrace of Christ's Way – as a positive invitation. If there is no record to confirm that Hunter immediately reflected this formative experience in his earliest sermons following ordination in 1911, the sermons of his established preaching voice – archived from 1928 to the end of his career – still bear strong witness to his grounding in these Crossley-Hunter traditions in three specific ways.[142]

Firstly, Hunter's archived sermons reveal without exception a preacher who considers himself first and foremost a storyteller. Every sermon begins with an engaging and expansive retelling of the biblical text of the day, just as Crossley-Hunter revivals did, setting characters in their social and historical context in order to bring them to life and to draw parallels to the contemporary context. Hunter's biblical scholarship is deep but hidden, emerging not in academic pronouncements but in a command of detailed

[142] The sermons, speeches, addresses, and pamphlets quoted in the remainder of this chapter and in Chapter Four were all accessed at The United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto: Ernest Crossley Hunter fonds F3137.

knowledge that lends colour to his storytelling and makes it emotionally accessible. Newer Testament texts in which Jesus or the Apostles are engaging with others are retold with contextual background that humanizes these ancillary characters by illuminating their perspectives, assumptions, and motivations. In one of the earliest archived sermons, for example, Hunter notes for his listeners that John the Baptist was “no spoiled or pampered man” but instead "a fearless type" who sought to expose "the artificialities…of his day" by rejecting "[slavery] to customs of food and dress" and “synagogues full of respectable people, because they were cold” in favour of “men who were passionate” and ready to rebuke those in power.[143] A slightly later sermon focused on a letter from the Apostle Paul to the Apostle Timothy begins by imagining their possible first meeting in “the wicked heathen city of Lystra” with its “temple erected to the worship of Diana”, where Timothy was raised but Paul had been “dragged out of the city and stoned… leaving him for dead... laying outside the city walls... bruised and bleeding, a terrible sight.” Small wonder, perhaps, that Timothy is “quiet, retiring, and timid,” given the potential risk of Christian witness in such a place, but Hunter can then echo Paul’s own endorsement of Timothy's inner strength as having been hard-won, as well as – not incidentally – ultimately attributable to the Lystra-resistant faithfulness of his Jewish mother and grandmother.[144] An early Labour Day sermon, also centred around a letter of the Apostle Paul, similarly lends significant colour and context to the struggles and hopes of the escaped slave Onesimus, as listeners are invited to imagine his “long, lonely trudge of 800 miles” buoyed only by trust, as he returns to his home city despite the risk of the “severe penalty provided by law... and the custom of the day” for having demanded and

[143] Sermon, May 21, 1928, “A Baptism of Fear”.
[144] Sermon, May 7, 1931, “Life’s Greatest Heritage”.

claimed his freedom.[145] These examples of deeper diving into context in order to illuminate significant figures in specific Newer Testament passages exist alongside many other snippets of contextual colour that Hunter regularly and repeatedly drops into sermons as brief humanizing points of reference for his listeners: that Matthew the Tax Collector, for example, was essentially trapped by his complicity in an unjust system,[146] that the Rich Young Ruler wasn't a bad person but merely couldn't conceive of life without wealth,[147] that Martha's obsession with housework reflected an unfortunate social construct,[148] and that if someone from Nazareth is 'from the wrong side of the tracks', as it were, then a Samaritan is truly the despised and rejected 'stranger within our gates'.[149]

With such Newer Testament figures, Hunter could -- and did -- assume a basic degree of familiarity with the essential narrative at hand. His sermons preached from Older Testament texts, however, were never offered under the same assumption. Often centred around notable Older Testament figures – Job, Esther, Ruth, Samuel, and Aaron are a few examples from his earliest archived sermons – each invariably begins, therefore, with a brief biographical sketch to ensure that listeners are aware of these figures' specific place in and import to the story of God's people. No longer vague or remote or alien, each is presented with intent reflecting paradigms that would be accessible to his listeners' understanding. Esther is located in an authoritarian court of Persia bent on the destruction of the Jews in which she's isolated and at risk, but her

[145] Sermon, August 31, 1928, "Labor Day Sermon".
[146] For example: sermons of April 12, 1928 and October 3, 1929.
[147] For example: sermons of May 21, 1928 and October 2, 1930.
[148] For example: study notes for sermon June 1931, and undated "Lilywork of Life".
[149] For example: sermon of October 4, 1928, and undated "Highways of Friendliness"; allusion to the phrase used by J.S. Woodsworth to describe immigrants to Canada.

courage alone – "I will go to the King. I will make this petition" – saves her people.[150] Aaron's weakness as Moses' also-ran brother is situated in the broader narrative both of Israel's weariness and fear during the endless sojourn in the wilderness, and their restless need for clarity – and a pleasingly visible golden calf to worship – when "for six weeks the voice of Moses had not been heard and his very presence seemed to be taken away."[151] Jonah's grumbling over his assignment to preach repentence to Ninevah unfolds within a detailed description of Ninevah as the capital of Israel's "greatest enemy Assyria, a ruthless, wicked, cruel nation", and his sulking is noted as quite understandable fury: "What's the use of having a God if he won't smash all your enemies?"[152] Naturally, both Aaron and Jonah are eventually moved to repent, but again Hunter's storytelling technique deepens the full humanity of these figures, illuminating their perspectives, their assumptions, and their motivations, in order to add them – as effectively as the Crossley-Hunter revivals had – to his listeners' personal rosters of useful guides and examples to follow. Their own faithful living, after all, is no less likely to include moments of weakness, frustration, or even anger that will need processing, and for Hunter – as for Crossley-Hunter – the gift and purpose of the Biblical witness is precisely its capacity to meet the full breadth of this need in the fully human and timeless spectrum of its characters. Making them emotionally accessible and alive in the present was as fundamental to Hunter's preaching as it had been to his father's.

The second way in which Hunter's archived sermons reflect his deep grounding in the Crossley-Hunter traditions is that each of his sermons extracts its message not merely from decontextualized snippets of Biblical pronouncement but from the story itself as

[150] Sermon, Sunday School Rally, 1934.
[151] Sermon, March 28, 1928.
[152] Sermon, undated, probably 1935 or 1936.

living narration, just as Crossley-Hunter revivals did. Revelations about and insights into the nature of God or faithfulness are not merely received but are derived from or predicated on relationships and interactions, either between people or between God and people. This lends each message a peculiar kind of universality in which conviction or belief is not dependent upon an intellectual appraisal and acceptance of a pronouncement, but instead arises naturally from identification with essentially human experiences in relationship. The story of the return home of the Prodigal Son in the Newer Testament, for example, is poignantly retold by Hunter in his sermon on this text in order to allow the complex theological concept of *grace* to be revealed not in explanation but in its narrative arc. "Remember," Hunter notes for his listeners, any of whom might themselves be carrying burdens of regret,

> in that long march home [the Prodigal Son] had plenty of time to frame up a wonderful story… But he was honest with himself. He would be honest with his father. He prepared himself to speak the words. I am sorry. He approached his old home filled with shame and regret. But his father ran to him. The father ran to him not with anger but with an embrace. Before a word had been spoken, his return just broke the father all up…"[153]

No additional explanation of the nature of grace is necessary. The story itself has been able to communicate its full meaning by Hunter's inviting his listeners into this father-son relationship as an unfolding experience. Courage, trust, steadfastness, humility, and other esoteric principles of faithful living are also illustrated in this manner rather than described, as Hunter allows them to be revealed in the unfolding of such Older Testament narratives as Esther's dawning realization of the opportunity presented by her sway over Persia's king,[154] Caleb's unexpected choosing of a mountainous portion of the Promised

[153] Sermon, March 28, 1928.
[154] Sermon, Sunday School Rally, 1934.

Land,[155] and the Psalmist's grief and yearning for sanctuary in Babylon,[156] as well as in the unfolding action of Newer Testament events like the Woman with the Flow of Blood reaching out for Jesus' cloak, the Widow presenting her two coins at the temple, and Paul's behaviour in prison.[157] This locating of meaning in how God and people behave rather than in inherent or assumed characteristics of people's identity – not incidentally also crucial to Hunter's understanding of brotherhood between Jews and Christians – then allows Hunter to even further reflect the Crossley-Hunter tradition in his preaching by smoothly proceeding from the Biblical narrative to more contemporary illustrations that translate its message into lived experience in modern times. Hunter certainly often relies for these illustrations on the sort of sentimental homespun anecdotes commonly found in Sunday School Newspapers, but he also regularly references current events, scientific discoveries, and social science insights. Many of his undated archived sermons can in fact be roughly dated based on allusions, for example, to particular labour uprisings, to Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, and to statements made by the League of Nations, each used to emphasize the import of – variously – remembering Jesus' imperative to care for the hungry and poor, standing against the dehumanizing violence of fascism, and treating "all men as brothers".[158] The works of scientists and scholars like Louis Pasteur, Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, and Frederick Banting are likewise referred to in various contexts, both as ways to inspire wonder at the intricate expanse of "what God has created" – a characteristic of the God-human relationship – and to emphasize the Christian's responsibility – in response that relationship – to demand (or at least pray) that such new

[155] Sermon, undated, delivered at Knox United Church in Winnipeg
[156] Sermon, undated, delivered at Trinity United Church in Toronto
[157] Sermons, undated, delivered at Trinity United Church in Toronto and Knox United Church in Winnipeg.
[158] For example: Address, "Young Peoples Conference in Hamilton," October, 1935; Sermon, "For Such A Time As This," March 28, 1928.

discoveries be used in service of peace and global well-being rather than for war.[159] Similarly, developing insights of social science into the relevance of nurture – childhood experience – to adult criminality or addiction are periodically mentioned in Hunter's sermons, as ever reinforcing the focus of faithfulness away from identity and toward experience, interaction, and behaviour.[160] Faithful Christians, as surely for Hunter as in the Crossley-Hunter revivalism in which he was raised, are not made but built over a lifetime of learning from and reacting to events and relationships, with others and with God.

Finally, in perhaps the most striking reflection of Hunter's grounding in the Crossley-Hunter tradition, every one of Hunter's sermons ultimately distills its particular message into the identical simple and positive invitation that also formed the heart of Crossley-Hunter revivals: a plea to listeners to embrace the Christian life for their own good and the good of the world. Not once in his archived sermons is this invitation to what Crossley-Hunter revivalism explicitly referred to as 'salvation' (though Hunter rarely does) urged for the sake of self-protection from damnation; indeed, no mention is made in his sermons of traditional Protestant soteriologies and one sermon specifically identifies thinking about salvation in this way as a form of religious idolatry.[161] Instead, and always, the hope is that listeners will feel "their hearts strangely warmed"[162] (in good

[159] For example: Sermon, "Speak to the Earth and It Shall Teach Thee," June 21, 1928; Sermon, "I Came to Fulfill," October 2, 1930.
[160] For example: Sermon, "Life's Greatest Heritage," May 13, 1928.
[161] Sermon, April 12, 1928, "Jesus Our Savior". The soteriology – doctrine of salvation – of the early United Church varied widely from Congregationalist universalism to Protestant salvation by grace alone, to Presbyterian predestination and double predestination. The absence of any references to salvation in Hunter's sermons suggest he considered the whole question fairly peripheral, which in turn makes it probable that he was either a universalist or (more likely) a traditional Protestant who took salvation by grace for granted, and cared more about faith's effect in this life as a result.
[162] Journal of John Wesley Online, accessed August 2, 2020. A reference to John Wesley's famous Aldersgate Sermon, describing his conversion. https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ii.xvi.html

Methodist tradition) toward “the still more excellent way”[163] embodied in the mind, teachings, and actions of Jesus, simply because this daily improves personal living and additionally inspires positive engagement and influence in community. Hunter actually gently ridicules in one sermon the notion of ‘taking Christ into one’s heart' as a theoretical response to a theoretical threat of an 'enemy', like Satan or Eternal Damnation.[164] For him, although he finds the phrase itself trite, its import is as an active response to the very real threat to human well-being of humanity’s easy and indolent complacency with the broken ways of the world. God has created humanity for better, he asserts, and has shown humanity the way. Humanity has only to seize the invitation and participate with energy. Whether he’s sharing with his listeners the specific lived example of a Biblical character in particular circumstances, therefore, or imploring their attention to a prophetic exhortation or a teaching of Jesus or Paul, Hunter’s ultimate point in his preaching is always the same. He presents the invitation in these positive terms and urges its passionate seizing, hoping to inspire the building of Christian character in his congregation so that they will personally benefit from its fruits and also participate in building the Kingdom of God – peace with justice – on earth. In this regard especially, his preaching is strikingly consistent with the Crossley-Hunter revivalist tradition in which his early faith was formed.

Even that revivalist tradition had itself slightly shifted. From its initial roots as a deinstitutionalized personalizing of conversion -- as an intentional embrace of Christ as Saviour in response to a spiritual experience, inspiring a transformed life of deeper holiness -- evangelical revivalism in Canada had become increasingly associated with the

[163] I Corinthians 12:31, from the Holy Bible.
[164] Sermon, April 12, 1928, “Jesus Our Savior”.

mainline Protestant churches, particularly as together they aimed toward the goal of Christianizing Canada. Indeed, John Hunter and Hugh Crossley, both ordained as Methodist clergymen before setting out on the revival circuit, had eventually been lured back to the Methodist fold to serve as denominational evangelists, newly accountable to the institutional church for success in winning souls for Christ.[165] But even as revivals became more closely associated with mainline Protestant churches, their primacy as the means by which Canada would be Christianized began to be questioned. Virtually all who had experienced a 'conversion' through a revival were already baptized Christians, and most had already been regular participants in their church's congregational life and worship. As a result, the Christianizing value of conversion was largely understood to be about inspiring enthusiasm and a more intense commitment to living the Christian life in community. As more and more Canadians' Christian-ness became fueled by this fresh vigour and passion, those who promoted the need for revivals insisted, Canada's Christianizing would would be effected incrementally, strengthening the country's moral foundation. [166]

Others were unconvinced, particularly as social unrest and labour disputes over inadequate wages and poor working conditions began to simmer across the country in the interwar period.[167] The Social Gospel Movement of earlier decades had inspired some church leaders, particularly in the newly-formed United Church of Canada, to focus away from assumptions that achieving a plurality of individual conversions, regardless of how passionate, could ever adequately address the injustices perpetrated by the socio-economic systems that transcended and limited individual agency. These leaders instead

[165] Kee, *Revivalists*, 18.
[166] Airhart, *Church with the Soul of a Nation,* 81-85.
[167] *Ibid,* 95.

began promoting the notion of Christianizing the social order itself, by leveraging Christian teachings about human dignity and the just distribution of wealth to provoke systemic change.[168] For Hunter, as for many of his new colleagues in The United Church of Canada, however, Christianizing Canada by means of individual conversion to a more passionate living of the Christian life remained crucial, even as efforts to Christianize the social order were valuable in their own right. Never particularly revolutionary, and still pastor and preacher rather than political activist, Hunter could not conceive of Christianizing without individual conversion, but he also could not conceive of individual conversion without a transformed stance in relation to community. Throughout the 1930s, with the country in the grips of Depression, Hunter's sermons do clearly and repeatedly identify the Bible's prophetic calls for economic and social justice as urgently compelling faithful Christians to advocate for and contribute to positive systemic change on behalf of all Canadians and especially the most vulnerable. Addresses delivered to the Rotary Club in Hamilton in this period go even further, offering detailed critiques of capitalism as an economic system so flawed and inhumane in its "lack of planning" and its "fundamental dedicat[ion] to profit," in which "we produce our goods whether of food and clothing not to feed and clothe the people but to make a profit," that "it fosters class bitterness [and] will lead us sooner or later to class strife, and if we cannot see that we are blind."[169] But despite regular mention in sermons of the need, for example, for more just labour codes or relief for the unemployed[170] or Old Age Pensions[171] or a federal department devoted to

[168] Don Schweitzer, ed., *The United Church of Canada: A History* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2012), 100, Google Ebook. Also Kee, *Revivalists*, 136.
[169] Addresses, "Capitalism Challenged" (1935), "May Day" (1937), "Talk on Unemployment" (May, 1939), Rotary Club of Hamilton.
[170] Address, Barrie Presbytery Rally, October 1930.
[171] Sermon "Growing Old Gracefully", undated

building global peace,[172] his Christian social justice imagination as manifest in his preaching never quite reaches beyond envisioning that passionately Christian citizens will themselves behave justly in relation to their neighbours, and will automatically demand of their leaders righteous and just governance and policies. This message, sprinkled throughout the archived sermons, is particularly forceful in two undated sermons about war that appear to be from the mid- to late 1930s. Both extrapolate from planting and harvesting images in Biblical texts, and both amount to passionate appeals to members of his congregation to remember that "it always goes back to seeds."[173] In the earlier of the two, "Harvest of Yesterday," Hunter is unrelenting in his identification of the roots of the fearsome rumblings in Europe:

> Back in 1918 nations sowed seeds we're now reaping. The Treaty of Versailles was born in bitterness. When Germany was persuaded to join the League of Nations, there was a promise that other nations would gradually decrease armaments to her level. That was a promise, actual wording, stated explicitly. France, Italy, Britain: all to reduce. Everyone built up. We sowed the wrong seeds. We are only reaping the inevitable harvest.[174]

But for Hunter, this is not merely a political failure but a spiritual failure. "We preachers failed," he admits, "to preach the Sermon on the Mount as we should have."[175]

> We must sow different seeds. We've got to sow the seeds of the Sermon on the Mount. No matter what the world says – "blessed are the aggressive, they prosper". Say it to our children, say it to ourselves, plant it in all hearts: "blessed are the meek, the peacemakers, the pure of heart." Do you know, if the truth of the Sermon on the Mount were planted in the hearts of men, it would bring in a new social and economic order.[176]

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172 Sermon "I Came Not to Destroy but to Fulfill," April 1928.
173 Sermon "Harvest of Yesterday"
174 *Ibid*.
175 *Ibid*.
176 *Ibid*.

This vision of a Christianized world as the inevitable – indeed, promised by God – result of a plurality of hearts transformed by the seeds of the gospel message is even more fully developed in the later of the two planting and harvest sermons. Entitled “Instead of,” this sermon is again a passionate appeal from Hunter to his congregation to consider afresh the seeds God can plant within them and through them to heal the world, but the nature of these seeds has now broadened. Hunter wonders aloud if “we thought too much merely of ruling out war and a program of disarmament, instead of being inspired by the possibility of a co-operative world:[177]

> We will never get rid of war merely by seeing its ugliness or by disarmament conferences. A criminal is not cured by taking away his weapons. The nations of the world must be inspired by the beauty and fruitfulness of a co-operative international order… in which each nation [brings] its gifts to the life and enrichment of all… [and] the wealth that now goes for the destruction of war would lift the fear and burden of poverty from every heart.”[178]

Again, although the goal is the broad Christianizing of the social order, Hunter still ultimately preaches to his congregation in personal terms. He specifically aims this exhortation to sow seeds not merely *against* wrong but *for* good at “each of us, as parents, as teachers, as men of business, as ministers,”[179] and notes alongside its import at a global level its additional benefits in addressing waywardness in youth (“any bad habit is only safely broken when replaced by a good habit”)[180] and temptation to take strong drink (“those interested in ridding the nation of this terrible evil must be more concerned over providing a richer and more abundant life for any in its thrall”).[181] The broad and compelling call to Christianize the social order, in other words, could never for Hunter be

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[177] Sermon, “Instead Of”
[178] *Ibid*.
[179] *Ibid*.
[180] *Ibid*.
[181] *Ibid*.

imagined apart from the cumulative effect of Christianized individuals translating their faithfulness into personal actions in their own spheres of influence as well as into broader advocacy for peace and justice and the well-being of all.

To some degree this already betrays – even in the earliest years of The United Church of Canada – the denomination's essential identification with middle-class sensibilities. Hunter can and does assume that he's preaching to listeners who understand themselves to possess sufficient agency and power in their society that they can individually, with one another, effect social change. For his congregations, therefore, turning to Christ didn't need to be *individualistic* – focused on the personal solace of 'comfort in heaven' for those beleaguered on earth. It could, however, be understood as essentially *individual* in the context of an understanding of individual human capacity, when impassioned by and harnessed for good, as virtually unlimited in its potential. If some of Hunter's colleagues struggled to maintain their optimism in this regard as the Depression deepened and social unrest simmered, his sermons in the late 1930s still cling to it fiercely. Good men and women could not and would not remain silent, allowing evil to flourish, and so good men and women were necessary. Hunter could applaud those who undertook to Christianize the social order more systemically, but his contribution as a pastor and preacher was to inspire "labourers for the vineyard, who would turn to Christ in order to participate in building God's Kingdom"[182] – with its marks of human dignity, just distribution of wealth, compassion, and peace – on earth. Even as his new denomination shifted toward attention to the social order, therefore, Hunter remained grounded in the conviction of his evangelical upbringing that all social transformation must begin with individual conversions.

[182] Sermon "The Program of the Kingdom," Aylmer Men's Banquet, January 1939.

The language of individual conversion was itself beginning to shift in Canada by the late 1920s. The institutionalizing of the revival movement had entrenched it in church systems that had shorn it of not only its informality and emotional enthusiasm, but also of its capacity to inspire fearless self-reflection and personal change. Laying bare one's true self in repentance, in the language and company of a solemn congregation, could feel deeply uncomfortable. For those still broken by the experience of the Great War and making every effort to hide their brokenness from loved ones, it could be unfathomable. Seeking a way around these limits of institutionalized revivalism, American clergyman Frank Buchman had begun holding large "house parties" of college students instead, at which the traditional language of revivals was replaced with psychology-tinged encouragements to "share" their sins publicly and support one another in reshaping their lives according to "absolute principles" that reflected Christ's teaching.[183] The immediate popularity of this "Oxford Group" movement shocked many traditional churchmen, who complained about its lack of Christian rigour and church accountability. Others recognized in the "Oxford Group" a much-needed corrective to long-standing traditions.[184]

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[183] Kee, *Revivalists*, 112ff.

[184] Developed by Frank Buchman at Oxford University, the popularity of these Oxford Group 'house parties' swiftly transcended college campuses, where they had been largely non-sectarian, to church communities where their non-sectarian language smoothly lent itself to soft-evangelical revivalism. Christians responded to the emphases on personal transformation through public sharing, repentance, and solidarity with others on the same path. In the United Church of the 1930s, the Oxford Group Movement tended to be most popular with and promoted by clergymen who had been Methodist prior to Union, and were therefore more comfortable with its emotionalism and emphasis on personal sin and repentance. Former Presbyterians tended to disdain its simplistic pseudo-theological categories, and to be disturbed by the freedom with which unmentionable sinfulness found itself mentioned. In 1938, Buchman pivoted to Moral Rearmament, and the Oxford Group Movement faded, but its model continues in Alcoholics Anonymous. D. W. Bebbington, "The Oxford Group Movement Between the Wars," *Studies in Church History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queens University Press, 1996): 228-232.

One of these was Hunter, who swiftly supported the Oxford Group movement and encouraged Oxford Group meetings in his community as a natural and useful alternative to traditional revivalism.[185] For Hunter, the purpose of evangelism had been and remained the personal and purposeful acceptance of new life in Christ, in which the individual was set free from the past to live the Christian life of love and service in community. If this transformational grace could be fully embraced without direct reference to Christian doctrine or overt use of Christian language, Hunter was still ready to rejoice: the purpose was achieved. He was entirely capable, in other words, of recognizing the marks of living a Christian life beyond the bounds of describing that life using Christian language or categories.

Again, his archived sermons from this period bear this out. Although every sermon is deeply grounded in Biblical storytelling, each is notably bare of doctrinal analysis or even language. Broad Christian concepts such as repentance or forgiveness or moral courage are attended to straight-forwardly, often with illustrations from literature or current affairs, while theological esoterica like the Trinity or Incarnation are absent altogether. Hunter does quote Biblical scholars and theologians as sources in his story-telling and preaching, and his own theological convictions about the nature of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the world and the church, can easily be extrapolated from his sermons. But his concern is clearly and simply how Christians are called to live, rather than how they or others might describe the precise author, source, or means of that call. Like the Oxford Groups, in fact, Hunter actually presupposes – and apparently assumes he can depend on – a degree of such familiarity in his listeners with Christian concepts and tropes like Incarnation or Grace that he needn't parse them. At the

[185] Kee, *Revivalists,* 107.

same time, he clearly understands the Oxford Group's contempt for the sort of trite Christian lingo that has ceased to carry any spiritual weight. If his archived sermons largely bear witness to this by virtue of the absence of the bread-and-butter slogans of evangelism, an Easter Season sermon delivered in 1928 is more direct. "Saved, Saviour, and Salvation are the three most familiar words of our Christian faith," he begins, "but now having said that, let us ask ourselves what do we mean when we talk about being saved?"[186]

> For instance, I think of that phrase "Washed in the Blood." That phrase meant a great deal to our forefathers. It was vital with meaning and full of holy content. But I asked a teacher of a class of boys in my Sunday School in North Bay, and he said that phrase would have NO content to the boys of his class. Either we must put that content back into some of our religious phrases or stop using them, one of the two.[187]

As the sermon continues, it's clear that Hunter's preference is for the latter. "There is a danger," he observes, "in keeping on using a word or a phrase long after it has any vital meaning to our souls."[188] Later in the sermon, he recalls being asked by a past congregant whom he was visiting, "when and where I was converted." When he couldn't tell her, he notes wryly, "she insisted I had never been converted."[189] Amusement aside, he has little patience with this kind of "fossilized and lifeless" religious language, and he wants to communicate this clearly to his congregation. "I am not anxious," he tells them firmly, "that my children shall ever know The Day when they were Saved. Rather I pray that they might simply know from their earliest years, as I knew, the love of Jesus through Godly praying parents."[190] If the point has been distilled into "a holy hour, a thrilling

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[186] Sermon, "Jesus our Saviour", April 12, 1928.
[187] *Ibid*.
[188] *Ibid*.
[189] *Ibid*.
[190] *Ibid*.

experience,"[191] the point has been missed. It is "a narrow view."[192] The import lost in the triteness of the phrase 'being saved' is that Christian discipleship is "a life-long process, a growth, a character to be achieved."[193] Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group would heartily agree. Those of Hunter's colleagues who disdained the Oxford Group for its lack of Christian rigour might well have equally disdained Hunter's preaching for the laziness that Christian cultural hegemony allowed in its preachers, who could assume that the shape of Christian discipleship was generally understood, and already Swiss theologian Karl Barth was urging the church to rediscover its counter-cultural voice in proclamation of the gospel.[194] In contrast, Hunter, as a child of revivalism whose sole experience of the church arose in a context of new-nation-building along explicitly Christian lines, considered the blurred boundary between culture and church to be entirely positive. The purpose of proclamation and conversion, for him, was simply that Canadians be enjoined to passionately live the Christian life of love and service in community. How that was achieved, and regardless of whether the marks of that life were described using Christian language or categories, he was entirely prepared to consider irrelevant.

Was he equally prepared to recognize the marks of living a Christian life beyond the bounds of strict identification, however vague, as Christian? His embrace of the Oxford Group movement is strongly suggestive in this regard, as it stepped firmly away from rigid association with church traditions and moved instead toward a non-sectarian expression of what Hunter would still have considered the fundamental Christian message. It is certainly possible, therefore, that either his embrace of or his engagement

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[191] Sermon, "Jesus our Saviour."
[192] *Ibid*.
[193] *Ibid*.
[194] Schweitzer, *Theology,* 6. Also Kee, *Revivalists*, 167.

with the Oxford Group movement bore witness to – or helped him to develop – his conviction that the Jews' relationship to God was already full and sufficient, and needed no 'improvement' involving specific conversion to Christianity. As the Oxford Group insisted, after all, a Christian life could be known by its fruits and not by its name. Whether it began with repentance or it began with Oxford Group 'sharing,' its purposefulness and contribution to building the Kingdom of God on earth could be the same.

In the construct of the evangelical revivalist tradition in which Hunter's theology had arisen and developed, however, one element of Christian discipleship – whether labeled as such or not – did remain absolutely necessary: thoughtful, sincere, and intentional repentence. Conversion toward a new path required honest self-reflection, an acknowledgement of failings, an expression of sorrow, and an overt commitment to change, and those hard at work Christianizing Canada took this as a given.[195] Rarely, however, did they pause to consider their own need for repentance as they insisted on the 'repentance and turning toward Christ' of non-Christians and non-Protestants, in service of that goal. In this regard, Hunter seems not to have been notably different from his colleagues: his archived sermons include no particular critique of the "civilizing" and Christianizing undertaken in Indian Residential Schools and in missions to Ukrainian, Chinese, and Japanese immigrants, and only urge in general terms the need for good Christians to protest vicious acts of racism. His reaction to the casual cruelty of cultural anti-Semitism and to the rise of more virulent anti-Semitism in Canadian society would prove strangely and strikingly different. While a firm evangelical stance predicated on the existential importance of turning to Christ as Saviour might righteously be held, so he

[195] Schweitzer, *Theology,* 168-169.

seems to have assumed, in relation to those with either no knowledge of or relationship with the God of the Bible, or whose knowledge and relationship were limited, he was emphatic in his conviction that this was absolutely unnecessary in relation to Jews. Their knowledge of and relationship with the God of the Bible had been established through Abraham, and mediated through the teachings of Moses and the Prophets: it was already full and complete. No exhortation to conversion was required, and indeed *any* exhortation or even mild evangelical intimation that without Christ their faith was illusory and moot and utterly lacking, Hunter identified as an egregious sin. Not only did it engender the hateful sinfulness of anti-Semitism, which he considered quite sinful enough, but it also sinfully diminished and denigrated God as viciously petulant and treacherous, apparently capable of simply casting off those first chosen and long-beloved in a fit of pique. As a sin implicit in Christian doctrine, Hunter therefore believed that it demanded of Christians precisely the same thoughtful, sincere, and intentional repentance, sorrowful acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and commitment to a new path, that was the hallmark of evangelicalism. His leveraging in this way of evangelicalism's emphasis on repentance and conversion, otherwise invariably associated with accepting Christ as Saviour, to instead address the very sinfulness of demanding that acceptance from Jews who had no need for it, was as extraordinary as it was singular in United Church circles in the late 1920s.

Not one of Hunter's archived sermons, addresses, or notes offers a clear explanation for this singular perspective: no anecdotal reference is ever made to a specific event in the 1920s that roused his spirit in this regard (the Christie Pits riot did

not occur until 1933[196]), nor does he ever mention a particular personal friendship through which his awareness of Canadian anti-Semitism suddenly sharpened into a concerted focus. Certainly the friendship begun in 1925 with Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of Holy Blossom Temple would prove broadly significant,[197] as reflected in Hunter's repeated urgings – in *all* his various forays into promoting good Christian-Jewish relations into the 1930s – that "if we knew one another better… if we clasped hands… we would appreciate one another so much more."[198] In the absence of an explanation for an interest so passionate – and singular in United Church circles at the time – locating its source simply in Hunter's faith as it developed may be undramatic but is reasonable. The Crossley-Hunter revivalist tradition had grounded him in the Biblical stories of both Older and Newer Testaments in a way that entrenched them in their Jewish context, connected them throughout to one unchanging Loving God, and extrapolated their meaning in terms of relationship rather than identity. He had learned to embrace Jesus' Jewishness and to reject familiar tropes pitting a Jewish God of Vengeance against a Christian God of Love, locating instead a consistent relationship into which God called humanity that undergirded both traditions. Crossley-Hunter revivalism had also shaped Hunter's understanding of Christian evangelism as a positive invitation into a transformed life, rather than a protection against otherwise certain damnation; and since the marks of that transformed life were embodied in Jesus' Jewishness, they were already implicit in Judaism. Furthermore, into this Judeo-Christian faith as developed in youth and crystallized in Hunter's earliest years of ministry, the Oxford Group movement of

[196] "Riot at Christie Pits," University of Toronto Library Exhibit, accessed August 2, 2020. https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/items/show/2543
[197] "A Brief History of Holy Blossom Temple," accessed August 2, 2020. https://holyblossom.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/A-Brief-History-of-Holy-Blossom-Temple%E2%80%99s-First-150-Years.pdf
[198] Peace Broadcast with Rabbi Arthur Feldman of Anshe Sholom Synagogue, Hamilton, December 1936.

Frank Buchman had then introduced the notion that living a life manifesting the markers of a Christian life could quite easily happen – and did – without reference to Christian language or even identity. Indeed, if the ultimate goal of preaching and evangelism was simply to inspire people to reflect God's highest hopes for humanity in their actual living, the question for Hunter of how this was described became essentially irrelevant. From God's perspective, after all, "by their fruits shall ye know them"[199] was quite sufficient. Who was he to disagree?

As a pastor and a preacher, Hunter was a working Christian theologian. As he considered the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism, not only in Canada but around the world, he recognized its source as not simply human distaste for difference but Christian theology itself, as developed and entrenched in Christian countries by the Christian church. He was quite aware he was an outlier. His archived sermons and addresses regarding Jewish-Christian relations bear witness to extensive and careful reading of the violent history of Christian anti-Semitism in previous centuries, particularly in Europe, but he returns again and again to its less overtly violent but continued subtle malignancy in contemporary Christian thought and praxis. Christian supercessionism itself he recognized as dangerously poisonous and ready fuel for anti-Semitic attitudes and behaviour, and Christian supercessionism continued to reign virtually unchallenged in Christian theological discourse, Sunday morning preaching, and Sunday School curricula. As such, he concluded, it was the church's sin for which the church must actively and intentionally repent, while equally actively and intentionally striking out on a new path. It was the church's responsibility to hold itself accountable for its sin – for the disdain, contempt, and hatred of Jews implicit in its teachings and explicit in its preaching – and

[199] Matthew 7:20, New Testament of the Holy Bible, King James Version.

to challenge and repair the anti-Semitism of its theology and reach out to the Jewish community with humility, offering solidarity while leveraging Christian cultural privilege to heal and eliminate Canadian anti-Semitism.

An Enlarged Theology: Early Jewish-Christian Connections

Hunter began this work with intent in the late 1920s with his call to Carlton Street United Church in Hamilton, Ontario, and the historic 1928 pulpit exchange with Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto. Although the archived record in this regard begins only in 1928, its initial manifestations necessarily presuppose friendships of some depth. Rabbi Isserman had arrived at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto in 1925 and in a striking break with tradition had initiated a Sunday morning service at Holy Blossom to provide businessmen kept from Shabbat services with an opportunity for weekly worship.[200] As the synagogue's history notes, this had the unexpected result of also attracting non-Jewish worshippers,[201] intrigued perhaps by the chance to worship 'as usual' on a Sunday morning while also learning something about a Judaism previously shrouded (for them, at least) in mystery. It is entirely possible that Hunter was one of these non-Jewish worshippers while on a weekend visit to Toronto in this period, though that can only be conjecture based on his curiosity and interest. Certainly, however it occurred, a friendship between Rabbi Isserman and Hunter was begun far enough prior to February 5, 1928 to permit their historic exchange of pulpits on that date. Rev. E. Crossley Hunter preached the morning sermon at Holy Blossom Temple and Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman preached in the evening at Carlton Street United Church, in the first Christian-Jewish pulpit exchange in Canada at least, and possibly – as

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[200] "A Brief History of Holy Blossom Temple," accessed August 2, 2020. https://holyblossom.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/A-Brief-History-of-Holy-Blossom-Temple%E2%80%99s-First-150-Years.pdf
[201] *Ibid*

the Holy Blossom history claims – in the British Empire.[202] Astonishingly, police reported that more than 5000 people had to be turned away from the Carlton Street United Church service that evening.[203] Whatever shape cultural anti-Semitism in Canada may have taken in the late 1920s, it clearly had not stifled plain curiosity. Fortunately, for any not able to attend, the morning service at Holy Blossom was radio-broadcast by CFCA, sponsored by the Toronto *Star* newspaper, and a pamphlet was produced for wide distribution which included both sermons as well as Welcoming Comments by each clergyman and an Introduction by Rev. William Creighton, editor of the United Church publication *The New Outlook*.[204]

The sermon Hunter preached that morning at Holy Blossom was entitled "The Enlarged Life" and took as its text the 19th verse of Psalm 18: "He brought me forth also into a large place." Despite the momentousness of the occasion, the sermon itself is charmingly comparable to any of Hunter's 'ordinary' sermons of this period, simply setting the text in its context as a song of King David, lifting out what it reveals about David's relationship to God, extrapolating from this to others' – including his listeners' – relationship to God, and concluding with the invitation to better this relationship implicitly offered to them all as a gift. The occasion did of course demand overt attention to both past perfidies and hopes for a healing path forward. Hunter begins by expressing his "very high sense of privilege and… deep sense of indebtedness"[205] at having been invited into the Holy Blossom pulpit, but swiftly turns from this into a passionate acknowledgement of the indebtedness of the church "beyond all reckoning" to the Jewish

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[202] "A Brief History of Holy Blossom Temple." Hunter himself always referred to the pulpit exchange as "the first of its kind in Canada".
[203] *Ibid*.
[204] Pamphlet: "An Account of An Historic Exchange of Pulpits Between Rabbi and Minister".
[205] Pamphlet, 8.

community for “your holy literature that is so vital… that we call inspired” and for “your pure and lofty Monotheism” that are “the greatest of all the gifts you have given to us and to the world.”[206] Hunter reserves a special acknowledgement for “the prophets who have kept alive in every generation the vision of the new world wherein dwelleth righteousness.”[207] These, he notes for his listeners at Holy Blossom, “are [also] from you… and among them the one whom we call Christ and love the best.”[208] With this subtle but decisive rejection of Christian supercessionism, as Hunter locates Jesus *within* the long tradition of Jewish prophets, he then underlines this point with a fine example of the sort of homespun anecdote that his archived sermons betray he unabashedly adores. “During the Great War,” he begins, as he does amusingly often…

> … a soldier boy was brought out of the trenches near to death. No Protestant chaplain was at hand, and so a Roman Catholic padre went to minister to him. When the boy saw him, he said, “But padre, I do not belong to your church.” “No,” said the priest, “but you do belong to my God.”[209]

“It seems to me,” Hunter continues, “that is the very finest thing that could have been said.”[210] The point he wishes to make is simple but meaningful. Recognizing each other as brothers in one family of faith has neither erased nor ignored the distinctive features and integrity of the respective faith expression of either priest or soldier, and the same can be true on that very day at Holy Blossom and Carlton Street. “I would like the members of this synagogue to say,” he tells them, “as they look at the one in their pulpit this morning, ‘He may not belong to our synagogue, but he does belong to our God.’ And

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[206] Pamphlet, 8.
[207] *Ibid.*
[208] *Ibid.*
[209] *Ibid.*
[210] *Ibid.*

I will look into your faces and will say, you may not belong to my church but you do belong to my God."[211]

> Neither one of us is asked to surrender a single conviction; still we can worship in the beauty of holiness because we are children of the same Heavenly Father, God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob – and of Jesus.[212]

Firmly grounded in this articulation of a shared foundation, Hunter then continues his sermon with precisely the same pattern of Biblical storytelling and extrapolation that marks all his preaching. The speaker of the Psalm chosen for his preaching text is King David, whose "shepherd's lot had been a very obscure and humble one" and who had been "born in a small place".[213] David looks back in this Psalm on "the strange and wonderful years" of his lifetime, when "step by step through difficulties and dangers he had been led out until at last he had sat on the throne of Israel," and – overwhelmed with gratitude – he praises God for all that has occurred, saying "He brought me forth into a large place."[214] This, Hunter proclaims, "has been the song of God's servants in every age. Obedience to Him never contracts our life, but always enlarges it."

> Ur of Chaldees was a small place, but Abraham, faithful to the call of God, was led out into a large place in life and history. It was so with Moses and with Joseph and with all the prophets. Down through every generation those who have been obedient to the call of God have found life to be a thing of widening horizons.[215]

"Whatever real religion does," he concludes this opening portion of the sermon, "it never narrows or restricts or impoverishes life. Rather it is an enrichment and an enlargement of

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[211] Pamphlet, 8.
[212] *Ibid*.
[213] *Ibid,* 9.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] *Ibid*.

life"[216] into which God has always invited and continues to invite the faithful. Hunter notes that this "place of large vision" is not a mystery but is borne witness to by the prophets Micah and Zechariah as "that day [when] spiritual values and spiritual standards should everywhere prevail" and "the Kingdom of God be established on earth."[217] The shared foundation, the common narrative tradition, and the common goal have all been articulated. All that remains is the invitation. "Well, my friends," Hunter declares, as he shifts into the second half of his sermon, "this seems to me to be the great value of our services today. They are not meaningless exchanges of pulpits. Both our congregations are being led out into a larger place."[218] It is at this point, before the new path – the "larger place of friendship and of fellowship"[219] – can begin to be imagined, that sincere acknowledgement of and repentence for the past must be offered, and Hunter does so solemnly and simply. "I stand in this synagogue this morning," he says…

> …utterly ashamed of things that have been done in the name of Christianity – we cannot deny it – when we have utterly betrayed Him whom we call our Lord. The story of prejudice and of cruelty … the narrowness of hate… by those who confessed [Christ's] name but denied His spirit."[220]

Though he prays mid-sermon for God to forgive the church "for the things that have been done in the name of Jesus,"[221] he does not ask for forgiveness from his listeners. Instead, perhaps instinctively understanding the humility necessary to real healing of a broken relationship, he returns immediately to God's readiness to "lead us out this morning away from the narrowness of hate and prejudice into the larger place of

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[216] Pamphlet, 9.
[217] *Ibid,* 9-10.
[218] *Ibid*.
[219] *Ibid,* 9.
[220] *Ibid*, 10.
[221] *Ibid*, 9.

sympathy and fellowship." But he is not being facile. Entering "the place of larger fellowship" literally and simply involves spending time in one another's company, socializing and eating together, getting to know one another as people rather than archetypal 'others', and this "is venturesome… is courageous… is the commital of oneself to the truth wherever it may lead."[222] For Hunter, this "truth" is that faithful Jews and Christians are grounded in shared foundation, guided by a common narrative tradition, and inspired by a common goal. "Together we love peace and justice and brotherhood," he reminds his listeners. "Together we hate war, and prejudice, and injustice, and together we work for a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."[223] As ever – but notably in a sermon devoted with intent to promoting a healed Jewish-Christian relationship – Hunter ultimately understands and proclaims faithfulness not as identity but as capacity:

> Following God will lead us into a place of larger service. He has great tasks into which He would lead us all this morning. All those great visions of the prophets wait to be fulfilled, when the sword shall be turned into the plowshare, when the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God. God has these great tasks waiting for our endeavours. The problems of race and religion and color are not easy ones, the road that leads into world brotherhood is a teasing and tortuous one, but of this we can be certain: that ill-will will not help, that prejudice is no use, and that if there are any people in the world that should labor together for these better days it is we who share a common faith in God and His purposes for His children.[224]

Just as the foundation, narrative tradition, and goal are shared, Hunter concludes, the capacity is also shared. The relationship is not skewed by supercessionism but is simply and straightforwardly filial: "Let us go out ready to be led by the God of Abraham, of

[222] Pamphlet, 10.
[223] *Ibid,* 11.
[224] *Ibid*.

Isaac and of Jacob and of Jesus, into larger realms of friendliness and of service."[225] As the morning service at Holy Blossom ended, the congregation at Carlton Street was already preparing to welcome Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman into a "larger realm of friendliness" – and their pulpit – that evening.

As a first and decisive step toward healing Canadian Christian anti-Semitism, Isserman and Hunter's pulpit exchange was at once momentous… and ironic. Neither clergyman, it transpired, had needed to expend particular energy or stretch his theological creativity – or even vocabulary – to achieve a sermon that would reach across that theoretically impenetrable boundary between their two communities of faith. But that irony was itself an experienced sermon of sorts, for both men and for their listeners that day. The work of healing they'd undertaken together, imagined as momentous by virtue of its daunting complexity, had been revealed in that first gathering to be momentous instead because the healing was so clearly possible. At the same time, however, Hunter knew quite well that the path forward would look very different for Jews and for Christians. If the Jewish community could simply take heart following the pulpit exchange that the degree of their differentness was not so high, and could carefully begin to tentatively trust in the possibility of true brotherhood with their Christian neighbours, Christian Canadians would require much learning, even more unlearning, and serious changes to their cultural and theological biases and norms and to their behaviour. The "larger place of fellowship" had indeed been sketched out by Hunter with his customary warmth of appeal to his listeners to access what they knew to be their best and finest impulses, but in subsequent sermons and addresses in the late 1920s and early 1930s, he would build on this warmly encouraging foundation with far more pointed and

[225] Pamphlet, 11.

challenging specificity. Of particular note in this regard is an address delivered in March of 1928 to the Oakville Men's Club which archived notes suggest was adapted to be repeated at other comparable gatherings in that period.[226]

Entitled "An Adventure in Understanding," the speech begins by recalling the pulpit exchange that had taken place just a month prior as the beginning of "an adventure in understanding between a Jewish Rabbi and a Christian Minister."[227] But instead of merely noting the history of violence perpetrated by Christians upon Jews, as he had in the sermon at Holy Blossom, Hunter takes time and space in this address to specifically detail that violence – both legislative and deadly – over nearly two millennia of European history. There is clear intent to shock his listeners with the relentless list of horrifying massacres – hundreds of Jews locked into their synagogues and burned alive in both Worms and Erfort – expulsions from Spain and France and England, forced conversions on pain of death, confiscated property, curfews and ghettos and denial of citizenship rights, and quotas or bans on professions and education. But Hunter does not wish to merely appal his listeners with a recitation of what has been wrought in the past. His goal in this address is to make them aware that casual stereotypes that continue to be so pervasive in Canadian culture are directly the result of that past. "How is it," he asks rhetorically, "that when you see a pawn shop you're sure to see a Jewish name associated with it? How is it that we say Jews are a greedy lot, interested in nothing but money?"

> My friends, when you go down the street and see the pawn shop with the Jewish name put your hand over your mouth. We Christians did that. Did

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[226] Address to Oakville Men's Club, "An Adventure in Understanding," March 15, 1928. The typewritten manuscript has been edited with pencil marks bracketing names and temporal markers like "recently" and "last month". While this proves nothing in particular about the address being re-used in other locations, it's fairly suggestive: Hunter routinely re-used portions and full texts of older sermons in 'new' sermons delivered at later dates.
[227] "An Adventure in Understanding"

> you know that for 1400 years Christendom had a law refusing Christians the right to lend money at interest? Century after century, Christians under pain of damnation were not allowed to lend money. A new world, however, was opening up. Loans had to be made, and the Jews were there. They were damned anyway, said the Christians, so the Jews were forced into money-lending by the Christians.[228]

As for why Jews might seem "to despise Christians," or seem "to keep to themselves," Hunter rather pointedly notes that it really ought not to surprise any Christian, considering the centuries of oppression and cruelty (quite apart from stereotypes about greed), that "bitterness and hate [grew] like a canker"[229] in the Jewish community. But this is precisely the reason Hunter is urging his listeners to join him in embarking on this "adventure in understanding." What has been need not continue to be. The Oakville Men's Club and other Canadians can educate themselves about the past and can "extend hands of friendship to [their] Jewish neighbours." Canadian Christians and Jews can learn to know one another better as "fellow citizens of this land."[230]

The invitation into active healing of Christian-Jewish relations that was begun fairly gently with the pulpit exchange is now being built upon, deepened not only by Hunter's use of considerably more emotionally-charged and challenging language, but also by this direct appeal to simple friendliness. For Christians, facing the egregious history would be essential, and Hunter specifically makes reference in this address to having himself recently visited the library in order to become more informed. His listeners, he hopes, will feel moved to do the same. But Hunter's hope is not for Canadian Christians to contemplate their Jewish neighbours as exotic specimens, achieving a sort of distant appreciation for all they have suffered and resolving to broadly commit to their

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[228] "An Adventure in Understanding"
[229] *Ibid*.
[230] *Ibid*.

proper treatment in future. His hope is that Canadian Christians will with humility and contrition recognize their Jewish neighbours as fellow children of God, and reach across the cultural divide to courageously dare the first step on the new path toward healing: talking to them. "The basis of much of the trouble in the world today," he observes, "is misunderstanding."

> Between nation and nation, between group and group, between individual and individual, what a tragedy of misunderstanding there has been, when all the time 'If I knew you and you knew me, How little to complain there'd be'.[231]

Hunter is not naïve about honest Christian and Canadian appraisal of past history and current anti-Semitism. But he is also not being trite. A new and healed relationship between Canadian Christians and Jews would require making and taking opportunities to become acquainted with one another, and as he challenged the various gatherings to whom he presented versions of this address, in Oakville and beyond, Hunter was also ensuring such opportunities for fellowship and conversation for his own congregation and neighbours in Hamilton. While his connection with Holy Blossom in Toronto would continue into the 1930s, both with Rabbi Isserman and with Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath who replaced him in 1929,[232] Hunter also reached out in friendship to Rabbi Arthur Feldman who served the local Hamilton congregation of Anshe Sholom Temple[233] and the two began working together to foster good-will between their congregations. Their early efforts would prove not merely pleasing in the abstract, but broadly and increasingly meaningful. As the world entered the Great Depression, and anti-Semitic

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[231] "An Adventure in Understanding"
[232] "A Brief History of Holy Blossom Temple," accessed August 2, 2020. https://holyblossom.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/A-Brief-History-of-Holy-Blossom-Temple%E2%80%99s-First-150-Years.pdf
[233] "Our History," Anshe Sholom Temple, accessed August 2, 2020. https://anshesholom.ca/about-us/our-history/

ideologies exploited workers' desperation and anger both at home and abroad, Canadian Jews' concern for their own well-being paled considerably in the face of growing fears for fellow Jews in Europe. If any safe refuge was going to be provided by Canada, maximum solidarity with and advocacy by Canadian Christians would be essential. Unfortunately, as the next chapter of this thesis demonstrates, broad solidarity and advocacy by Canadian churches in this regard developed slowly and fitfully when cultural anti-Semitism and the competing pressure of mass unemployment and poverty in Canada allowed them to develop at all. Hunter, however, did not waver. Throughout the 1930s, he continued his dogged and singular theological challenge to his fellow Christians and United Church colleagues unabated, lending his pastoral influence and voice to the refugee cause championed in this period in The United Church of Canada by Rev. Claris Silcox.

Chapter Four
Preaching Into the Refugee Crisis

Scanning the crowd from his place on the stage as over 20,000 Torontonians rallied at Maple Leaf Gardens in November of 1938, Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter had reason to feel hopeful that the Nazi state-engineered violence of Kristallnacht had finally awakened Canadians' sense of responsibility toward Germany's Jews. Similar rallies were being held in urban centres and small towns across the country. Newspaper editorials were not only expressing horror at the reports of burning synagogues, neighbourhoods ransacked, and thousands of Jews beaten, murdered, and rounded up into prison camps. They were also demanding that Canada immediately act to provide safe haven to Jewish refugees.[234] Canadians, individually and collectively, in town councils and church groups, were flooding Prime Minister King's office with telegrams and letters urging a softening of immigration restrictions and pledging both welcome and support for any newcomers. [235] For Hunter and his colleagues on the stage at Maple Leaf Gardens, nearly six years of labouring and lobbying to shift public opinion and government policy toward the rescue of Germany's Jews appeared at long last to have achieved its moment. Canadians were finally recognizing the full measure of the existential threat facing Jews in Germany. The Prime Minister and his officials would surely be moved as a result to take swift and positive action to welcome refugees.

There did seem to be reason to be hopeful. In response to the rallies across Canada, Prime Minister King firmly assured Canadians that he shared their views and

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[234] Toronto Daily Star, "Vast Throng of Toronto Citizens Fills Maple Leaf Gardens To Protest Nazi Persecution of Jews" and "Jews Sob at Gathering as 20,000 Voice Protest" (Monday, November 21, 1938): 3; Winnipeg Free Press, "Canadians Protest Horrors" (Tuesday, November 22, 1938); Globe and Mail, "Canadian People Protest" (Tuesday November 22, 1938); Halifax Herald, "Theatres Filled by Citizens: Church and Civic Leaders Join in Condemnation of Campaign" (Monday, November 21, 1938; Ottawa Citizen, "Big Canadian Meetings Urge Aid to Refugees" (Monday, November 21, 1938)
[235] National Archives of Canada, William Lyon Mackenzie King Correspondence: C3737-C3738.

their sense of urgency and was continuing to work toward the shared goal of "solving the refugee crisis." [236] But promises of urgent action could postpone urgent action, at least for a time, and King had no intention of acting decisively. The prospect that King might soften his position on Jewish refugees provoked even stronger warnings from Quebec's clergy and political leaders that he would lose the support from Quebec necessary to retaining power.[237] His own Immigration Minister continued immovable on the subject. By the time those Canadians who had rallied began to question afresh King's commitment to providing safe haven to Germany's Jews, Germany had finalized its non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union and had invaded Poland, provoking Britain and Canada to declare war. Extracting Jews from Germany had become impossible, the efforts of the Canadian Committee on Refugees, Senator Cairine Wilson, Rev. Claris Silcox, and others had come to naught, and Canadians generally turned their attention to the war itself.

Despite the ultimate failure of the campaign to soften immigration policy, Crossley Hunter still saw Canadians' call to admit Jewish refugees as meaningful. The early efforts to arouse Canadians to pressure their government to open the borders and welcome Jews that had depended largely on arguments based on expedience – Jews were wealthy, skilled, professional – had indeed failed. But Canadians had found themselves feeling and expressing a degree of compassion for Germany's Jews that necessarily depended on some real sense of shared humanness. A Canadian cultural divide exaggerated by prejudice and entrenched by social separateness had somehow been

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[236] "Canada May Open Doors to Jewish Refugees," Toronto Globe and Mail, November 22, 1938; "Ottawa Settles Refugee Policy of 'Sympathy,'" Toronto Globe and Mail, January14, 1939.
[237] "Canada Will Not Adopt Open Door to Refugees, Premier King Intimates," Toronto Globe and Mail, January 30, 1939; "Doubt Ottawa to Cross Powerful Catholic Body After Huge Petition Sent," Toronto Telegram, January 31, 1939.

transcended, at least to some degree and for the moment. This was precisely the breakthrough that Hunter had been working toward for the decade prior: it suggested a significant shift in what it might be possible to achieve in Canada. Hunter had obviously shared his colleagues' sense of urgency and the desire for concrete action to save Germany's Jews, but he had never been satisfied with advocacy shaped merely to appeal to Canadians' appreciation for the possible economic benefits or infusions of capital or professional expertise that might be associated with Jewish immigration. In a crisis, of course, every effort for any reason would be worthwhile. If it is fair to note in retrospect the implicit anti-Semitism in the advocacy of many who worked diligently in the 1930s to soften immigration policy,[238] since their arguments often leveraged anti-Semitic tropes about Jewish wealth and mercantile prowess, it is equally crucial to recognize the degree to which they knew that speed was essential. They were demanding a complete – and immediate -- reversal of immigration policy in relation to Jews that the vast majority of Canadians had never before particularly questioned and indeed had regarded as essentially reasonable and consistent with national interests.

A decade earlier, the historic pulpit exchange undertaken by Crossley Hunter with Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of Holy Blossom Temple had marked the beginning of Hunter's preaching toward a comprehensive historically and theologically grounded vision for a healed Jewish-Christian relationship in Canada. The late 1920s and earliest years of the 1930s had allowed this work to proceed, albeit with the knowledge that repairing Canadian anti-Semitism would take time and care. Adolf Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in 1933 at once lent it a new note of urgency and threatened to

[238] Note, for example, Carmela Patrias "Jobs and Justice: Fighting Discrimination in Wartime Canada 1939-1945", 113-115; also Haim Genezi, "Claris E. Silcox, The Refugees, and the State of Israel," Chapter 3 of *Holocaust, Israel, and Canadian Protestant Churches,* 64-65. Google Ebook.

diffuse its focus. As Alan Davies and Marilyn Nefsky note in the introduction to their *How Silent Were the Churches?,* it is impossible to underestimate the degree to which the economic and social collapses of the Great Depression had betrayed to Canadians the weakness of the systems and structures they had assumed were both unbreakable and protective. The lack of democracy associated with communism and fascism could perhaps be held at bay while capitalism, however imperfect, was producing prosperity; its failure had cast everything in doubt. Unemployment, hunger, social unrest, and fear-fueled anger were rising. Hitler's accession to power did not, therefore, merely represent a vastly more terrifying existential threat to Germany's Jews and, by extension, to Jews in Canada and elsewhere. It also represented a terrifying existential threat to the notion that democratic capitalist systems were even viable, never mind trustworthy, and a terrifying existential threat generally: no Canadian still grieving the effects of the Great War less than twenty years prior could read of Hitler's rhetoric and his swift re-arming of Germany without a sickening fear that another war was looming. In other words, at precisely the moment when repairing Canadian anti-Semitism sufficiently to inspire active compassion Germany's Jews had become urgent, Canadian anti-Semitism was instead exacerbated by reactive conflation with xenophobia, anger against monied classes, fear of communist uprisings, and isolationism. Breaking it down, already not easy, had become infinitely more complex.

Canada ended the 1930s with by far the most abysmal record amongst the western democracies of providing safe haven to Jewish refugees fleeing Europe.[239] The

[239] Abella and Troper, "The Line," 181. The authors note that approximately 800,000 Jews sought refuge between 1933 and 1939. The United States admitted 140,000, Great Britain 85,000, Argentina 22,000, Australia 10,000, Brazil 20,000, Colombia 20,000, Mexico 20,000, China 15,000, and Palestine 100,000. Canada welcomed roughly 5000. The majority of the rest perished in the Holocaust.

simmering anger of Irving Abella and Harold Troper's tracing of this record is wholly justified. The social instability and economic collapse of the Great Depression crushed many countries in the 1930s. Many countries were overwhelmed by mass unemployment and the anti-immigration passions it engendered in their populations, and most were at least as culturally anti-Semitic as Canada, if not more so. Furthermore, the conflation of Jewishness with grasping capitalism on the one hand and communism on the other was fully as widespread in other countries in the fraught 1930s as it was in Canada, and other non-European nations were as inclined toward ignoring any further European troubles in perpetuity as war-averse Canadians were. But when Jewish refugees sought escape from the Third Reich over the course of the decade, Canada far outstripped its neighbours near and far with an intransigent rigidity that kept its borders closed to all but a very few. Its response to the refugee crisis was not merely abysmal but strikingly abysmal by contrast with that of other countries, none of which acquitted themselves particularly admirably, and Abella and Troper rightly assign responsibility for this not only to government, but also to the churches that claimed jurisdiction over the country's moral formation. Had the churches leveraged their putative power adequately – or at all, in Abella and Troper's view – tens or even hundreds of thousands might have been saved. In the absence of any meaningful pressure from the country's moral guardians, the Canadian government had no reason to soften its stance.

This chapter begins by setting Hunter within the broader context of the United Church's institutional responses, such as they were, as meticulously recorded by Davies and Nefsky.[240] Hunter's participation in these efforts has not gone unnoticed by these and

[240] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches: Canadian Protestantism and the Jewish Plight During the Nazi Era.*

other scholars: he is invariably listed amongst United Church clergymen who lent their voices to the cause. But even references to Hunter's work that additionally note the pulpit exchange of 1928 miss the singularity and import of his specific contribution to Christian-Jewish relations in Canada more broadly. Even as the times demanded more concerted activism, Hunter remained a pastor and preacher whose primary focus was the traditional evangelical's 'sharing the Good News of Christ Jesus'. In this capacity, what he continued to contribute to the collective public and political advocacy he undertook with his colleagues in support of refugees was a theological rationale for that enterprise. Support for refugees could be grounded not merely in Christian compassion or sensible utilitarianism, either of which might falter under the weight of Depression anxieties, but should, as Hunter insisted, be grounded in the more emotionally-weighty relationship of what he often referred to as brotherhood. In sermons, addresses, radio broadcasts, and speeches to social clubs in the mid- to late-1930s, Hunter deepened the work and relationships he had fostered in the previous five years, bringing to his listeners a message which challenged the United Church's hesitant half-measures and lukewarm statements. If Canada's refusal to admit Jewish refugees was the presenting abomination, the greater abomination for Hunter was the Christian theology that had fostered – and the culture that overlooked – the casual observation by a government official contemplating possible Jewish immigration that "none is too many."[241] In a Canada in which that comment was so unremarkable that it remains unknown who actually made it, Hunter was unwilling to cede the field to expedience. While he worked with and actively supported his colleagues in pushing for sanctuary for Jewish refugees by whatever means necessary, he also continued his theological reframing of the Jewish-Christian

[241] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many,* v.

relationship, one sermon and speech at a time. What he hoped for was a Canada in which no one could declare unchallenged in relation to Jewish immigration that "none is too many."

As The United Church of Canada muddled its way through its fraught second decade and into its third, its broad theological stance would begin to crystallize in part as the direct result of working theologians like Hunter who were doggedly attempting to articulate it in relation to the local and global context on a weekly basis from United Church pulpits. His distinct contribution to the refugee cause in the 1930s became in effect the sort of "seed" that he passionately believed Christians were responsible for "sowing" to promote the common good. It would leave a significant, if latent, mark on United Church theology, and by extension Canadian culture. If too many Christians were silent, most ineffectual, and all ineffective in advocating sanctuary for Jewish refugees, the story of their collective failure is incomplete without this attention to a contribution to United Church theological discourse that had pre-dated the refugee crisis, would outlast the war, and did eventually fuel a reshaped vision of United Church-Jewish relations in Canada.

The Gathering Storm: 1933-1934[242]

If it is illuminating it can also be jarring to discover the limited degree to which an event that in retrospect seems of obvious import appears to register that import at the time. Adolf Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933 and his subsequent seizure of dictatorship that followed the Reichstag fire less than a month later were of course widely reported in Canada and recognized by Canadians as significant. Not merely yet another fascist regime arising in Europe, the descent of rational and

[242] With thanks to Winston Churchill.

cultured Germany into fascism seemed to many Canadians to be especially appalling. Certainly the headlines in Canadian newspapers in the early months of 1933 were not calculated to calm Canadian concerns or to understate the collapse of freedoms in Germany. Articles printed in the newspapers of all Canadian cities detailed the Hitler regime's suppression of the socialist press, its banning of the Communist party, the violence against and incarceration of suspected Communists following the Reichstag fire, and the declaration of martial law.[243] Rumours of plans for a random massacre of Communists made headlines in March,[244] as did the boycott of Jewish businesses on Saturday April 1st.[245] To be sure, Canadian newspapers also quoted Hitler's reassurances to the world on May 18th that he planned nothing unreasonable and only wished for a prosperous Germany,[246] only alluding obliquely, if at all, to the racist ideology at the heart of Nazism that was fueling all these putatively 'political' actions clearly reported as early as February and March of 1933. By the end of March, following passage of the Enabling Act according Hitler dictatorial power,[247] Jews were banned from businesses and the professions and vulnerable to street attacks.[248] By the end of April, Jews were barred from attending school, and on May 10 the first massive book-burning was

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243 Since Canadian journalists depended on wire services for European stories, many appeared in identical or comparable form across several publications each day. References that follow in this and subsequent footnotes are therefore representative of national coverage unless noted. For example: "Gagging of Press as Election Nears Planned by Hitler: Three Killed, Thirty Injured in German Political Riots ~ Newspapers Protest," *Toronto Globe*, February 6, 1933; "Hitler Now Outlawing Communists ~ Police in Germany given Extraordinary Power as Result of Reichstag Fire," *Victoria Daily Times*, February 28, 1933.
244 For example: "German Massacre Widely Rumored," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 1, 1933; "Rumors of Massacre Plot in Germany," *Victoria Daily Times*, March 1, 1933; "German Government Denies Rumor of Plot to Massacre Communists," *Calgary Herald*, March 1, 1933.
245 For example: "Nazi Boycott Effective ~ Iron-Clad Discipline Maintained by Brown-Shirts," *Windsor Border Cities Star*, April 1, 1933.
246 For example: "Long Expected Address Surprises World by Conciliatory Tone," *Toronto Globe,* May 18, 1933.
247 For example: "Hitler is Given Dictatorship for Four Years," *WinnipegTribune*, March 24, 1933.
248 For example: "National Boycott of German Jews Ordered by Nazis ~ Professions Closed to Non-Gentiles, Children May be Barred from Schools, Jewish Stores Closed," *Toronto Globe*, March 29, 1933; "Nazi Horrors are Described ~ Jews Baited Until Death," *Windsor Border Cities Star*, April 1, 1933.

orchestrated,[249] with 40,000 Germans in attendance as books by Jewish authors like Freud and Brecht were consigned to the flames. All these actions and events were reported in Canadian newspapers in the first half of 1933.[250] Canadians did not need to have read *Mein Kampf* , in other words, to be aware that Hitler's appointment as Chancellor had immediately plunged German Jews into impending poverty, dread, hopelessness, and vulnerability, nor to imagine that many would already be desperately seeking escape.

At the same time, this specific import of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor for Germany's Jews in particular – its immediate focused assault on their freedoms and safety – seems strangely lost in the earliest responses of The United Church of Canada. Notwithstanding a report in the United Church publication *The New Outlook* as early as March 29, 1933 detailing attacks on Jews "more inhuman and atrocious than any that has occurred in the Middle Ages,"[251] more florid handwringing and alarm were expressed about Nazism's assault on the integrity of German churches as Hitler demanded and enforced their alignment with Nazi racial policy and racial nationalism. This perversion of the gospel and suppression of Christian freedom of conscience appalled United Church leaders, whose concern for the fate of German Christianity and Christian dissidents tended to make them lose the thread of the specific plight of German Jews for much of

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[249] "Burning Books of UnGerman Spirit Tonight," *Ottawa Journal*, May 10, 1933. Curiously, this seems to be the sole mention of this event in the Canadian daily press, although it was covered at length in the *New York Times* (May 10 and 11, 1933) and sparked Jewish protests in that city.

[250] For example: "National Boycott of German Jews Ordered by Nazis ~ Professions Closed to Non-Gentiles, Children May be Barred from Schools, Jewish Stores Closed," *Toronto Globe,* March 29, 1933; "German Jews Make Appeal on Boycott," *Montreal Gazette,* March 30, 1933; "Jews Appeal to Hindenburg," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune,* March 30, 1933; "Women Told They Are Fighting Holy War," *Ottawa Journal*, April 1, 1933; "Anti-Semitic Campaign Starts in Germany This Morning," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, April 1, 1933. Also Timeline Germany, accessed August 2, 2020. https://www.timelines.ws/countries/GERM_C.HTML

[251] *The New Outlook,* March 29, 1933, 267. Quoted in Haim Genizi, *Holocaust, Israel, and the Canadian Protestant Churches*, 26.

this early period.[252] Many, like future Moderator Richard Roberts in his *New Outlook* article of November 1933, deliberately reframed Germany's suppression of its Jewish population for a United Church audience in Christian terms, pointing out that "Jesus himself would not be welcome in Hitler's Germany."[253] Whether calculated to arouse at least a modicum of outrage from Canadian Christians or an actual representation of the limited degree to which most United Church leaders were able to distinguish between oppression for dissidence and oppression based on (purported) racial identity, this 'Christianizing' of the German threat would continue in United Church discourse throughout the 1930s, though not even the travails of German Christians were provoking concerted protest or action. Apart from the few articles in *The New Outlook*, the United Church registered no official national response to the rise of Nazism in 1933-1934. Not only did the Sixth [biennial] General Council held in Kingston in September of 1934 manage to unfold without a single mention of events in Germany, but the one obliquely related motion – for a Commission on the Jewish People to study "the place in our human family of our fellow men of the Jewish Nation" for a report to the subsequent General Council in 1936 – was tabled with no action taken.[254] Unfortunately, it would be far easier to assume that the United Church was simply overwhelmed with attending to the profound economic and spiritual hardships brought on by the Depression had somewhat less of the 1934 General Council meeting been absorbed by formulating a denominational response to the pressing issues of gambling and strong drink.[255]

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[252] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent Were the Churches*, 59.
[253] Richard Roberts, "If Jesus Went to Germany," *The New Outlook*, 15 November 1933, 805. Quoted in Genezi, *Holocaust*, 27.
[254] The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings: Sixth General Council 1934*, 44 and 50.
[255] *Ibid*, 64-67.

While the United Church officially did nothing, *The New Outlook* tempered its early expressions of concern about Germany by additionally publishing Harold Hendershot's "The German Point of View" in August of 1933 – notable for its flagrant rationalizing of "the heat of released passions" in Germany as "a rather natural reaction" because "the Jews had unfairly pushed themselves to too great prominence" and "every deposed Jew means a job for a good Nordic German."[256] However, Claris Silcox was already beginning his own campaign against the Hitler regime. Always church-adjacent, a Congregationalist clergyman from the United States who never shifted into ministry in The United Church of Canada, Silcox immediately rebutted Hendershot's "German Point of View" with "The German Psychosis," published in *The New Outlook* a week later, and made advocacy for Germany's Jews an important focus of his tenure as secretary of the Christian Social Service Council of Canada from 1934-1940.[257] As historian Haim Genizi notes in the introduction to his appraisal of Silcox's post-war anti-Zionism, Silcox grounded his pre-war activism in a longstanding commitment to the "religious unity" between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews that he considered necessary to, and a powerful force if leveraged in service of, achieving social justice in Canada.[258] As a scholar in the 1920s, he had developed educational resources supporting positive Jewish-Gentile relations, following this in 1934 with co-authorship with Galen H. Fisher of *Catholics, Jews, and Protestants*; and throughout the 1930s he "appeal[ed] for unity among the three religions, calling for mutual understanding and sympathy"[259] and urging Canadian Protestants, Catholics, and Jews to "seek a common ideology… in the whole of the

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[256] H. B. Hendershot, "The German Point of View," *The New Outlook,* August 9, 1933, 584. Quoted by Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 55.
[257] Genezi, *Holocaust,* 52ff.
[258] *Ibid*, 53.
[259] *Ibid*.

Judeo-Christian tradition."[260] But if Silcox was technically a clergyman and comfortable with the rhetoric of faith expression, he was neither a theologian nor a working theologian/preacher. He was a social reformer whose activism was theologically grounded only insofar as he assumed without question that any sincere faith would necessarily manifest in compassion and a desire for justice. As a result, since he additionally seems to have assumed that all Canadians were faithful in some fashion, he imagined that achieving social justice could simply be a matter of emphasizing this connection as shared and shareable across religious boundaries, and most effective when deployed in unison. He deployed himself tirelessly in the pre-war period, inspired and supported by friendships with Canadian Jewish and Christian leaders, in a relentless and intensifying campaign of speeches, articles, interviews, and pamphlets specifically challenging Canadians to honour "the British tradition of fair play"[261] by urging their government to open the border to Jews fleeing Europe. In 1933 and 1934, of course, this work was just beginning.

At Carlton Street United Church in Hamilton, meanwhile, the preaching and pastoring work of Hunter was continuing. In the absence of much in the way of archived notes or sermons from 1933-1934, this is admittedly an assumption, but it is a fair one: quite apart from the fact that Hunter was clearly still Minister at Carlton Street during this period, and that his filing of sermons was inconsistent throughout his career, his files do include the text of a radio broadcast made in 1934 by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath which extensively references a pulpit exchange between the two clergymen the Sunday prior at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto and Carlton Street United in Hamilton. Entitled

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[260] Claris Silcox, "Can the Church Survive," undated manuscript. Quoted by Genizi, *Holocaust,* 53.
[261] Genizi, *Holocaust,* 54.

"Christian and Jew: Our Tragedy and Triumph" and aired on CFRB Toronto as part of the "Forum of the Air" series, the broadcast was delivered by Eisendrath on Easter Sunday of 1934 and fortunately, in view of the dearth of records from this period, offers a meaningful glimpse into Hunter's continued preaching of Jewish-Christian brotherhood in a context that now newly included a Hitler-led Germany. Central to the theme of the broadcast is its delivery on Easter Sunday, the final day of the Christian Holy Week so inescapably associated for the Jew with "the knock of the persecutor rapping at his very door, the shouts of the Crusader and the threats of the Inquisitor who were never so fervent or so frenzied in their cruelty as they were at this particular season."[262] Eisendrath continues with a measured but unrelenting detailing of the Jewish experience of isolation, exclusion, ostracism, prejudice, harassment, and violence into the 20th century, before noting that he nevertheless remains hopeful that one day "instead of this Season being anywhere a signal for the storming forth of Crusaders of enmity and evil, it must become at last the occasion when Knights-Errant of fellowship and understanding and good will shall march forth to melt all sorrow in the consuming fires of love."[263] The source of his hope, as he explains rather magnificently, is "the one radiant star upon the somewhat murky horizon" that arose "upon Palm Sunday last"[264] in the shape of a pulpit exchange between himself and Hunter at Holy Blossom and Carlton Street.

Of his own contribution to that "inspiring interchange" he mentions little, preferring instead to "take the liberty of quoting to [his listeners] but a few of those rarely

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262 Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, "Christian and Jew: Our Tragedy and Triumph," Forum of the Air, CFRB Toronto, April 1st, 1934, 1-2.
263 Eisendrath, 3.
264 *Ibid*.

prophetic words uttered by this courageous, noble, truly Christian minister of God."[265] What follows, after his noting of Hunter's usual opening remarks about Christians' and Jews' shared heritage, shared vision, and common purpose, is attention to a sharper focus for Hunter that Eisendrath recognizes as deeply meaningful. "Noble words, heroic words, divine words, are they not?"[266] he asks rhetorically, but Hunter has followed them not only with his own honest reviewing of the vicious history of Christian oppression of the Jews but also with pointed and specific contemporary critique. As Eisendrath quotes him:

> There has been prejudice, blindness, misinformation. In our Sunday Schools we have held up the Pharisees with their exclusiveness as typical of all Jews, we have not shown to the children of the Christian Church the sheer moral beauty of Judaism, the lofty moral passion of their prophets. We have not reminded them often enough that they have given us our scriptures, the Commandments, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah.[267]

If Hunter's reminders of the shared heritage and shared vision are not particularly new, his deliberate reference to the portrayal of the Pharisees in the Newer Testament is clearly the result of new learning, likely gained through conversation with Eisendrath or engagement with Jewish scholarship. Having begun his campaign for healing the Christian-Jewish relationship with a rejection of supercessionism, and having deepened it with both study of and preaching about the history of Christian oppression and violence against Jews, Hunter has now added a new awareness of the anti-Semitism not merely explicit but implicit in the Newer Testament. It is notable and striking that not once in his archived sermons is there reference to texts from the Gospel of John. Although easily the most popular gospel for evangelical preaching, its supercessionist anti-Semitism is

[265] Eisendrath, 3.
[266] *Ibid*.
[267] *Ibid*.

flagrant, and Hunter seems to have rejected it as unpreachable on a Sunday morning.[268] But understanding the more subtle anti-Semitism of Newer Testament depictions of Pharisees in particular demanded more than paying attention to the obvious. Even solid Christian scholarship of the time was inattentive to the Newer Testament distillation of first century BCE pharisaism into a simplistic stereotype to serve a strict adversarial binary with Jesus. Hunter must have been challenged by his Jewish colleagues into a closer study of the breadth of Rabbinic Judaism. This would account for his awareness of Newer Testament anti-Semitic messaging not widely reflected in Christian preaching at the time, or even now. In Hunter's broad enterprise of healing Canadian Christian anti-Semitism one sermon at a time, this capacity to correct the intentional stereotyping of Jesus' primary adversaries in the Bible stories most familiar to his congregation, and most often preached, would be significant, as Eisendrath recognized.

In his Palm Sunday pulpit exchange sermon at Holy Blossom in 1934, Hunter for the first time in his extant sermons and speeches deliberately names, and rejects, that polite manifestation of anti-Semitism known as "mere patronizing toleration"[269] that pervades Canadian society. As Eisendrath quotes him approvingly:

> That is a poor and meagre word. Nobody wants to be tolerated. Toleration is not good enough for our home life; nor is it good enough for society. Let us get rid of that word and supplant it with the deep sense of appreciation one of the other.[270]

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[268] It's important to note that this flagrant anti-Semitism in the Gospel of John depends solely on the assumption (easily made) that references to "the Jews" by the author is meant to represent all Jews. Biblical scholarship began deconstructing this position in the latter half of the 20th century, identifying "the Jews" referred to by the author as instead reflective of the later Jewish community of the late 1st and early 2nd centuries CE in conflict with which the Gospel of John was written, as Jewish-Christians were being expelled from the synagogue due to fears of Imperial retribution. See for example: D. Moody Smith, "Judaism and the Gospel of John" in James H. Charlesworth, ed. *Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Crossroad: 1990): 76-96.
[269] Eisendrath, 4.
[270] *Ibid*.

For Hunter, grounded in the evangelical tradition, the healed relationship of this true brotherhood of mutual appreciation continues to require honest and regular appraisal of the past, repentance for past wrongs, and intentional change. In this regard, in what Eisendrath wryly describes as "marching bravely forward even into those dangerous reaches where angels fear to tread," Hunter does indeed in his Palm Sunday sermon further his message in a third way with a strikingly new confession of Canadian Christian supercessionism. "What we have done in the past," Eisendrath quotes him as acknowledging, "is to label 'Christian' virtues which are equally Jewish."

> That has been our most grievous error. We have talked of the 'Christian social order' when we meant all the time the very things that your prophets meant when they talked about the Kingdom of Righteousness and of Justice and of Peace.[271]

The clergyman who happily supported the Oxford Groups, recognizing that the marks of the Christian life could and did flourish apart from strict identification as 'Christian', has learned how naming actually matters when default assumptions can erase whole categories. "That does not mean," he continues, "that Christianity and Judaism are in every respect identical. They do not need to be so."[272]

> But that does mean that in the things which really count, in the great moral ventures and idealistic pursuits and generous desires for the welfare of mankind, Christians and Jews stand side by side.[273]

It is pleasant to imagine that Hunter never again heard a colleague utter that ubiquitous United Church phrase 'Christian social order' without gently – or not so gently – correcting him. Certainly, it did not appear in his own archived sermons thereafter.

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[271] Eisendrath, 4.
[272] *Ibid*.
[273] *Ibid*.

Citius, Altius, Fortius: 1935-1937[274]

In September of 1935, as Canadians contended with the onslaught of election coverage,[275] Hitler unveiled in Nuremberg a new series of laws that deprived German Jews of their citizenship, meticulously parsed Jewish 'identity' on wholly racial grounds, and outlawed relationships between racially pure ('Aryan') Germans and non-Aryans.[276] Reported on the front page of the Toronto *Globe* on September 16th,[277] the news also provoked editorial comment the following day.[278] The editorial opened somewhat sardonically with the observation that Hitler, "overshadowed of late on the European stage by the superior publicity of his Latin confrere"[279] – has now put himself "back in the running for the public nuisance trophy that the Italian Duce seemed to have sewn up in his bullet-proof shirt."[280] It was nonetheless clear and serious about the "ominous… latest manifestation of racial wrongheadedness" represented by "the German Reich's newest anti-Jewish laws."[281] Whatever rationalizations Hitler might offer or deflective claims he might make, the editorial continued, the Nuremberg laws were his unambiguous declaration that "it [is] the German Reichstag's right and duty to deprive German Jews of all their rights as citizens, most of their freedom as human beings, and the greater part of their livelihood – just because they are Jews."[282] If the editorialist does seem to enjoy composing wry prose a trifle too much, noting with a questionable wink

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[274] "Higher, Faster, Stronger", the Olympic motto.
[275] William Marchington, Staff Correspondent, "Parliament Dissolved: Election on October 14: Date Switched At Last Minute By Government," *Toronto Globe,* August 15, 1935.
[276] Timeline Germany 1917-1938, *Timelines of History,* accessed August 2, 2020. https://www.timelines.ws/countries/GERM_C.HTML
[277] "Nazis Outlaw Jews And Lash Lithuania," *Toronto Globe*, September 16, 1935.
[278] Editorial, "More Hitlerism," *Toronto Globe*, September 17, 1935.
[279] *Ibid*.
[280] *Ibid*.
[281] *Ibid*.
[282] *Ibid.* Also Editorial, "The Nuremberg Decrees," *Montreal Gazette,* September 17, 1935.

that "Germans as a people have not been widely noted for a sense of proportion,"[283] he has at least augmented his newspaper's reportage with a firm expression of moral clarity. The Nuremberg laws represented a signficant deepening of Germany's "national policy of oppression,"[284] and deserved Canadian attention.

Did they receive Canadian attention? Comparable articles did appear on the front pages of major newspapers across the country, and some newspapers also included comparable, and more uniformly serious, editorial commentary.[285] Quite apart from the country's not unreasonable absorption in the federal election campaign, whatever attention was spared for European affairs does seem to have been rather more focused in the weeks following the Nuremberg laws on Italy's belligerence toward and then invasion of Ethiopia.[286] Hitler barely featured in Letters to the Editor of the country's major newspapers that autumn. The Canadian Labor Congress did pass a resolution at its annual national gathering in Halifax on September 20th calling for Canada to end diplomatic and economic relations with Germany, but this was framed only obliquely as a response to anti-Jewish policies and was clearly a broader protest against Germany's suppression of dissent and general denial of human rights.[287] In fact, the most accurate representation of general Canadian awareness of and attitudes toward the Nuremberg laws may well have been the editorial page of the *Montreal Gazette* on September 17th, on which appeared a blistering editorial condemnation of the laws as "ill-conceived,

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283 "More Hitlerism," *Toronto Globe,* September 17, 1935.
284 *Ibid*.
285 "Jews Relegated to Ancient Status: New Nazi Laws Place People in Two Categories," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 16, 1935; "Jews Put Beyond Legal and Social Pale of Germany," *Montreal Gazette*, September 16, 1935.
286 "Italy invades Ethiopia," *Toronto Globe,* October 2 1935.
287 "Hitlerism Condemned: Labor Congress Calls on Government to End Relations," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 21, 1935.

grotesque, and frightfully ruthless”,[288] printed directly alongside a reassuring dispatch entitled “Glimpses of Germany,” in which a recent visitor to Berlin concedes “the Jewish persecution [and] the purges” but still can not contain his pleased surprise at finding Germany so charming to visit and barely fascist at all.[289] If most Canadians failed to register real alarm as Jews in Germany suffered yet another severe blow to their livelihood and security, it hardly seems surprising in view of such on-the-ground reports of “courteous” policemen, “flower pots adorn[ing] the windows of most flats,” railways in “first class condition,” churches drawing “large congregations,” and “art galleries thrown open free and crowded to the doors on Sunday and some other days.”[290] There was enough to worry about at home.

And Canadians were worrying. Even Abella and Troper, in their scathing appraisal of Canada’s response to Nazi Germany, concede without resentment that with more than one-third of Canadian breadwinners unemployed in the mid-1930s, there was little remaining Canadian concern available for the beleaguered Jews of Germany and still less inclination to consider welcoming them as immigrants.[291] At the same time, it would be disingenuous – and neither Abella nor Troper is disingenuous – to pretend that Canadians were not materially assisted in their relative apathy in this regard by their own suspicion of and distaste for Jews as different, other and generally best avoided if not outright malignant. In Quebec in particular, the culture of anti-Semitism remained virulent, deeply entrenched, and purposefully fostered and enflamed by clerical and political rhetoric. Even outside Quebec, the pervasiveness of casual and unchecked anti-

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[288] Editorial, “The Nuremberg Decrees," *Montreal Gazette*, September 17, 1935.
[289] John Kidman, “Glimpses of Germany,” *Montreal Gazette*, September 17, 1935.
[290] *Ibid.*
[291] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many,* 5.

Semitism in Canadian culture could allow no less a figure than J. S. Woodsworth to identify Jews as categorically undesirable in Canada, and this decades before Depression-era anxieties mounted.[292] Meanwhile, his once-colleague James Mutchmor, one of the most influential early luminaries of The United Church of Canada, barely scraped out a more righteous position by conceding that in view of the persecution in Germany perhaps more Jews might be allowed to come to Canada, but only if there was general appreciation for the fact that "they must be watched."[293] Even thoughtful Canadians paying close attention to the increasingly dire news from Germany, in other words, might still easily temper any rising compassion they might be feeling not only with socio-economic worries at home but also with a cultural anti-Semitism becoming increasingly malignant as it absorbed more and more propaganda-fueled suspicion and hatred from the wider world.[294]

When King's Liberals did prevail in the October election of 1935, with a mandate and a majority that depended heavily on Quebec, the concentration of anti-Semitic malignancy in that powerful province alone might have ensured a hardening of the closed-border status quo in relation to Jewish refugees from Germany. But pressure in this regard from Quebec, at least in the short term, would prove unnecessary. With the appointment of Frederick Charles Blair to head his government's Immigration Branch, King effectively positioned at the heart of Canada's immigration policy a malignant anti-Semitism as uncompromising as any that Quebec could produce or any Canadian from any part of the country could approximate. Although Blair's flat rejection of any Jewish immigration to Canada would be particularly consequential in the late 1930s, it

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[292] J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates,* 1909.
[293] Cited in Davies/Nefsky, *How Silent,* 67.
[294] For example Dreyfusards, Protocols, Henry Ford, etc.

immediately rendered virtually moot even the minimal alarm and agitation that arose in the mid-1930s in response to the Nuremberg laws. Prominent members of the Jewish community and their allies did intensify efforts to secure sanctuary for Jews. However, the response from Canadians tended merely toward a heightened awareness generally of the lengths to which Hitler appeared prepared to go, in service of his goals. Just as concern for the Jews following Hitler's seizing of power in 1933 had been couched within concern for the future of democratic rights and freedoms in the country as a whole, the horror provoked by the Nuremberg laws' specific isolation and disenfranchisement of Germany's Jewish population seemed to transcend that particularity remarkably swiftly, relocating more broadly into a deeper apprehension that Hitler clearly recognized no limits, whether political or moral, with regard to his plans for Germany or indeed for Europe. Neither labour calls for divestment nor conversations about boycotting the 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics gained much traction in early 1936. Concern was not translating into discernable action. Instead, Canada joined the other western nations in effectively allowing Hitler to continue unchecked, while simultaneously making no provision for those desperate to escape his regime. In January of 1936, with the Nuremberg laws in full force and obstacles to emigration multiplying and hardening, James G. McDonald, the High Commissioner for Refugees for the League of Nations, finally resigned in frustration in order to call attention to the crisis at hand.[295]

In Canada, Claris Silcox reacted quickly to McDonald's resignation, mustering an ecumenical group of thirty-one Christian leaders, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, United Church, and Quakers, who signed a manifesto "declaring that further silence on the part

[295] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 62. Google Ebook.

of the churches was impossible"[296] and urging the federal government to move to admit "a reasonable number of selected refugees."[297] As Davies and Nefsky note in *How Silent Were the Churches*, neither "a reasonable number" nor "selected" suggests an overwhelming degree of fervour in their advocacy. The manifesto published in March 1936 did at least represent an organized raising of Christian voices demanding that immigration restrictions be softened for some German Jews. Still The United Church of Canada was not making any discernable noise on a national institutional level as yet another biennial meeting of its General Council managed to unfold in September of 1936 without a single mention of the plight of German Jews, and with only brief mention of "solidarity with the Christian churches of all the lands…"

> …especially where the freedom of the Gospel is compromised and the conscience of Christians is troubled by authoritarian doctrines of the state, and in particular with the Confessional Synod in Germany.[298]

Not until the following year would the Board of Evangelism and Social Service officially endorsed Silcox's manifesto,[299] though its broad support of the Social Service Council he directed was implicit in a 1936 petition for an increase to its funding.[300] In the meantime, at least on a national level, expressions of United Church alarm and outrage had remained confined to the pages of *The New Outlook,* which continued to print occasional editorials and articles covering the news from Germany, including a blistering response to the Nuremberg laws printed in early 1936:

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[296] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 62. Google Ebook.
[297] Claris Silcox, "Canadian Churches and German Refugees," *Social Welfare,* March 1936, 26. Cited in *How Silent,* 62. Google Ebook.
[298] "Board of Evangelism and Social Service Report," The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1936*, 85.
[299] Genezi, *Holocaust,* 47. Google Ebook.
[300] "Board of Evangelism and Social Service Report," The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1936*, 86.

> …the anti-Jew policy has reached a pitch of brutality and injustice that can hardly be any longer tolerated by the world. That some millions of people are being deprived of all their legal and human rights and driven out of their country for the rest of the world to look after seems an injustice that cannot be endured without protest, even if protesting may be very dangerous work.[301]

It is worth noting, of course, both the editorial's subtext of irritation on behalf of "the rest of the world" on which this burden of care must fall, and the comfortable distance from which it declares someone else's absolute imperative to protest. If both impulses are understandable, and neither particularly attractive, they do betray how powerless United Church people felt in the mid-1930s in relation to the news from Germany. Some surely felt powerless by virtue of distance, limited resources to help in a time of economic crisis, or even their own overwhelming anxieties about the future. The forced alignment of the German church with Nazi ideology and the criminalizing of Christian dissent – what Claris Silcox had described as "the battle for the soul of the German church" – was itself profoundly disturbing to Canadian Christians.[302] What could a church do with its public voice silenced? What could Christians do without even the freedom in their personal lives to actively blunt any abuses of the state? A Christianity stripped of its inherent imperative to critique and challenge the social order seemed to many United Church members unfathomable and its emptiness of personal and collective potency bewildering and frightening. While Silcox continued to press Canadian churches and United Church members to leverage whatever influence they were still privileged to hold in Canadian society, *The New Outlook* continued recording "the escalation of the German anti-Jewish campaign" with its "wholesale arrests, new discriminatory laws, Jew-hunts in cafés and

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[301] Editorial, "The Limit Has Been Reached," *The New Outlook,* January 22, 1936, 73. Cited by Genezi, *Holocaust,* 44. Google Ebook.
[302] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 59. Google Ebook.

theatres, etc.,"[303] even as the world prepared to attend the Berlin Olympics in the summer of 1936. By early 1937, *The New Outlook* was adding its voice to the calls for economic divestment from Germany, citing the "aimless cruelty" in which the regime "seemed to delight."[304] Meanwhile, while visiting Germany in 1937 to meet with Hitler, Prime Minister King observed in his diary: "My sizing up of the man as I sat and talked with him was that he is really one who truly loves his fellow-men, and his country, and would make a sacrifice for their good."[305] Any Canadians and Canadian Christians hoping to be effective in changing their government's perspective toward Germany or policy on immigration faced an uphill battle.

Was Hunter's still a lone voice on theological revisioning lent to these efforts by United Church preachers in the mid-1930s? Davies and Nefsky concede in *How Silent Were the Churches* that drawing a firm conclusion in this regard is impossible, given the dearth of archival evidence. Other prominent United Church clergymen, including Moderators like Richard Roberts and Peter Bryce[306] as well as celebrated preachers Ernest Marshall Howse and Stanley Russell,[307] certainly "deplored [anti-Semitism] from time to time in the pulpit as well as in the press."[308] But their statements as listed by Davies and Nefsky all pre-date or post-date the mid-1930s period, with a significant uptick in engagement not appearing until 1938.[309] Since Davies and Nefsky note only Hunter's 1941 "The Marks of Anti-Semitism", despite his relevant archived addresses

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[303] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 60. Google Ebook.
[304] "Keeping the Money at Home," *The New Outlook,* June 1937; Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 60.
[305] Quoted in Norman Ravvin, "Hitler's Olympics Were More Than Just Games," *Canadian Jewish News,* June 17, 2015, accessed February 26, 2020. https://www.cjnews.com/culture/books-and-authors/hitlers-olympics-just-games
[306] Schweitzer, *History*, 86. Google Ebook.
[307] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 57. Google Ebook.
[308] *Ibid*.
[309] *Ibid*.

throughout the 1930s, their list is incomplete, as they themselves acknowledge.[310] The wisest conclusion is that Hunter was not alone, even in the mid-1930s, in bearing witness as a United Church clergyman to the plight of Germany's Jews and the need for Canada to offer sanctuary to refugees. His message continued, however, to demand of his listeners not merely the compassion for suffering 'others' toward which his colleagues tended.[311] He demanded a broader theologically-based assertion of Jewish-Christian brotherhood that would at once fuel that compassion as a filial responsibility and help to heal Canadian anti-Semitism.

In the mid-1930s, despite presumably still preaching weekly at Carlton Street United Church, Hunter continued his pattern of irregular filing of Sunday sermons, though he did carefully file roughly a dozen public addresses[312] made variously to Youth gatherings, Rotary gatherings, and Elders gatherings, as well as the scripts for two broadcast dialogues with local rabbis. Although it is only in the latter that he specifically mentions the blight of anti-Semitism, several of the addresses locate the prophetic vision that inspires Christians in the words of Isaiah and Jeremiah alongside those of Jesus, and all make reference to the destructiveness of social, religious, and racial division and hatred and to the need to "recognize our oneness."[313] It is clear that the broad purpose of these addresses, as opposed to the dialogues with rabbis, is primarily to muster courage and provide guidance for the battle at home against economic collapse, poverty, and despair. Several go into significant detail about the ways in which unchecked capitalism

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[310] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 57, Footnote 18: "There may have been others as well. The evidence is fragmentary and survives mostly by word of mouth."
[311] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 57. Google Ebook.
[312] UCC Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137.
[313] Address, Young People's Conference, Tillenburg, October 1935; see also Address at Elders Fellowship, December 1935; Young People's Conference at St. Catharines, October 1935; Hamilton Rotary Club, January 1935; Youth Congress on War and Peace, April 1937.

and industrialization have failed to protect workers while rewarding the greed of a few, and also urge listeners to leverage their influence as businessmen and Christian citizens to actively promote progressive economic policies and model more just labour practices. In the addresses to young people, Hunter echoes similar themes while adding acknowledgement of their anger and frustration at being failed by their elders. Change is needed and they are surely "paying the price"[314] as they attempt to enter an unstable adulthood. On a more positive note it is precisely their energy and vision that is required for change to occur, and Hunter knows they are ready for the task. Broadly speaking, these addresses are sincere and heartfelt if a little trite, each easily distillable into the standard Social Gospel message that better is possible if only the faithful work together to build it. In Canada in the mid-1930s, such attempts to arouse a sense of hopefulness and purpose were not unimportant. Although Hunter contributed nothing directly in these addresses to awareness of the Jewish refugee crisis, he did emphatically warn his listeners against the "false promises" of nationalism and isolationism, and also – as noted above – located the foundation and the spiritual fuel for the "new order" in the prophetic vision and promise borne witness to in the Older Testament as well as the Newer.[315] Perhaps more to the point, in each of these addresses he reiterates the importance of developing true brotherhood across apparent divisions, making and taking opportunities to learn from those who might ordinarily be strangers.

Long an interest of Hunter's as he collaborated with local rabbis in connecting members of their respective congregations socially, in the mid-1930s Hunter was inspired

[314] Address, Young People's Conference, Tillenburg, October 1935.
[315] Address, Hamilton Rotary Club, January 1935; Address, Young People's Conference, October 1935; Young People's Conference at Milverton, October 1936; Youth Congress on War and Peace, Hamilton, April 1937; May Day Labor Day Meeting, May 1st, 1937.

by a story of outreach across enormous divides "so beautiful [he] could never forget it"[316] from the missionary Stanley Jones, just returned from India:

> No sooner had he begun his missionary work in that land than he saw that because of the rigid caste system a true fellowship was quite impossible. A high caste Brahmin and an untouchable dare not recognize one another. They each would be ostracized. So the only possibility of breaking thru this rigid caste that blocked understanding and true brotherhood was to get men away where they could be free in a sense that they could not under normal conditions.[317]

Jones had contemplated for a time how such a thing might be possible. Finally, after much consultation with local friends and colleagues, "he established his ashram…"

> … up in the Himalaya mountains. There, 150 representing the vast castes and religions of India lived for six weeks like brothers together, [and] a sign over the entrance to the ashram reads like this – "All earthly distinctions dropped who enter here."[318]

"That story," as Hunter later explained to a Rotary Club in Toronto, "set one thinking of all the divisive factors at work in our Canadian life." In short order, he had organized a diverse group of men to 'retreat' to an island in Muskoka: "clergyman, rabbi, professor, MP, blind, unemployed, parolee, missionary, farmer – as my boy would say, what have you."[319] One participant was Tim Buck, General Secretary of the Communist Party, recently released from prison "and sitting next to him a member of the government."[320] Although "a young coloured man" who had planned to be present had not been able to attend, Hunter otherwise marvelled at the diversity of the "interesting crowd" who spent a week together sharing meals and recreation time, and also more focused conversation

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[316] An Adventure in Understanding, Rotary Club, Toronto, October 6, 1937.
[317] *Ibid*.
[318] *Ibid*.
[319] *Ibid*.
[320] *Ibid*.

about their various experiences and their viewpoints on topics ranging from violence to the purpose of life to "how do you propose to change the world."[321]

> And then we learned this. We could be friends even tho we differed. We could live like brothers even tho we did not agree in many ways. We trusted each other sincerely and we all wished for a better world. And as we took each other by the hand and looked into each others' eyes and said goodbye, we dreamed of Canada free from prejudice and hate and from the divisive spirit.[322]

Back home in less bucolic Hamilton, Hunter's work on that dream continued to find specific focus in collaboration with local rabbis, including two radio addresses for which the scripts were archived, the first with Arthur Feldman of Anshe Sholom Synagogue in late 1936, and the second with Maurice Eisendrath of Holy Blossom Temple in 1937. In both conversations, Hunter specifically locates the current "Jewish persecutions" about which he has read "until my heart ached and my eyes were dimmed with tears" within the longer and egregious history of "bitterness and hate… prejudice and bloodshed… in the records of Christianity."[323] Although the refugee crisis itself is only referenced obliquely, albeit with a pointed noting of Canada's sheer size and "beautiful situation, blessed with such abundant resources,"[324] the purpose of both addresses is the broader demystifying of Jewishness necessary to awaken listeners' identification with these "brethren" suffering in Germany. Hunter repeatedly returns to his essential similarities with his two colleagues, wondering rhetorically, "Why should it be something unusual… that a

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[321] An Adventure in Understanding, October 1937.
[322] *Ibid.*
[323] Conversation Between Rabbi and Minister, undated, though it can be dated to 1937 as it refers to Rabbi Eisendrath as having arrived at Holy Blossom eight years prior.
[324] *Ibid*.

Christian minister and a Jewish Rabbi should go out together and stand side by side to plead for goodwill, for understanding and for peace?"[325]

> Since we seek together a world such as the God of Amos and of Isaiah and Hosea and of Jesus desires why should it be a unique thing that we should join our witness and our plea? We believe in the same God, we seek the same Kingdom. God forgive us that we have been so long apart.[326]

At the same time, neither Hunter nor his colleagues are interested in a simplistic papering-over of cultural and religious differences. "We are not the same, but why should we be?" Hunter observes in his conversation with Rabbi Feldman. Rabbi Eisendrath pushes him one step further by asking him to speak specifically to "the distinctive contribution [that] the Jewish people… make to Canadian life." Hunter's response is striking, as he begins by immediately raising Eisendrath's own "fearless[ness]… in crying out against certain characteristics all too well known among the Jewish people that are to be deplored and withstood." This refers to a remarkably nuanced position for Eisendrath to be taking at a time when stereotypes of Jewish avarice and chicanery are being malignantly exploited. As a faithful Jew and religious leader he has clearly chosen to acknowledge and reject the stereotypes while at the same time calling out all manifestations of greed regardless. Hunter knows this is even touchier territory for a Christian minister, but he too chooses in this broadcast conversation to take direct aim at the stereotype without descending into romanticizing. "I read *Jewish Review*," he notes for the audience, "[and Jews are] equal in every fault you see in Christians [and vice versa]."[327] What may seem an odd way to begin reflections on the Jewish community's

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[325] Conversation Between Rabbi and Minister, 1937.
[326] *Ibid*.
[327] *Ibid*. Hunter's handwritten notes (which appear in many of the archived documents) involve both common abbreviations and his own preaching shorthand. What I have translated as "and vice versa" is rendered in pencil with an equal sign and a zigzag at the end of this sentence.

"distinctive contribution" to Canadian life is actually pivotal to Hunter's fundamentally theological message. The true brotherhood that he hopes for between Christians and Jews does depend on deliberately engaging the stereotypes in order to reject them. It also depends on everyone in both groups learning to consider one another sufficiently fully human – children of God – that neither individual flights of goodness nor anyone's sad wrongdoings are assumed to be somehow wholly representative of the character of one entire portion of God's family. All stereotypes are diminishing. At the same time, however, a particular community's cultural traditions and religious practice can indeed make an identifiable contribution to the broader society, and Hunter readily outlines for the audience three contributions of the Jewish community to Canadian society that he considers especially positive and important.

The first two contributions that Hunter lists are less notable for originality of insight than for the choices he makes in describing them. Both are fundamentals of Jewish faithfulness: the first is "the great and noble vision of the prophets" and the second "the spirit of reverence."[328] These are 'gifts' of Judaism that Hunter has regularly acknowledged in his preaching for at least a decade,[329] but this address offers the first example of his describing these gifts with no reference to Christianity or to the church. Instead, it is the Jewish community itself that contributes to Canada the vision of justice and peace "that sustained you in the wilderness… and held you through the centuries." Likewise, it is the Jewish community itself that models for Canadians "so real… a sense of God" as the awe of "Moses standing before the burning bush, Jacob building his altar,

[328] Conversation, 1937.
[329] As noted in citations from his archived sermons (1928ff) in the previous chapter.

Isaiah in the temple, the psalmist beneath the stars."[330] Characterizing both vision and reverence not as past gifts of Judaism to Christianity, and thence to Canadian society, but instead as elements of Jewish tradition and faithfulness that have already had – and will continue to have – a living, direct, and positive impact on Canadian culture is a small but meaningful change that Hunter makes here to his usual message. These are words clearly calculated to challenge the anti-refugee rhetoric arousing fears of Canada being "swarmed," "flooded," or "overrun." On the contrary, any Jewish newcomers would bring with them a cultural heritage long recognized as fundamental to the Canadian ethos. For those listeners who might be less than impressed by theological esoterica, however, the third contribution Hunter lists is far more mundane. The Jewish community, he notes, "might well be the envy of all" in "keeping high the standards of home life."[331] Not only is "the Jewish home… one of noble authority and true sanctity… with a standard of purity and of affection," but Hunter has also combed through statistics and wishes his audience to be aware that Jews have lower rates of divorce and juvenile delinquency than Canadians in general, and "there are less *(sic)* unmarried mothers in our Dominion among Jews than in any other racial group. Jews are at the bottom of the list."[332] Whether Rabbi Eisendrath found this latter point compelling as a "distinctive contribution" that the Jewish community was making to Canadian life is not recorded, but Hunter was obviously impressed. Their conversation concluded with Hunter's reiteration of anti-Semitism's roots in the Christian church's perversion of Jesus' "true emphasis, back to forgiveness, back to kindness, back to love,"[333] and with Hunter's conviction:

[330] Conversation, 1937.
[331] *Ibid*.
[332] *Ibid*.
[333] *Ibid*.

> This can happen here, that sharing a common history of prophets and of saints, and a common desire for a land where justice shall run down like rivers and righteousness as a mighty stream, and all inspired by the holy Word: 'Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' This can happen in fair Canada.[334]

Whether any Jewish refugees from Germany would be in Canada to experience it remained highly unlikely.

Shattering: 1938-1939

As advocacy by groups and individuals on behalf of Jewish refugees intensified in 1938, The United Church of Canada ceased its institutional silence and began officially pressuring King's government to admit Jewish refugees, although not with notable fervour. In 1937 its Board of Evangelism and Social Service (BESS) had officially endorsed Silcox's Manifesto calling for Canada to "[provide] a haven for at least a reasonable number of selected refugees."[335] Finally it turned in 1938 to developing a stated "position of the United Church" on the refugee crisis, to be submitted to the General Council meeting in 1940.[336] In the meantime, BESS secretary James Mutchmor wrote to Thomas Crerar, federal minister responsible for Immigration, calling for "a slightly more 'open door' policy in the matter of immigration" which the Board anticipated "the United Church would favour"; and presbyteries across the country were asked to consider and weigh in on the matter, after spending time in their regular meetings giving it "careful and constructive thought."[337] In the pages of *The New Outlook,* the editor lamented the relative inaction coming out of the July Evian Conference, an international conference called by President Franklin Roosevelt to find

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[334] Conversation, 1937. Quotation is from Psalm 133 in the Holy Bible.
[335] "Board of Evangelism and Social Service Report," The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1938.* 10, 30, 52.
[336] *Ibid.*
[337] *Ibid.*

solutions for the refugee crisis. He went on to suggest that "the whole refugee question" needed to be attended to by the Canadian government within "the wider issue of an intelligent immigration policy for this country."[338] At its biennial meeting in September of 1938, the General Council did for the first time directly address the Canadian Jewish community, offering "sincere New Year's Greetings on the observance… of Rosh Hashana"[339] and noting the United Church's "deep sorrow and mortification" at "the sufferings inflicted upon the Jewish people."[340] Notably, the statement managed to conflate these sufferings with "political persecution" endured "for conscience's sake" by Protestants and Catholics as well, and failed to mention Germany at all.[341] In retrospect, the closing words of this statement, which invoke imagery from the Book of Isaiah, are chilling and prophetic: "The road before us may be long and bitter and the crusade of the faithful may seem to meet with many reverses, but let us not grow weary in well-doing. A remnant will survive and the torch of a living faith shall come after."[342] The Council did significantly amend Item 7 of Section III ("Peace Action") of its Report on The Church and International Relations.[343] Originally entitled "Persecution of Religious and Racial Groups," and written in broad and unspecific language, the section was sharply focused

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[338] *The New Outlook,* July 15, 1938, 574. The nature of the conference and particularly the action it might then require of participating nations was sufficiently vague to make King wary of accepting the invitation on Canada's behalf. He was not alone. In Quebec, the St-Jean-Baptiste Society circulated a petition against Canada's participation in Evian – and against admission of any Jewish refugees – that was sent to parliament bearing 128,000 signatures of Quebeckers whose possible future votes for the Liberal Party King was unwilling to risk. At the same time, international political pressure to attend was mounting, particularly from the United States, and Canadian newspapers were reflecting a growing sense across Canada that a refusal to participate would be an international misstep, if not actually shameful in view of the country's sheer size and relative emptiness. In the end, King agreed to Canadian participation with no intention of softening his government's stance, and Canada made no meaningful commitment in Evian to offer sanctuary to Jewish refugees.

[339] The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1938*, 54-55.

[340] *Ibid.*

[341] *Ibid.*

[342] *Ibid.*

[343] *Ibid,* 77-78

during Council debate, amended to begin "We regret and lament the widely-diffused evil of anti-Semitism, whereby terrible suffering has been imposed on the Jews,"[344] and retitled "Anti-Semitism" before being adopted.[345] The clergy were further exhorted directly "to urge our people to ignore such propaganda and to repudiate such propaganda as utterly un-Christian and foreign to the mind of Christ."[346] Interestingly, the Board of Evangelism and Social Service was already hard at work formulating, as requested, that "stated position of the United Church" concerning the refugee crisis that Council looked forward to receiving in 1940; and the 1938 General Council had no difficulty adopting Item 10 of "Peace Action," which concluded: "We urge our own [country] and the countries of the world to open hospitable doors to refugees of oppression, help them become reestablished and made to feel at home."[347] Compassion for refugees was clearly unquestionable in theory; in practice, however, it would apparently require two more years of "careful and constructive thought."[348] Although Davies and Nefsky are correct in their assertion that the United Church was not completely silent as German Jews desperately sought to escape Hitler's regime,[349] Heim Genizi is equally correct in pointing out that the strictly institutional response, particularly from the General Council, was virtually "mute".[350] A scant two months later, thousands of Canadians would choose instead to speak for themselves.

Reaction across Canada to news of the state-engineered pogroms in German-held territories was swift and passionate, revealing the point past which Canadians' casual

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[344] The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1938*, 96.
[345] *Ibid*,78.
[346] *Ibid*, 97.
[347] *Ibid*, 78.
[348] "Board of Evangelism and Social Service Report," The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1938*, 10, 30, 52.
[349] Davies and Nefsky, *How Silent,* 46. Google Ebook.
[350] Genizi, *Holocaust,* 34. Google Ebook.

anti-Semitism became moot in the face of identifiable atrocity. Awakened perhaps by the Evian Conference, which, despite its lack of results, had at least highlighted 'the refugee crisis' as a serious issue warranting international attention, Canadians and their civic and religious leaders rallied in the thousands in towns and cities demanding their government open the border to Jews seeking safe haven, and flooded Prime Minister King's office with telegrams and petitions.[351] In Ottawa, Senator Cairine Wilson leveraged the moment by establishing the Canadian National Committee on Refugees in collaboration with Claris Silcox and intensifying both the public campaign and the pressure on King's government.[352] Between the widespread public support for decisive action, notwithstanding continued antipathy from Quebec, and the redoubled efforts of prominent Canadians like Wilson and Silcox, Prime Minister King could reasonably have cited a broad Canadian desire to step up to respond to the crisis, and declared Canada ready to admit a specified number of refugees. Instead, he remained firmly anchored to the same indistinct expressions of heartfelt concern with which he had ignored any pressure following Evian, reassured Canadians that his government was working on a response, and did nothing.[353]

Certainly Abella and Troper are correct in noting that Canadians were appallingly slow to react to the news from Germany, and in attributing this to the anti-Semitism

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[351] Toronto Daily Star, "Vast Throng of Toronto Citizens Fills Maple Leaf Gardens To Protest Nazi Persecution of Jews" and "Jews Sob at Gathering as 20,000 Voice Protest" (Monday, November 21, 1938): 3; Winnipeg Free Press, "Canadians Protest Horrors" (Tuesday, November 22, 1938); Globe and Mail, "Canadian People Protest" (Tuesday November 22, 1938); Halifax Herald, "Theatres Filled by Citizens: Church and Civic Leaders Join in Condemnation of Campaign" (Monday, November 21, 1938; Ottawa Citizen, "Big Canadian Meetings Urge Aid to Refugees" (Monday, November 21, 1938); also Abella and Troper, None is Too Many, 41.
[352] Knowles, *Cairine Wilson,* 195-196. Google Ebook.
[353] "Canada Will Not Adopt Open Door to Refugees, Premier King Intimates," Toronto Globe and Mail, January 30, 1939; "Doubt Ottawa to Cross Powerful Catholic Body After Huge Petition Sent," Toronto Telegram, January 31, 1939.

implicit and pervasive in Canadian Anglo-centric chauvinism. Certainly Davies and Nefsky are correct in noting that the Canadian churches were equally slow to react, and when not actually silent leveraged their voices and influence with a circumspection that in retrospect appears shameful. But if the political will of King's government had been assailable by popular pressure and uprising, it would surely have bent toward creating a clear plan for immediately welcoming even the "limited number of selected refugees"[354] that Silcox had called for, after Canadians' widespread and passionate response to *Kristallnacht.* It did not. Nor did King seize the opportunity presented six months later by the MS *St. Louis'* need for safe harbour, which might have placated concerned Canadians with a single extension of sanctuary to nearly a thousand Jews in desperate straits.[355] Instead, the bulwark against refugees, and Jewish refugees in particular, remained securely in place, precluding even piecemeal concessions to public pressure while King continued to falsely assure Canadians that his government was attending to the issue. Whether attributable to his fear of losing support in Quebec or to personal or political conviction that Canada's Jewish community had already achieved an 'appropriate' size, King continued to reject even modest Jewish immigration under emergency circumstances. The border remained closed as Hitler prepared to test British resolve by invading Poland.

Less than a year earlier, Hunter had been one of those invited to speak from the stage at Maple Leaf Gardens as over 20,000 Torontonians rallied to protest that closed border after *Kristallnacht.* Earlier in 1938, he had "[counted] it a high privilege"[356] to be invited to address the congregation of Holy Blossom Temple on the occasion of

[354] For example: "Silcox Favors Canada Taking Best Refugees," Regina Leader-Post, January 7, 1939.
[355] "Canada Condemns Jews to Suicide," Toronto Globe and Mail, June 9, 1939.
[356] Address, "Dedication of Holy Blossom Temple," May 14, 1938.

dedicating their new temple building, and he took the opportunity to celebrate Holy Blossom's "magnificent witness… overlooking a great city… send[ing] out light and truth… and voicing the needs and hopes of all classes and conditions of men."[357] He reiterated what he believed to be "in the heart of… all who are in these pews:"[358]

> …that we hate, we hate anti-Semitism. It's an ugly word and we hate it because it denies every principle of true democracy and every test of true religion…
> No longer mere toleration but brotherhood, no mere casual interest but glad and fruitful fellowship. This may be a great day if Christians and Jews resolve to write henceforth a new story of brotherhood motivated by the law of love.[359]

"In the building of this noble synagogue," he concluded, "you have quickened faith in us all."[360]

The Holy Blossom Dedication speech is the last of Hunter's archived addresses from that spring and summer of 1938. We know that Hunter was instrumental, at Claris Silcox's behest, in the early work of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees which Senator Cairine Wilson would establish late that autumn. It is possible that these summer months were spent in preparatory collaboration with Silcox in particular; however, neither man's archived records offer evidence of this. Whatever the reason, the next address that Hunter would file in his personal papers, later archived by The United Church of Canada, was his speech given at Maple Leaf Gardens on November 21, 1938. Also on stage that evening were Rabbi Eisendrath, Claris Silcox, and the past and current Moderators of the United Church, Revs. Peter Bryce and John Woodside.

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[357] "Dedication of Holy Blossom," May 14, 1938.
[358] *Ibid*.
[359] *Ibid*.
[360] *Ibid*.

Hunter's address was a mere two pages, one of several speeches given that night. As always, he expresses gratitude to his Jewish colleagues and to the Jewish community well-represented in the audience for inviting a Christian minister to speak, though he notes that "every decent man would be glad of the opportunity to protest in an hour like this [when] the instincts of humanity are being outraged:"[361]

> There is reversion to barbarism. There is injustice more flagrant than we have seen for a hundred years. Every paper adds to the ugly story… how hate found its expression in a sadistic cruelty. There is not one justifying word to be said about these modern persecutions, about Germany's determination to exterminate your people. The whole thing is the child of hate, begotten of hell.[362]

As ever, the best Hunter can offer as a Christian minister is first repentance: "As a member of a nation that calls itself Christian, that has shared with other so-called Christian nations in an unspeakable responsibility… I am sorry for things that are done by nations that call themselves Christian."[363] Then comes a firm declaration of solidarity and brotherhood:

> I am proud to be associated with the Jewish people of Toronto and Canada today. Your fears are our fears. Threats that hang over you hang over us. Your moral indignation is ours also.[364]

As one of the platform party that evening, Hunter is speaking not only to the audience but also for the audience, who have rallied to protest not only against German atrocities but also against Canada's unwillingness to admit Jewish refugees from those atrocities. So, "May I add this," he asks before concluding:

> I sincerely hope that our Empire and Dominion will show its sympathy in a very practical way. Canada would do well to make her fair cities cities of refuge… Canada with her wide expanse of land, and with her good

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[361] "Address at Maple Leaf Gardens," November 20, 1938.
[362] *Ibid*.
[363] *Ibid*.
[364] *Ibid*.

> neighbors so willing to co-operate, if Canada will say to those who suffer from the madness of the dictator, 'Our door is open. We will protect and we will help.'[365]

Invited by Claris Silcox into leadership in the Canadian National Committee on Refugees, established shortly thereafter, Hunter threw himself into the effort to make the significant sympathy of Canadians, finally aroused by *Kristallnacht*, translate into the "very practical" opening of the border, albeit still primarily as a pastor and preacher rather than as an activist. As his last two archived addresses from 1939 attest, his inclination remained toward identifying and speaking to the brokenness implicit in Canadian suspicion of 'the other,' reinforced by the cultural anti-Semitism that had solidified the closed border against refugees in the first place. Neither address was about anti-Semitism or refugees: the first was a speech to the Guelph Presbytery entitled "What a Minister Expects from His Laymen" and the second a "Talk on Unemployment" for the Hamilton Rotary Club. In both addresses, however, Hunter's subtextual emphasis is on the need for good Christians and good citizens to stretch their minds beyond familiar and comfortable and too often rigid norms. "You would be surprised," he tells Guelph Presbytery, "how many preachers came to me and said 'I wish we could invite the rabbi, but I have laymen who object'…"[366]

> I think this spirit of curbing and restricting the preacher is on the decrease, nevertheless many of our ministers feel it. They tell me so. It must be a heartbreak if [the minister] is not free to act and to speak.[367]

As for tackling the issue of unemployment, Hunter merely returns to a theme he has raised in the past, now more poignant in the context of heightened awareness in Canada about the plight of refugees:

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[365] "Address at Maple Leaf Gardens," November 20, 1938.
[366] Address to Guelph Presbytery, "What a Minister Expects from His Laymen," February 1939.
[367] *Ibid*.

> This problem will never be solved without somebody making sacrifices. It is going to cost something in mind and in money, and it stands to reason that the strong will have to bear the burdens of the weak. There are few groups more favored than the groups found in Rotary. It is reasonable and wise [that] we will probably find that our participation involves sacrifice.[368]

For a pastor and preacher, and especially for one with roots in evangelical revivalism, effective action and activism is always best undertaken alongside the incremental work of personal transformation and reorientation toward if not faithfulness itself at least the values embodied in faithfulness. Even as he committed to the practical activism of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees, this remained Hunter's chosen space in the movement. In 1941, well after a real sanctuary for Jewish refugees was viable in Canada or elsewhere, he published a statement entitled "The Marks of Anti-Semitism" that was widely circulated in the United Church and the broader community.[369] For Hunter, healing Canadian anti-Semitism remained the primary goal.

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[368] Address to Hamilton Rotary Club, "Talk on Unemployment," May 4, 1939.

[369] Ernest Crossley Hunter, "The Marks of Anti-Semitism," *United Church Observer* (March 15, 1941): 10, 28.

Chapter Five
Conclusion

It is estimated that at most 5000 Jewish refugees from Europe were admitted to Canada between 1933 and 1939.[370] Technically prevented from admission by Orders in Council amending Canada's 1910 Immigration Act in response to the catastrophic poverty, unemployment, and drought that crushed the Canadian economy and Canadian well-being during the Depression,[371] Jews fleeing the Nazi regime were further barred from finding sanctuary in Canada due to a deliberately anti-Semitic enforcement of the Immigration Act by the government of William Lyon MacKenzie King through his Immigration Director Frederick Charles Blair.[372] Consistent with the latent and explicit anti-Semitism pervasive in Canadian society at the time, and particularly malignant in Quebec,[373] the closing of the Canadian border to Jewish refugees aroused little concern outside Canada's Jewish community until the violent pogroms of *Kristallnacht* in late 1938 shocked many Canadians into demanding a softening of restrictions by the King government.[374]

Canada's Protestant churches, including The United Church of Canada, likewise remained virtually silent until late 1938, at least at the national and institutional level, reflecting their own embedded anti-Semitism. While a handful of United Church

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[370] Abella and Troper, "The Line," 181. Although Abella and Troper place the number somewhat lower, they concede that the total is unknown. Canada admitted roughly 6000 Jews in total during the 1930s, but a portion of these were from the United States and the United Kingdom.
[371] Knowles, *Strangers,* 106. Google Ebook.
[372] Abella and Troper, *None is Too Many,* 54-56.
[373] Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews,* 192-207. Google Ebook.
[374] Toronto Daily Star, "Vast Throng of Toronto Citizens Fills Maple Leaf Gardens To Protest Nazi Persecution of Jews" and "Jews Sob at Gathering as 20,000 Voice Protest" (Monday, November 21, 1938): 3; Winnipeg Free Press, "Canadians Protest Horrors" (Tuesday, November 22, 1938); Globe and Mail, "Canadian People Protest" (Tuesday November 22, 1938); Halifax Herald, "Theatres Filled by Citizens: Church and Civic Leaders Join in Condemnation of Campaign" (Monday, November 21, 1938; Ottawa Citizen, "Big Canadian Meetings Urge Aid to Refugees" (Monday, November 21, 1938)

statements were made at a denominational level, and the United Church's periodical *The New Outlook* did keep its readers aware of the plight of German Jews as Hitler's regime erased and circumscribed their rights and freedoms and threatened their lives,[375] the contribution of the United Church to the fight to open Canada's closed border was minimal, again until *Kristallnacht* awakened outrage.[376] Nevertheless, scholarship in recent decades has examined more closely even this limited contribution in order to offer a more nuanced understanding of the part played by the churches in what was indisputably Canada's egregious moral failure to respond to a humanitarian crisis.[377] More recently, scholars of Canadian Church History have urged a deinstitutionalizing of this research particularly germane in relation to the non-creedal and non-directive ethos of the United Church, with focus oriented locally and on the work of individuals.[378] The work of this thesis was undertaken in that spirit, with exploration of archival records allowing for new attention to the specifically theological contribution made to the United Church response to the refugee crisis by one United Church clergyman, primarily from the pulpit.

Rev. Ernest Crossley Hunter is invariably listed amongst those United Church clergymen who advocated for, spoke about, or contributed to the efforts to welcome Jewish refugees to Canada. Given his long association with Claris Silcox, his immediate engagement with the work of Senator Cairine Wilson's Canadian National Committee on Refugees, and his ongoing commitment to the Canadian Council for Christians and Jews

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[375] Editorial, "The Limit Has Been Reached," *The New Outlook,* January 22, 1936, 73. Cited by Genezi, *Holocaust,* 44.
[376] "Board of Evangelism and Social Service Report," The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings of General Council 1936*, 85.
[377] Davies and Nefsky, 10. Google Ebook
[378] Jonathan Durance, "Silence and Outrage: Reassessing the Complex Christian Response to Kristallnacht in English-Speaking Canada." *History of Intellectual Culture*. 10, 1 (2012/2013): 7.

it could hardly be otherwise.[379] But while his name has been remembered and his activism noted, awareness of the singularity of his theological contribution to Christian-Jewish relations has been missing. Appreciating this contribution has required the close reading of an archived file of sermons and addresses, delivered week upon week by a working preacher called at once to help his congregation live faithfully day by day, while at the same time deepening their broader understanding of the Christian message. Hunter's personal campaign to deconstruct Christian supercessionism from the late 1920s onward inserted radical new theological content into the traditional Christian doctrine that had prevailed for centuries and continued fundamental in Christian churches, including The United Church of Canada. As an activist, he was no more successful than any of his counterparts in convincing Prime Minister King to open the border. As a preacher, however, he built a theology of Jewish-Christian brotherhood from his Hamilton pulpit, one sermon at a time, that would finally be reflected as a lasting and crucial contribution to United Church theology in the 1997 document *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today*. It only took The United Church of Canada seven decades to produce a formal statement indicating they had caught up with him.[380]

A theological contribution to a social, political, and humanitarian crisis can seem marginal, particularly when even the most passionate activism has been unsuccessful. As early as 1974, however, theologian Rosemary Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* was recognized as ground-breaking in its firm

[379] UCC Archives, Ernest Crossley Hunter Fonds F3137*,* Biographical Information.
[380] "Bearing Faithful Witness," The United Church of Canada, accessed August 2, 2020. https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/What%20We%20Believe%20and%20Why/Ecumenical%20and%20Interfaith%20Relations/Bearing%20Faithful%20Witness%20-%20United%20Church%E2%80%93Jewish%20Relations%20Today.pdf

identification of Christian theology as the fundamental source of anti-Semitism.[381] As she argued, healing the scourge of anti-Semitism cannot be disconnected from attention to the Christian theology that engendered and entrenched it. It is intrinsically a theological endeavour.

It is precisely for this reason that Hunter's contribution ought to be understood not as marginal to United Church efforts in the 1930s but central. As scholars Davies and Nefsky and particularly Genezi have pointed out, even the most passionate advocacy fueled by humanitarianism could still display xenophobic anti-Semitism rooted in and clinging to centuries of anti-Judaic Christianity with its implicit 'othering' of refugees as objects of charity and in its dependence on tropes about Jewish mercantile prowess or a Jewish work ethic. Even the most passionate advocacy from such United Church luminaries as Claris Silcox, J. S. Woodsworth, and J. R. Mutchmor could fail to fully acknowledge or address the Canadian and Christian anti-Semitism that had engendered and entrenched the closed border in the first place.[382] It was this space that Hunter deliberately chose to fill. Although no obvious theological radical, and deeply faithful to his roots in traditional evangelical and revivalist Christianity, Hunter nevertheless anticipated Ruether by decades, not as a scholar but as a preacher. He recognized that anti-Semitism was a Christian theological sin that required a Christian theological repair. He understood Sunday preaching as weighty with potential not only to inspire faithful discipleship, but also to shape and expand his listeners' understanding of the nature of God and of the discipleship into which God called them. He believed that pulpit

[381] Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 30-31, 246.
[382] Haim Genezi, *The Holocaust,* xii. Google Ebook.

exchanges with local Rabbis and Sunday sermons deconstructing Christian supercessionism could change the hearts and minds of listeners, and so he began in this way to challenge the doctrinal foundation of Canadian Christian anti-Semitism fully five years before Hitler seized power in Germany. Even as the refugee crisis deepened his commitment to the direct activism led by Claris Silcox and Senator Cairine Wilson of the Canadian National Committee on Refugees, Hunter's primary contribution continued to centre on appealing to his listeners from a theological perspective, as Christians, urging them to recognize their bond with Jews as brothers in a comparable covenant with God, shaped by the common values proclaimed by Moses and the prophets, and Jesus.

Was he successful? Any hope that he contributed to a theological breakthrough at the institutional level is dampened by analysis of the Statement of Faith produced by The United of Canada in 1940.[383] Crafted only fifteen years after the doctrinal statements of the 1925 Basis of Union as a reflection of the denomination's conviction that "Christians of each new generation are called to state [their faith] afresh in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs,"[384] the 1940 Statement nevertheless provides little evidence that the denomination's awakening to the existential threat facing Europe's Jews had translated into a rethinking of traditional supercessionist theology. With the country at war, this is unsurprising: the denomination's concerted mission to offer "friendly service to the nation" was hardly likely to include any deep appraisal of sinful heritage as Hitler overran France and began bombing Britain; and the 1940 Statement fulfilled its wartime purpose by being both familiar and accessible.[385] Even

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383 "A Statement of Faith ~ 1940," The United Church of Canada, accessed August 11, 2020. www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/statement-of-faith-1940.pdf
384 *Ibid.*
385 Airhart, *Church with the Soul of a Nation,* 156.

had there been an inclination for radical theological change, which there was not, this was not the time to have that debate.[386]

At the local level, it is even more difficult to measure the degree to which those who heard Hunter preach regularly or attended a gathering at which he offered an address altered either their views or their behaviour in response to his words. Certainly the regularity with which he was invited to address Rotary Clubs and other social groups makes it clear that he was highly regarded as a speaker beyond his own congregation, and the length of his tenure at Carlton Street United Church in Hamilton suggests that his ministry was deeply appreciated and valued. Moreover, if the first pulpit exchange with Holy Blossom had been "An Adventure In Understanding" for all involved, the subsequent pulpit exchanges would have required endorsement by the Elders of Carlton Street, which was obviously granted. Also granted, this time by Victoria College in 1934 when Hunter's theological engagement with issues of anti-Semitism was well-established, was a degree of Doctor of Divinity *(honoris causa)* presumably predicated on the College's esteem, and his colleagues re-confirmed this esteem after the war by nominating him to serve as Moderator.[387]

But a fine preacher can be highly regarded for his fine preaching, the content of which is considered by the gathered listeners to be laudable, while nevertheless inspiring not one whit of alteration of perspective or behaviour in those listeners. Even if it were possible to know – which it is not – that those who sat in the Carlton Street pews on

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[386] In a close examination of "A Statement of Faith ~ 1940" with the "Articles of the Basis of Union 1925," I found only one tantalizing hint of a real shift away from supercessionism. "Article VI: Redemption" begins with the words "We believe that in the greatness of His love for man God has in Christ opened up *a* way of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin," (italics mine). It's a stretch, but the traditional language – and the import of that used in 1925 – would have been "*the* way of deliverance."

[387] Victoria College, University of Toronto, "Honorary Degrees Conferred by Senate," accessed August 2, 2020. https://vicu.utoronto.ca/about-victoria/honorary-degrees/honorary-degrees-conferred-by-senate/.

Sunday mornings in the 1930s then challenged their golf clubs to lift barriers against Jewish membership, or never again used the word 'jew' as a verb, or truly began to understand 'Christian' values to be 'Judeo-Christian' values, this would at best be anecdotal evidence of little measurable import. Fortunately, the significance of Hunter's contribution to United Church efforts on behalf of Jewish refugees, and the importance of its recognition to scholarship in this field, is far more straight-forward. At a time when the United Church's denominational response to a moral outrage and a humanitarian crisis had taken five years to heat up to lukewarm, Hunter appears to have been alone in doggedly and deliberately attending to this anti-Semitism not merely as wrong behaviour but as wrong theology. The more nuanced understanding of the Canadian Protestant response to the Jewish refugee crisis that recent scholarship has provided, concentrating as it has on closer reading of denominational records and individual humanitarian activism, is made more complete with the addition of Hunter's theological contribution. Not one of those who fought to open the border to welcome Jewish refugees was successful, but Hunter's fight was for a welcome that would extend beyond the border, grounded in a repaired Christian theology of Jewish-Christian brotherhood that was decades ahead of its time and envisioned a Canada in which "none is too many" would be unthinkable. If his efforts were largely undertaken at a local level, they were nevertheless the efforts of a United Church clergyman held in high regard in a Toronto-centric denomination's Ontario heartland.

Only one piece of Hunter's writing was ever granted a national platform. In "The Marks of Anti-Semitism,"[388] published in 1941 in *The United Church Observer*, he

[388] Ernest Crossley Hunter, "The Marks of Anti-Semitism," *United Church Observer* (March 15, 1941): 10, 28.

delivered to readers a blistering condemnation of anti-Semitism which was a distillation of over a decade of his sermon messages:

> It is an ugly thing... and not only ugly, but it is dangerous... and not only ugly and dangerous, it is wicked. It is utterly and absolutely unchristian, the denial of everything Jesus stood for, kindness and mercy and forgiveness and love... It is a wicked thing, contrary to God, as revealed in the Scriptures and in Jesus Christ.[389]

Writing at a time when it was by no means clear that the Allies would prevail, Hunter was no longer merely preaching against anti-Semitism as sinful, nor challenging it as a barrier to the humanitarian welcome of refugees. Canada and the world were facing an existential crisis themselves. "Nothing would please Hitler or serve his purpose better," he concluded, "than to see the wedge of anti-semitism driven into our Canadian life."[390]

> We Christians had better understand that the things which we cherish are being threatened by this anti-semitic spirit. Jew and Christian ought to stand together, witnessing to our faith in one God... Never was there a day as now when Christian and Jew ought to stand together for those moral and spiritual values that we hold in common, and in so doing we need not compromise the distinctive doctrines of our faith. We are perforce allies.[391]

Christian and Jew alike, Hunter warned, were threatened by the ugliness, the dangerousness, the wickedness of anti-Semitism. If he hoped that all who read his words would at least understand the urgency of overcoming their own anti-Semitic propensities and challenging those of others as part and parcel of the war effort, he had also embedded within his article the essence of the deliberate deconstruction of Christian supercessionism and the theology of brotherhood that was at the heart of his preaching.

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[389] Ernest Crossley Hunter, "The Marks of Anti-Semitism," 10.
[390] *Ibid,* 28.
[391] *Ibid.*

Perhaps some readers would notice and be intrigued. Below the article, a short note was appended in parentheses: "Any readers who are interested in Jewish-Gentile Relations are invited to write to the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews."[392] Ever the evangelical, Hunter never lost his conviction that all great social change happens one person at a time.

[392] Hunter, "The Marks of Anti-Semitism," 28. The Conference of Christians and Jews, founded in 1934 to promote improved relations between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, was reorganized and renamed the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews in 1940, and was led by Claris Silcox for the duration of the war. Hunter had been involved since 1934, along with Silcox and Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath. (Genezi, *Holocaust,* 58. Google Ebook.)

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