

“BUILDING THE NEW JERUSALEM IN CANADA’S GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND”: THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND THE ROOTS OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ACADEMIC SOCIOLOGY IN CANADA, 1889-1921¹

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Abstract. According to the conventional account of the history of English-Canadian sociology, the discipline was established in the 1920s at McGill, followed by developments at Dalhousie, Toronto and elsewhere. I dispute this account by documenting the substantial institutional footprint of so-called “social gospel” sociology in Canada’s Protestant universities and religious colleges, 1889-1921: courses taught; faculty appointments made; programs established. Between 1889 and 1921, 28 men, many of them clerics, taught sociology for two years or more in one of Canada’s English-language universities or Protestant denominational colleges. By 1921, 11 institutions offered sociology courses, 7 institutions had made a dedicated faculty appointment in sociology, and 8 institutions offered a program in sociology. In most cases, their teaching reflected the political – but not theological – principles of the social gospel. I argue that these men are the true pioneers of Canadian sociology and that we should rewrite the first chapter of Canadian sociology to give them their due.

Keywords: social gospel, religion, history of sociology, Canada, intellectuals

Résumé. La présentation conventionnelle de l’histoire de la sociologie canadienne-anglaise soutient que la discipline a été établie dans les années 1920 à

1. I delivered preliminary versions of this essay as the 2013 Pitirim Sorokin Lecture at the University of Saskatchewan and the 2014 Nels Anderson Lecture at the University of New Brunswick (Helmès-Hayes 2013, 2014a). Thanks to the *CJS*’s reviewers for their comments, to the editor, Kevin Haggerty, for his willingness to publish a longer manuscript, and to Philippe Vienne, my colleague at the Free University of Brussels, for translating the abstract.

l'Université McGill, après quoi elle se développa à l'université Dalhousie, à l'université de Toronto et ensuite en d'autres sites universitaires. J'entends ici remettre en question cette version conventionnelle en mettant en évidence les traces institutionnelles significatives laissées par la sociologie relevant du courant du *Social Gospel* (christianisme social), et ce à travers les cours donnés, les postes académiques assurés mais aussi les programmes mis en place dans les universités protestantes du Canada et les collèges religieux du même courant, de 1889 à 1921. Sur cette période, vingt-huit hommes, dont beaucoup étaient des ecclésiastiques, ont enseigné la sociologie pour deux ans au minimum, sinon plus, dans les universités canadiennes de langue anglaise ou les collèges confessionnels protestants. À l'issue de cette période, onze institutions offraient des cours de sociologie, sept institutions avaient opéré un recrutement académique spécifique en sociologie, et huit institutions proposaient un programme d'enseignement en sociologie. Dans la plupart des cas, leur enseignement reflétait les principes politiques – mais non théologiques – inhérents au *Social Gospel*. Je soutiens que ces hommes doivent être considérés comme les authentiques pionniers de la sociologie canadienne et que nous devrions réécrire le premier chapitre de l'histoire de la sociologie canadienne en rendant justice à leur contribution à celle-ci.

Mots clés: évangile social, la religion, l'histoire de la sociologie, du Canada, des intellectuels

INTRODUCTION

In *'A Full-Orbed Christianity'* Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau claim that sociology was “almost totally absent” from the curricula of Canadian universities prior to 1920 (1996: 75). And for years that has been the dominant conception English-language sociologists have held of the history of their discipline. Thus, accounts of the history of English-language academic sociology have all but skipped over the period before 1922, when Carl Dawson was hired at McGill, on the grounds that there is no story to tell. According to this standard chronicle, the pioneers of Canadian university sociology were Carl Dawson and Everett Hughes at McGill, Samuel Henry Prince at Dalhousie, and, somewhat later, S.D. Clark at Toronto (see e.g. re Dawson: Wilcox-Magill 1983; Helmes-Hayes 1985, 1994; Shore 1987; re Prince: Hatfield 1990; re Clark: Hiller 1980, 1982; Harrison 1981, 1983; Campbell 1983c, Nock 1983, 1986). Some sources make passing reference to something called “social gospel sociology” that was taught at a few Protestant denominational colleges early in the century, but historians of the discipline have not paid it detailed attention

(Tomovic 1975; Hiller 1982: 8–11; Campbell 1983a; Helmes-Hayes 1985, 2003a; Shore 1987: 75–80; Brym 1989: 15–16; Valverde 1991: 54, 129; Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 75–6, 83–4, 89; Semple 1996: 274, 351, 375, 393; Cormier 1997).² For all intents and purposes, the period before 1922 has been treated as a footnote, a part of what Robert Brym has referred to as the discipline’s “pre-history” (1989: 15). S. D. Clark dismisses their contribution on the grounds that, in his view at least, they proved irrelevant to the later development of the discipline. “It could hardly be claimed ... that sociology in Canada today owes anything much to the influence of these early sociological pioneers” (1975: 225).³

My archival research shows unequivocally that this account should be amended. Data from university calendars and sundry university and church archival sources regarding 1/ courses taught, 2/ faculty members appointed, and 3/ programs in sociology established, demonstrates that Dawson, Hughes and Prince were not, even in the 1920s, the lonely trailblazers we have understood them to be. It is true that Dawson and Hughes established the first large-scale, systematic program of university-based empirical research⁴ – Dawson’s work on the city, immigration, and Prairie settlement; Hughes’ work on industrialization and ethnic relations in Quebec – but in terms of *teaching* sociology, Dawson, Hughes and Prince were latecomers. By 1921, the year *before* Dawson was hired, sociology was on the curriculum of eleven English-language Canadian universities and colleges. At seven of those institutions, a named appointment, sometimes temporary, had already been made.⁵ By the time Dawson was appointed at McGill, 28 men had already taught sociology for two years or more in one of

2. Christie and Gauvreau point out that as late as 1926–28, despite “strenuous” lobbying by senior church figures in favour of “the introduction of chairs of sociology in theological seminaries,” the United Church resisted. They claim that the only exceptions were the United Theological Colleges in Montreal, Victoria University in Toronto, and Wesley College in Winnipeg (1996: 89).

3. I do not exonerate myself in this regard; until recently, I, too, held to the dominant account (Helmes-Hayes 2002: 83; 2003b: 12).

4. Scholars have discussed research undertaken by social gospellers who were not university or college faculty (Allen 1972 [1911], 1973, 1976; Barber 1972 [1909]; Rutherford 1972 [1897]; Felske 1975; Campbell 1983a; Cook 1985; Fraser 1988; Whitaker 1992; Valverde 1991; Christie and Gauvreau 1996; Cormier 1997; Westhues 2002).

5. By a named appointment I mean the person was hired with the word “sociology” in his job title, even though he might have been appointed in another discipline as well.

Canada's English-language universities or colleges.⁶ It is this group of men who are the true pioneers of academic sociology in English Canada and it is these men who are the subject of this essay.

Most of these individuals (20 of 28) taught in Protestant theological colleges and denominational schools. Given the high cultural profile and personal salience of religion at the time, and the institutional setting in which most of these sociological pioneers worked, the sociology they taught was often influenced by the social gospel. For most of them, sociology was *religious in inspiration and tone* and *reformist and applied in nature*. Their goal was to "Christianize" Canada – to "build the New Jerusalem in Canada's green and pleasant land" (Calvert 2009: 4) – and sociology was a means to that end. Some of those who taught in secular institutions were not as greatly influenced by the specifically religious motivations of so-called "social gospel" sociology as their counterparts who taught at denominational institutions, but they too were often interested in the role sociology could play in helping to understand and remedy social and economic problems of the period. The fact that so-called "social gospel sociology"⁷ was value-laden, unselfconsciously tied to do-gooding in the form of institutional social reform (government policy) and "social service" (what we now call social work) and, above all, Christian in tenor, explains why it has been largely ignored. It is incongruent with current scientific practices and standards in the discipline and, thus, not regarded as real sociology. Hence Brym's label and Clark's dismissal.

However, the urge to describe social gospel as "unscientific" and, therefore, not real sociology, should be resisted, for three reasons.

First, many current schools of sociology – postmodernist, post-structuralist, feminist, Marxist, interpretive – are critical of science as the "gold standard" of disciplinary practice. The raucous debate ignited by

6. Others who taught sociology during the period but for only one year are not included in this analysis. A prominent example is J.S. Woodsworth. Though he never held a faculty position at a Canadian university, Woodsworth kept in touch with faculty members at a number of Canadian colleges and universities, including Wesley College and McGill University. In 1916–17, he gave a course of sociological lectures on "social problems" at the United Theological Colleges in Montreal (*Congregationalist Church of Canada Yearbook 1916–17: 77*). Sociology courses were taught at other institutions as well (e.g. UBC), but the calendars do not indicate who taught them. In these cases, I could document "courses taught" only. Also excluded from the analysis are those who taught sociology at Canada's French- and English-language Catholic colleges and universities (see Hiller 1982: 8–9; Warren 2009). This is likely a small group. Warren has noted that sociology was better institutionalized outside Quebec's universities than inside them (2009: 8)

7. I argue below that the term "social gospel sociology" is a misnomer.

Burawoy's ASA presidential address, "For Public Sociology," (2005a) demonstrates clearly that there is no consensus on the form sociology should take. Moreover, while it is true that social gospel sociology differs substantially from the dominant *current* conception of the discipline, it must be remembered that *at the time* it was considered "real" sociology (Burawoy 2005b, 2005c). Unless we want to become unapologetic presentists, it seems appropriate to understand what they meant by sociology at the time.

Second, for critics, it is above all the religious character of social gospel sociology that disqualifies it from being considered "real sociology." But so-called social gospel sociology was *not exclusively religious*. Historian Michael Gauvreau has noted that during this period some Presbyterian and Methodist clergymen used the term "sociology" as a euphemism for what was basically a rephrased version of traditional evangelical religious beliefs and practices drawn from the Bible (1991: 181–217, espec. 214–7) and some of the 28 men discussed below likely belong in this group. But most do not. In fact, the sociology taught by most of the early proponents of the discipline was secular in two senses: 1/ it was informed by social science (political economy and economics as well as sociology); and 2/ it was guided by secular philosophies and approaches to social reform.⁸

This introduces the third reason why we should be careful about dismissing social gospel sociology as not real sociology because it was a) too religious and b) not scientific enough, in part because it was c) oriented toward social reform rather than being value-free. As Andrew Jewett points out in *Science, Democracy and the American University* (2012), the move to scientize the academy, even in the US, which was ahead of Canada in this respect, was a long way from reaching its goal. Even in more science-influenced disciplines such as economics and political economy, there was a strong moralistic element aimed at making science – both its methods and its findings – the core of new democratic culture. According to these "scientific democrats," "science could make ethical citizens" (3); it "contained within itself the seeds of an egalitarian democratic culture" (7). Without buying holus bolus into Jewett's claim that science is nothing more than a "linguistic category" (5, n. 6), I would argue that he is right to draw our attention to the historically specific meanings of terms such as "science."

8. Sociology instructors at Canadian institutions drew on British and American social science literature, in particular by assigning popular American sociology textbooks as reading. I discuss the complex balance of religious and scientific messages these textbooks contained below.

One must keep in mind that the linguistic categories now used to carve up the world of experience are contingent and fluid rather than fixed and given.... The current equation of the term science with a strictly value-neutral conception of knowledge, along with the narrowing of its boundaries to include only the natural sciences and related technological pursuits, stem from mid-twentieth century intellectual transformations. But that is not the science that most earlier thinkers had in mind when they set out to make America scientific (9).

This broad scientific and reformist conception of the nature and purpose of science in general and sociology in particular was showcased by proponents of the social gospel. Not only did it allow them to draw on the cachet of science, but it fit in with a new conception of the role of clergy then spreading in the Protestant churches. Increasingly, the Protestant denominations regarded ministers not just as spiritual guides but also as men of affairs. They trained new clergy to see themselves as community leaders with a responsibility and mandate to understand and remedy social and economic problems. As a part of this ameliorative effort, clergy were trained to rely on two secular sources of knowledge and guidance: 1/ sociology, the nascent science of society; and 2/ selected practical strategies of reform then being proposed by British New Liberals and American progressives. Such strategies were regarded as “converging” nicely with the “social evangelism” of the social gospel (Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 91; see 75–130 more generally). Woodsworth’s address, “The Wider Evangel,” illustrates the seamlessness of these links. “We should not only find the poor, but should endeavor to change the conditions that lead to poverty.... I firmly believe in scientific Christianity – in performing our Christian duty according to the light that modern science has thrown on social conditions” (LAC, Woodsworth Papers, vol. II, file 6: “The Wider Evangel,” n.d.). In this respect, like its American counterpart, the Canadian sociology of the period should be seen as an early form of “public sociology” (Burawoy 2005a, 2005b; see also the essays in Calhoun (ed.) 2007) that was later superseded as Canadian sociology secularized, professionalized, and scientized.

Long before Carl Dawson was hired at McGill, colleges and universities across Canada offered courses in sociology. This sociology, heretofore largely ignored by historians of the discipline, deserves a detailed accounting, for it constitutes the proper “first chapter” of the history of English-language Canadian sociology. This brings me to the purposes of my paper.

Purpose and rationale

My paper has two basic purposes:

1. To insert a new opening chapter into the existing account of the history of Canadian English-language academic sociology.

The current account is inaccurate because it all but overlooks the contributions of a substantial number of scholars who taught sociology in Canada's English-language universities and colleges during the period 1889–1921. I correct this oversight by documenting the substantial institutional presence of sociology – courses taught, faculty members hired, programs established – in the post-secondary educational system of the time. This gives long overdue credit to heretofore unrecognized pioneers of Canadian sociology while beginning to fill a gap in our account of the history of the discipline. I begin the analysis in 1889 because that is the date sociology first appeared in a Canadian university calendar. I chose 1921–22 as the cut-off date because the following year (1922) Dawson was hired to teach sociology and direct the social service program at McGill. This event is generally regarded as the origin of academic sociology in the English-language university system.

One caution. While it is important to acknowledge the collective contribution of these pioneers and to document the widespread institutionalization of sociology in the curricula of colleges and universities across the country, I do not want to overstate my case. If some colleges established a multi-course “program” in sociology, most did not. In fact, sociology most often appeared as a secondary subject within a broad-based curriculum in theology – sometimes no more than one course involving one book or a small set of books. This reflects the colleges' purpose in introducing sociology into the curriculum. Their goal was not to institutionalize sociology; unlike Dawson at McGill, they were not on a mission to establish sociology as an independent discipline. Rather, their goal was to give students an understanding of social problems and to provide them with an intellectual and political tool they could use in their efforts to Christianize the nation. It is likewise important to appreciate that not all 28 of the men discussed below were equally interested in and knowledgeable about sociology. For at least a third of them sociology was likely either a passing interest or (more likely) a temporary assignment foisted on them by a college or university president.

That said, several universities and colleges decided sociology was important enough to add to an already full curriculum. Likewise, many of the men discussed below took seriously the ideas of sociology and

made a long-term commitment to teaching the subject (see Table 3). Beyond that, some became involved in church organizations and/or worked for government agencies that attempted to realize a modest, liberal version of the social gospel. They believed in the capacity and right of the collectivity to right the moral wrongs of an urbanizing, industrializing Canada and adopted sociology as a means to achieve that goal.

2. To argue that we should reconsider the label we have used historically to talk about so-called “social gospel sociology.”

There is no question that most members of this generation of sociologists were influenced by the Protestant social gospel. Thus, I outline the elements of the social gospel – theological and political – and describe the nature and purpose of sociology as it was understood by proponents of the doctrine. In the United States scholars have examined the social gospel in detail (see, e.g. Visser’t Hooft 1928; Hopkins 1940; Miller 1960; Handy, ed. 1966; Oberschall 1972; Kloppenberg 1986; Phillips 1996; Smith 2000). Historians of the American discipline have analyzed the relationship between sociology and the social gospel (see, e.g. Morgan 1966, 1969, 1970; Oberschall 1972; Hadden, Longino and Reed, Jr 1974; Swatos 1983, 1984, 1989; Vidich and Lyman 1985; Lampers-Wallner 1991; Greek 1992; Smith 2003; Evans 2009; Abbott 2010; Jewett 2012). In Canada, however, historians of the discipline have largely ignored the social gospel and its influence on academic sociology (see Sections II and III). One unexpected but noteworthy finding of my analysis is that the use of the term “social gospel sociology” to describe the subject that was taught in Canada’s Protestant English-language universities and colleges between 1889 and 1921 – indeed, throughout the 1920s – is, technically, a misnomer. Most of the scholars who taught sociology during this period were *influenced by the political-economic ideas* of the social gospel, but none of them appears to have adopted the *theological principles* of the social gospel. Indeed, most of the so-called “social gospel sociology” taught during this period was a form of mildly reformist applied Christian sociology more accurately, if clumsily, labeled “progressive Protestant evangelical sociology.”

Structure of the paper

Section II provides a ‘primer’ about the social gospel. It describes the historical context within which social gospel sociology developed and describes the theology and practice of the movement. Section III describes the place and role of sociology in the social gospel movement in

Canada in the early twentieth century. Section IV reports archival evidence regarding: 1. courses taught; 2. faculty members appointed; and 3. programs established (1889-90 to 1921-22). The conclusion analyses the political character of the social gospel sociology of the period.

II: THE SOCIAL GOSPEL IN CANADA: A PRIMER

The social gospel came to Canada from Europe and, more directly, the United States. To understand its impact on Canadian society, Canadian universities, and the development of academic sociology in Canada, it is necessary to understand not just considerable church history but also much nineteenth-century theology and philosophy. Especially noteworthy are the Protestant churches' respective theological and practical responses to three sets of events: 1/ the rise of science, especially Charles Darwin's writings (1859, 1870); 2/ the development of scholarly literary and historical criticism of the Bible; and 3/ the growth of widespread social problems that bedeviled Canadian society during the period. In the pages below, I assess the influence of the social gospel on the universities, in particular, its impact on the development of academic sociology. My review of hundreds of period course calendars from two dozen universities and colleges, combined with research in church and university archival collections, reveals that sociology was a central aspect of the Protestant churches' collective response to these three events. To understand the problems the churches faced, and to see how sociology came to be part of their coping strategy, it helps to appreciate the economic, social, political, and intellectual context within which they operated.

Societal context

Between 1895 and 1930, Canada industrialized rapidly. During the same period, its population grew from 4.3 million to 10.4 million, largely due to massive immigration. Most growth occurred in the cities; Canada's urban population grew over 500%, to 5.6 million, so that by 1931 over half the nation's population lived in urban centres (Statistics Canada, *Historical Statistics of Canada*, Population Series A1–247: Series A1: Estimated population of Canada, 1867–1977) and Series A67–69: Population, urban and rural, census dates 1871–1976). These three developments – large-scale industrialization, mass immigration, and rapid urbanization – created serious, widespread social problems that drew the attention of social reformers, religious and secular alike. Among the most prominent of these groups were the Protestant churches. At the time, about half of Canadians were Protestant and, outside of Quebec, Canada was overwhelmingly a

Protestant nation: about 80%.⁹ The Protestant denominations adopted agendas and strategies of social change that differed from region to region and evolved over time, but collectively Protestants constituted a powerful constituency that had a substantial impact on the development of Canada's welfare state (Christie and Gauvreau 1996). Most consequential of the religious ideas that underpinned their efforts at social reform, in particular the development of the welfare state, was the social gospel.

Theology and practice

The social gospel departed radically from traditional Protestant doctrine. According to long-standing theology and practice, the church's first purpose was to save *individual* souls via evangelization; i.e. to get people to convert to Christianity and follow a pious life in the here and now with the promise of immortality as their reward. They regarded the social problems of the secular world as secondary and derivative, the consequence of widespread sin. Once people adopted Christian beliefs and acted with a proper Christian "character," social problems would disappear. *Social regeneration* would take place automatically.

Social gospelers rejected this view of the place of Christian *conversion* in the process of Christianizing the social order. Following the writings of American reformers such as Washington Gladden (1887), Francis Peabody (1900, 1909), Walter Rauschenbusch (1907, 1912, 1917) and, in Canada, J.S. Woodsworth (1972 [1909], 1972 [1911]) and Salem Bland (1973 [1920]), social gossellers argued that the churches should worry less about saving souls for the hereafter and worry more about creating the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth in the here and now. They pointed out that the prosecution of many successful evangelical "campaigns" (Airhart 1992: 127, see also 78–93) had done little to solve social problems. Indeed, they argued that *social regeneration* was *at least as important as* and would have to *precede rather than follow individual regeneration*. They acknowledged that individuals had faults that led to sinful behaviour, but reminded traditionalist members of the pious middle and upper classes that in many respects people were products of their environment. Where people's life circumstances exposed them to unemployment, poverty, degradation, and crime, they would likely fall prey to sin (Shore 1987: 76; see also Valverde 1991: 132–34). Without fundamental changes to the Canadian economy and other faulty institutions, including the church, citizens

9. Forty per cent were Catholic; the rest held other faiths, or none (re 1901, see Airhart 1992: Appendix p. 148; re 1931, see Statistics Canada, Section A: Population and Migration: Series A, Table A164: Principal religious denominations of the population, census dates, 1871 to 1971," [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-516-X/sectiona/A164_184-eng.csv; accessed 21 December 2012]).

would lack the economic, political, and moral wherewithal to realize the task of regeneration. “A starving, exploited family living in a slum was not in a position to contemplate heavenly salvation; only a truly just society could produce good individuals” (Semple 1996: 351). Or, as Woodsworth put it in a 1915 article in *The Grain Growers’ Guide*: “At least in this world, souls are always incorporated in bodies, and to save a man, you must save his body, soul and spirit. To really save one man, you must transform the community in which he lives” (cited MacInnis, 1953: 91).

There is a longstanding debate regarding the popularity and influence of the social gospel – the dates of its rise and fall, if and when it became influential within and across denominations and in various regions of the country, etc. Indeed, there are disputes about who should be counted as a social gospeler – and I return to this point below. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that social gospel ideas increased in popularity and reached the zenith of their influence in Canada between 1918 and 1925 when, especially in the Methodist Church, the social gospel became the official doctrinal orientation and guide to practical social service activities (e.g. Royce 1940; Christie 1955; Allen, 1968, 1972, 1973, 1976, 1985, 2008; Bliss, 1968; Forbes 1971; Markell 1971; Carder 1973; Felske 1975; Crysedale, 1976; Brookes 1977; Emery, 1977; Ellis 1977, 1988; Russell 1978; Fraser 1979, 1988; Moir 1980; Campbell 1983a; Marshall 1985, 1992; Grant 1988; Rawlyk 1988, 1990; Scott 1989, 1996; Cook 1991, 1997; Elliott 1991; Manson 1991; Airhart, 1992: 105–11; Feltmate 1993; Boudreau 1996, 1997; Burke 1996; Christie and Gauvreau 1996; Semple, 1996: 345–55; Stebner 2001, 2003; Hunt 2002; Riggins 2012).

However, while Protestants agreed that Canadian society should be reformed, they never came to a consensus about the degree and kind of social change required to Christianize Canada. By the time World War I broke out there were three different groups of reformers gathered under the ‘big tent’ of the social gospel (Allen 1973). These groups – conservative, liberal, radical – constituted a continuum.

At one end were the conservatives, traditional evangelicals minimally influenced by the theology and political-economic ideas of the social gospel. For them, peoples’ morals, not institutions, were the problem. They identified sin with individual moral decisions and, thus, concentrated their efforts on issues such as temperance, prostitution, “illegitimacy,” and gambling, all of which they gathered under the heading of “social purity” (Valverde 1991). Insofar as they focussed on secular issues, they kept front and centre the idea that the church had a sacred mission as a “soul saving institution” (Boudreau 1997: 130; citing Rev. E. E. Daley). They were uninterested in issues of economic exploitation and inequality and resisted efforts to change the economic system.¹⁰

10. The same situation held in the United States. William Hutchison notes that to be a religious reformer did not mean one was a progressive and did not imply

In the middle, and comprising the majority were liberal social gospelers. Liberals had a more structuralist and progressive understanding of the causes and of solutions to social problems and were distressed to varying degrees by the excesses, abuses and shortcomings of capitalism – greed, political corruption, the unethical treatment of workers, etc. Nonetheless, they regarded the system-as-constituted as basically sound. The economic and political institutions that constituted the foundations of Canadian society needed to be adjusted, not dismantled. For advice on matters of social reform, they looked to American progressivism and British New Liberalism (Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 91–5) as well as the social gospel. In their collective view, the most practical means of dealing with social problems – child welfare, minimum wages, prison reform, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, etc. – was an expanded interventionist and welfare state.¹¹ However, even during the heyday of the social gospel, liberals were cautious reformers committed more to social order than social change (re Methodists, see Semple 1996: 349–54; re Baptists, see Moir, 1980; re Presbyterians, see Fraser, 1979, 1988, especially xii; re Anglicans, see Pulker, 1986; see also McKay 2008: 217).

On the left of the continuum – and in a distinct minority – were radicals, full-fledged theological social gospelers such as Bland and Woodsworth. They had little patience for the half-measures proposed by their cautious Protestant colleagues and argued that there could be no personal salvation without social salvation. They demanded sweeping changes immediately be made to Canada's economic and political system (Rutherford 1972 [1897]; Cook 1985; Phillips 1996). The best-known statement of this radical view was a set of resolutions adopted by the otherwise moderate Methodist Church of Canada at its General Conference in Hamilton in 1918. At that remarkable event, the Methodists endorsed a slate of motions that: i) “condemned special privilege, autocratic business organization, profiteering, and all unearned wealth”; ii) called for “the development of democratic forms of industrial organization”; iii) advocated “the nationalization of natural resource industries, means of communication and transportation and public utilities”; and iv) spoke in favour of the establishment of an old age pension scheme (Allen 1973: 73). More remarkable still, they appeared to all but abandon the evangelical emphasis on changing individuals by claiming that the “moral perils inherent in the

that one was a social gospel; many period movements of “religious social reform” such as temperance were conservative (1976: 165 n. 36; cited Airhart 1992: 104). Re Canada, see Valverde (1991) and Airhart (1992).

11. On reform movements of the period, see Cook (1985) and McKay (2008). On the New Liberalism, see Freedon (1978), Clarke (1978), Collini (1979) and Allett (1981); on its impact in Canada, see Ferguson (1993) and Phillips (1996). On the role played by the Protestant churches in pressing for social reform and building the interventionist state, see Christie and Gauvreau (1996).

system of production for profit” were so dire that “the system,” not individuals, should be the focus of change. “Nothing less than a transference of the whole economic life from a basis of competition and profit to one of cooperation and service,” they argued, would do (*Methodist Journal of Proceedings 1918*: 341–2; cited Allen, 1973: 74).

It is important to appreciate these differences of political and economic opinion, for they constituted true divisions among reformist Protestants. But just as important were their theological differences.

The social gospel was a theological view concerning the relative importance and temporal priority of social regeneration versus personal regeneration. If one adopted the doctrine of the social gospel in its full sense, it was axiomatic that substantial structural change was a temporal and spiritual priority. Capitalist society would have to be fundamentally transformed, perhaps dismantled, before widespread personal regeneration could take place. Nothing less would create an environment capable of producing sound Christians. While Allen and others have demonstrated that the influence of the social gospel spread widely among Protestant believers at the time, most of those to whom we have traditionally attached the label “social gospellers” did not adopt the “social gospel” as a *theological* principle. Certainly, few were politically radical. Indeed, true radicals such as Woodsworth and Bland charged, and rightly, that the Protestant establishment had come to be both a cause and a symbol of the problems of the age. It had abandoned true Christianity for “churchianity” – a falsely pious, formal, conservative style of living and worship mired in the self-serving biases of the well-to-do (Bland, 1973 [1920]; Cook 1985: 192; McKay 2008: 99, 237–9). Caring for one’s neighbour had always been an integral part of what was expected of the committed Christian, but the individualistic ethic of Protestantism, when practised in conjunction with the competitive, individualistic ethic of capitalism, had led people to focus on personal piety and economic success at the expense of social service and social regeneration (Semple, 1996: 334–62 *passim*). According to radicals such as Woodsworth, Protestants, especially wealthy Protestants, were just as likely to be advocates of Andrew Carnegie’s “gospel of wealth” (1889) as Walter Rauschenbusch’s “social gospel” (1907, 1912, 1917).

These theological and political-economic distinctions among social gospellers are an important element of my discussion of the early institutionalization of academic sociology. Most of those who taught sociology in Canada’s Protestant denominational colleges and universities were moderates. There is no evidence that any of them adopted the theology of the social gospel or became political radicals on the model of Bland or Woodsworth. As such, their priorities were two-fold: 1/ to convince their students that the pious, regenerated individual had a moral obligation to engage in ameliorative social and economic activities; and 2/ to serve in

ways that would model appropriate behaviour for students and the wider public. However, while none was a “true” social gospeller, all emphasized that institutional reform should be a core aspect of the Christianizing efforts of the church *and each of its members*. For too long Christians had emphasized individual piety. If humanity were to be redeemed, they said, Christians would have to draw on more than “God’s providence and personal virtue.” Much work needed to be done to clean up politics, deal meaningfully with social problems, and reorganize the economy on a sound moral and scientific basis. As they moved forward, Protestant reformers argued, they would need to avail themselves of “the techniques of science, sociology and education” (McLeod 1985: 1).

III: THE PLACE AND ROLE OF SOCIOLOGY IN THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

By the time the Protestant churches began to incorporate sociology into the curricula of their respective denominational colleges in the early twentieth century, the Christian apologetics that had once made the Bible all but unassailable had been successfully challenged by scientists, historians, and literary theorists. Much of what was in the Bible, and much of what had previously passed muster as Christian apologetics, came to be regarded as either demonstrably wrong or open to multiple interpretations. For their part, theologians had answered back, either denying scientific findings and claims about the Bible and Christian beliefs or incorporating them into new Christian apologetics (see, e.g., McKillop 1979; Armour and Trott 1981; Berger 1985; Cook 1985; Gauvreau 1991; Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 79–81). And in some respects they had been successful. So powerful was Christianity as a worldview, so much were scientists influenced by this aspect of their cultural heritage, and so thoughtful were the new apologetics (see Gauvreau 1991), that many came to regard theology and natural science as “complementary” rather than competing or mutually exclusive endeavours. In Gauvreau’s words, “a common context of understanding” developed among many clergymen and scientists according to which “Protestant ministers claimed for theology the status of a science, and scientists professed the religious nature of their inquiries” (1991: 60–1). This consensus did not really come under fire in the church colleges until the early part of the 20th century.

It makes sense that in such an environment the sociology social gospellers adopted combined religion and science. For them, sociology was both an *intellectual orientation* and a *tool*. As an intellectual orientation, it stressed the collective, organic character of society and pinpointed the source of social problems in the structure of the social system rather than the character of individual persons. This made sociology an ideal orientation for the Protestant churches as they tried to intercede in a world that

needed Christian guidance at a time when secularization seemed ever more imminent. As a part of their strategy to influence social, economic and political developments, and simultaneously retain the social prestige and overarching political influence they had long enjoyed, progressive Protestant church leaders and clergymen turned their attention away from theological and philosophical argumentation toward what they referred to as “practical theology” or “applied Christianity.” This is where sociology as a tool came in. The churches introduced sociology – often an explicitly practical version of the discipline allied to social service – into the curricula of their denominational colleges and theological schools because they regarded it as a scientific discipline that could help them in their fight against social evils (Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 75–6, 89).¹² Note the following remarks by Samuel Dwight Chown, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church of Canada 1910–25, in his lecture, “The Preacher’s Study of Sociology”:

A minister without a working knowledge of social problems is seriously out of joint with the times.... Sociology has a supreme claim upon the minister, for it is undoubtedly the crowning science... [F]or the sake of the truest culture, for the completion of the science of theology, to get in touch with the forces now molding the culture, and to produce great leaders in social movements, the church of Christ must make ample provision for the study of sociology (United Church Archives, Samuel Dwight Chown Papers, Box 13, file 378: 8–9).

But sociology’s role as a tool was to be far greater than this. Not only would it provide a way of understanding social structures, processes, and problems, it would serve as a moral and practical guide to social betterment activities – what they called “the social task.” The churches could best do God’s work by applying practical, science-based sociological knowledge in the form of “social service” (social work) to the solution of Canada’s social problems.¹³

By 1914, “the social task” had come to rank equally with “evangelism” in the “official hierarchy of concerns of the Methodist and Presbyter-

12. Christie and Gauvreau argue that in their efforts to keep the nation “sacred” and counteract the secularization of Canadian society the Protestant churches attempted to “break down all distinctions between the sacred and the secular.” In so doing, they “provided [a] crucial rationale for the extension of the minister’s calling into the fields of politics, university teaching, and social reform activism” (1996: 100; emphasis added). They cite Carl Dawson as an example.

13. On the complicated relationship between the university settlement movement at the University of Toronto, based on the idealist philosophy of T.H. Green and Arnold Toynbee, and the halting development of academic programs in social science, social work and sociology 1888-1937, see Burke (1996).

ian churches” (Allen 1973: 12). All four denominations had established committees of social service and joined, first, the Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada (MSRCC) in 1907 and, subsequently, its successor, the Social Service Council of Canada (SSCC), when it was formed out of the MSRCC in 1914 (Allen 1973: 37, 70 and Pulker 1986: 26, 31).

This shift toward a social gospel-style worldview had an impact on the curriculum offered in the denominational colleges. By 1921, all the denominations had inserted sociology into their curricula. Theology and divinity students, those studying for various licences and certificates that would allow them to become clergymen, were required to take sociology. At a minimum, the colleges intended these courses to provide students with an awareness of the importance of social structural forces as determinants of behavior. But most of them also directed students’ attention to social problems and their solutions, often by focusing on practical social service activities. According to Christie and Gauvreau, faculty teaching such courses “eschewed” so-called value-freedom in favour of an “empirical” sociology “firmly anchored to the pursuit of an ethical standard and the advocacy of ... reform explicitly animated by the concerns of social Christianity” (1996: 75–6; see Jewett 2012). To this end, they made students aware of the utility of the social survey. Some courses even included a formal component on how to prosecute a social survey. Victoria’s program is a good example. It required candidates for the ministry to take “Sociology”: “The probationer is to make a study of the social, moral, and religious condition of his field along the lines of a questionnaire supplied by the College.” Suggested reading: *Rural Survey of the County of Huron (VicUC 1915–16: 21, 24)*. In 1920, Charlotte Whitton, in her capacity as assistant secretary to J. G. Shearer of the Social Service Council of Canada, produced detailed guidelines for the prosecution of social surveys, urban and rural, in a nineteen-page document entitled *The Community Survey: A Basis for Social Action* (LAC, Canadian Council of Churches, MG 28 I 327 vol. 32, file 35; see also Christie and Gauvreau, 1996: 179–80).

This is not to say that the cleric-professors teaching sociology in Canada’s Protestant theological colleges and universities carried out such surveys. They had neither the resources nor the time to do so – and research was not expected of them in any case. Such surveys as were undertaken were carried out either by wealthy individuals (see Ames 1972 [1897]) or, more commonly, by a group funded by one or more of the churches (see Campbell 1983a: 21–2, 1983b: 58–62; Christie and Gauvreau, 1996: 178–86).¹⁴ Note, for example, the series of over a dozen social surveys carried out in urban and rural communities across the country in 1913–14 under the auspices of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches (UCA, Methodist

14. Christie and Gauvreau (1996: 179) note that the Protestant churches “far out-distanced the universities” in terms of the number and sophistication of the surveys they produced early in the century.

Church of Canada and Presbyterian Church in Canada, Reports of ... Social Surveys, 1913–1914; see also Campbell 1983b: 58–62; Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 165–96; Hunt, 2002). In 1918, they founded their own journal, *Social Welfare*, which informed readers about recent publications in economics, sociology, social work, etc., and reported on social betterment activities carried out across the country. Not only did they draw on the systematic empiricism of sociology, but they drew unabashedly on the growing body of scientific sociological literature, especially textbooks, then being produced in the United States and England. The churches saw no disjunction, then, between their efforts in aid of social change driven by religious moral imperatives and the use of scientific sociology. In Chown's words, "sociology was not meant to displace traditional theology; rather its aim was to 'complete the circle of scientific theology' by amplifying the minister's commitment to the new 'social morality'" (UCA, S.D. Chown Papers, Box 13, file 378: "The Preacher's Study of Sociology," n.d.). As a result, by 1921 sociology was well established in many of English Canada's denominationally based universities and colleges.

IV: THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF "SOCIAL GOSPEL" SOCIOLOGY: ARCHIVAL EVIDENCE

In the following pages I outline my findings regarding a) sociology courses taught, b) faculty members appointed, and c) programs in sociology established, 1889–1921. Before doing so, however, a caveat: Course descriptions and lists of course texts published in university calendars are useful indicators of a course's likely orientation, but few course lectures from the period survive¹⁵ and, thus, it is perilous to draw too-firm conclusions about early sociology offerings.

Courses taught

Courses in this period were of two types; i.e. those with a sociological component but not titled sociology, and those titled "sociology." First to appear, with one exception, were *courses with some sociological content or component, but not titled sociology*.¹⁶ Calendar descriptions for such courses made explicit mention of "sociological themes," a "sociological

15. To date I have discovered only one source from the period; i.e. "Living Together: A Study of the Social Life of Canada" [n.d.], an unpublished volume written by the Rev. J. H. Riddell. Riddell's book appears to have been based on lectures he delivered at Wesley College, United College, and the University of Manitoba (handwritten notation on draft ms of "Living Together," signed by G. B. King) (University of Winnipeg Archives, AC-17-3).

16. The exception is a course called "Christian Ethics and Sociology" taught at Wesley College, Winnipeg beginning in 1896 (see below).

orientation,” or listed a sociological book among the course readings. Nine such courses had been offered at seven universities by 1908. A good example is a first-year course offered by the Rev. Byron Crane Borden at Mount Allison in 1895–6. The typically brief course description reads as follows: “Walker’s *Advanced Political Economy* [1874], Gide’s *Principles of Political Economy* [1891]. These works will be supplemented by lectures on Canadian Banking Law, Sociology, and the various modern problems of applied economics (3 hours a week)” (*MtAUC 1895–96*: 27). Another example is an untitled, required “Honor course” taught to third-year economics students by John Freeman Tufts at Acadia in 1899: “The work in this course will be along sociological lines as represented by the following works or their equivalents: Kidd, *Social Evolution* [1895]; Fairbanks, *Introduction to Sociology* [1896]; Schaffle, *Quintessence of Socialism* [1890]” (*AcUC 1899–1900*: 20). Philosopher John Watson at Queen’s did not use the word “sociology” in his course outline, but he did list Auguste Comte’s *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (6 vols. 1830–42) among the readings for the PhD program in Mental and Moral Philosophy (*QUC 1889–1990*: 54–5). Indeed, Watson drew on Comte and Spencer as early as 1880 because examination questions referred to their work (*QUC 1880–1*: 108–9; *QUC 1882–3*: 136; *QUC 1883–4*: 143; *QUC 1884–5*: 125; *QUC 1886–7*: n.p.; exams in “Mental and Moral Philosophy”).¹⁷ Another example is political economist John Davidson at UNB who listed F.H. Giddings’ *Principles of Sociology* (1895) among the readings for a third-year political economy course (*UNBC 1899–1900*: 52).

Of the nine courses, six were taught at denominational institutions, two of which were Baptist (McMaster, Acadia), one Presbyterian (Queen’s), and one Methodist (Mt. Allison).¹⁸ In each case, the person teaching the course had completed formal training in theology and was a qualified clergyman. Likewise, in all cases, the courses were offered as part of a program in theology, philosophy, economics or political economy. All of the institutions that established sociology in this way retained it thereafter, though in altered form, as a course with “sociology” in the title.

17. It is impossible to tell if Watson referred to their specifically sociological writings as opposed to their more philosophical works. A.B. McKillop notes that Watson espoused a form of philosophy predicated on the idea that individuals had to recognize the existence of a social good to which they should subordinate their personal desires (1979: 196–200). In this respect and others, McKillop argues, he helped build the “intellectual foundations” of the social gospel (217; see 216–28 more generally).

18. I list only four institutions because both Acadia and Mt. Allison offered two such courses in different fields/departments of study (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: Courses with sociology in the course description, by year initially offered, 1889–1890/1908–09¹

Year	Instn (Denom)	Instructor (C if clergy)	Discipline/ Course	Dept
1889–1890	Qu (Pres)	Watson, J. (C)	Mental/Moral Phil	Phil
1895–6	MtA (Meth)	Borden, B. (C)	Labour Problems	PolEco
1896–7	McM (Bap)	Newman, A. (C)	Pol Eco	PolEco
1898–9	Ac (Bap)	Kierstead, E. (C)	Moral Phil	Phil
1898–9	MtA (Meth)	Paisley, C. (C)	Ethics/Xian Evid	Th
1899–1900	Ac (Bap)	Tufts, J.	Eco	Hist/PolEco
1899–1900	UNB (Sec)	Davidson, J. (C)	Pol Eco	Phil/PolEco
1904	McG (Sec)	Caldwell, W.	Appl Ethics	Phil
1908	OnAgC (Sec)	LeDrew, H.H.	Eco	Eco

TOTAL = 9

¹. Course not titled sociology, but has “sociology/sociological” in the course description or lists a sociology book in the course readings. Denomination refers to the denomination of the institution. “Sec” means the university or college was a secular institution at the time the course in question appeared.

By 1921, *courses titled sociology* had been taught at sixteen universities, church colleges and schools of theology, the first by the Rev. John Henry Riddell at Wesley College, Winnipeg, in 1896. Of the sixteen institutions where a course titled sociology was taught at some point before 1922¹⁹, twelve were denominationally based religious schools where the social gospel likely had considerable influence.

Of the twelve denominationally based institutions, four were Presbyterian, three Baptist, three Methodist, three Presbyterian, one Congregationalist, and one Anglican. This denominational distribution is not what one would expect.²⁰ The conventional understanding is that in Canada it was the Baptists and Methodists who introduced sociology into the universities (Shore 1987: 75; Valverde 1991: 45; Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 82–3, 89). The social gospel was influential for part of the period 1908–1921 at three secular institutions as well (Manitoba Agricultural College, Ontario Agricultural College, UNB). The sociology courses offered at each institution were taught by professors influenced by the social gospel (Rev. R.W. Murchie at Manitoba Agricultural College taught sociology 1916–21; Alex MacLaren taught sociology at the Ontario Agricultural College, 1916–1920²¹; and Rev. W. C. Keirstead taught sociology 1919–21²²). Of the 16 institutions where sociology was offered before

19. Queen's, Manitoba College, Robertson College (University of Alberta) and Wesley College had offered courses at some point before 1922, but the courses were in abeyance in 1921–22. From 1899–1903, the Rev. Graham Taylor likely taught Christian sociology at the Congregational College of Canada in Montreal. He was appointed as a lecturer in “Christian Sociology” in 1899 (*Congregational Church of Canada Yearbook 1899–1900*: 150). He came to Canada from Chicago where he had established the first department of Christian sociology in an American theological school (at the Chicago Theological Seminary, beginning 1892) (“Taylor, Graham,” The Social Welfare Project: <http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/people/taylor-graham> (accessed 5 May 2015)). However, available sources (Congregational Church of Canada Yearbooks) do not offer a list of courses taught during his time in Montreal.

20. In 1912, Robertson College, a Presbyterian theology college affiliated with the University of Alberta, offered a course in “Philosophy, Ethics and Sociology” (*UABC 1912–13*: 92). I have recorded the course as offered at a Presbyterian institution, despite the fact that the University of Alberta was a secular institution. While it is not clear who taught the course, one possibility is the Rev. J. H. Riddell, the principal of the University of Alberta's Methodist-affiliated Alberta College, and formerly the principal of Wesley College, Winnipeg. Riddell had introduced sociology at Wesley in 1895–96 (see Table 2). Alberta College and Robertson College shared faculty.

21. See MacLaren (1917) re his strong attachment to the principles of the social gospel.

22. Keirstead taught sociology under the title “honour course” from 1919–20 to 1921–22. In 1922–23, he began to offer it under the title “sociology” (*UNBC 1919–20*: 42–43; *UNBC 1922–23*: 42).

1922, the courses at 10 of them were taught by Protestant clergy. Given a) the prevalence of social gospel ideas in the Protestant churches at the time, b) information about course content available from course descriptions and reading lists, and c) evidence from secondary sources, there is little doubt that the sociology of the period was deeply influenced by the Christian meliorist ideas of the social gospel.

TABLE 2: First courses with sociology in title, by year initially offered, 1896–97/1921–22

Year	Insttn	Instructor	Clergy	Denom ¹
1896	WesC	Riddell, J.H.	C	Meth
1899	CCC	Taylor, G.	C	Cong
1906	McM	McCrimmon, A.L.		Bap
1908	Ac	Tufts, J.F.		Bap
1908	PresC(McG)	Scrimger, J.	C	Pres
1909	Bran	Mode, P.G.	C	Bap
1910	Qu	Skelton, O.D.		Pres
1912	RobC (AB)	NK	C	Pres
1915	VicU(TO)	Dean, S.W.	C	Meth
1916	MtA	Borden, B.C.	C	Meth

¹. Denomination of the institution, not the course instructor. Ordinarily, instructors at denominational colleges were members of the denomination; indeed, often clergy. However, there were exceptions; the Reverend J. W. Macmillan, a Presbyterian, was hired at Toronto's Victoria University, a Methodist institution. "Sec" means the institution was a secular institution when the course first appeared. "NK" means not known.

1916	ManAgC	Murchie, R.W.	C	Sec
1917	ManC	Macmillan, J.W.	C	Pres
1919	UNB	Keirstead, W.C.	C	Sec
1920	OnAgC	LeDrew, H.H.		Sec
1921	UWO	Brown, W.J.		Angl
1921	UBC	Beckett, S.E.		Sec
TOTAL = 16			10	

That said, it is somewhat surprising, given the Christian institutional settings and Christian orientation of most of the course instructors, that at only two institutions did the titles of the first courses in sociology betray an obviously Christian orientation; i.e. “Christian Ethics and Sociology,” offered by the Rev. J. H. Riddell at Wesley College, Winnipeg in 1896 (*WCC 1896-7*: 61) and “Christian Ethics and Practical Sociology” offered by the Rev. S. W. Dean at Victoria University, Toronto in 1915 (*VicUC 1915-16*: 14). In both cases, the course text employed was Newman Smyth’s *Christian Ethics* (1892). The use of this volume, which adopts a traditional individualist orientation to piety (leavened with ethical admonitions about the importance of good works), suggests that any social gospel content the course had, would have been injected by the instructor. The social service focus of the program at Victoria – the Rev. Dean was appointed as a “Special Lecturer in Applied Sociology” and students were required to work in a settlement house²³ – indicates that this is exactly what happened.

Other Christian-oriented courses did not have a religious title, but revealed their orientation in the course description. Note, for example, the brief calendar description – a one-book reading list, really – for “Sociology,” a course required of BDiv candidates at Presbyterian College (McGill)²⁴ beginning in 1908–09: “F.G. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question* [1900]” (*PresCC 1908–09*: 18). The course instructor

23. Dean was Superintendent of the Fred Victor Mission and Secretary of Church Extension, 1909–19 (UCA, Biographical File: S. W. Dean).

24. Presbyterian College was one of three Protestant denominational colleges – the others were Congregational College of Canada and Wesleyan College of Canada – which were affiliated with McGill for many years in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1912, they combined to create United Theological College, sharing resources and faculty and offering joint courses (McGill

listed is the Rev. John Scrimger, Principal and Professor of Systematic Theology. It is possible, but unlikely, this was a true course, a series of lectures, despite the fact it was listed as one of the “subjects” that honours students were required to take as part of the curriculum for the B.D. program. Rather, students likely read the book on their own and then sat the formal examination set by Scrimger (*PresCC 1909–10*: 86). Among other such courses is “Sociology 1,” prescribed for first-year divinity students at Victoria University (Toronto) and taught by the Rev. John Walker Macmillan beginning in 1919–20. During the first half of this two-term introductory course students studied “The Social Gospel of the New Testament and Its Application to Modern Life” for two hours per week. In the second term they studied “Applied Christianity: Relief, criminology, industrial accidents, child welfare, etc.,” likewise for two hours per week (*VicUC 1919-20*: 23).

Still other first sociology courses had neither a Christian title nor a Christian course description but indicated a likely Christian orientation via the reading list. An example is a course taught by Abraham Lincoln McCrimmon, Professor of Political Economy, Sociology and Education, at McMaster University, beginning in 1906:

Sociology: A discussion by means of lectures and essays of the general theory of society and its laws; the evolution of the social consciousness; an examination of the groupings, organs and functions of society; a study of social dynamics and technology. This general work will be followed by a more particular examination of some of the institutions of society, such as the family, the state or the school; and some of the different classes of society, such as the operative, the capitalistic, the professional; of methods of social amelioration respecting the dependent, defective and criminal classes (*McMUC 1906–07*: 52–3).

The course description is secular, but among the course readings were some penned by ostensibly Christian sociologists: Albion Small, *General Sociology* (1905); Small and George Vincent, *Introduction to the Study of Society* (1894); E. A. Ross, *Foundations of Sociology* (1905); and Charles Henderson, *Social Settlements* (1899) and *An Introduction to the Study of Dependent, Defective and Delinquent Classes* (1893, 1901).²⁵ The “Sociology” course taught by the Rev. Byron C. Borden at Mount Allison had

University Archives, RG 90, N. H. Mair, “The United Theological College, 1927–1977”).

25. I use the word “ostensibly” because there is disagreement in the literature about the degree to which these sociologists were, in fact, Christians and a related dispute about the respective emphases on science and religion in the textbooks they wrote. See the discussion of textbooks below.

a similarly secular course description; however, the course texts – F. G. Peabody's *The Approach to the Social Question* (1909) and Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912) – were unambiguously social gospel in orientation (*MtAUC 1916–17*: 52).

However, not all early named courses hinted at a religious orientation. For example, the “Rural Sociology” courses taught at Manitoba Agricultural College and Ontario Agricultural College (by the Rev. R. W. Murchie, and H. H. LeDrew, respectively) had secular course descriptions. Neither offered a reading list, but both focussed on social amelioration. Note Murchie's course description: “Lectures in rural leadership, applying the principles of social science to the practical problems of rural life in western Canada; suggestions given as to methods of redirecting rural social conditions in the home, school, church, and general community life. The aim of this course is to enable the student to take an intelligent and active interest in the various spheres of public life” (*ManAgCC 1916–17*: 47; see also *OntAgCC 1908–09*: 58). These examples suggest that rural sociology was introduced into the programs of study at agricultural colleges as a way of addressing various social and economic problems faced by farm families and rural communities (see Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 169–77). The sociology course offered at Queen's University by O. D. Skelton, later one of Canada's most celebrated civil service mandarins (Ferguson 1993), likewise had an entirely secular course description and used a mainstream scientific American sociology text: “The nature and scope of sociology, particularly as a study of the factors of social development” (text: T. N. Carver, *Sociology and Social Progress* (1905) [*QUC 1910–11*: 96]). However, it is hard to discount the possibility that this course took on a social gospel flavor. While Skelton apparently held a secular conception of social science, he was an “active member” of the Social Service Council of Canada and, according to Christie and Gauvreau (1996: 87), saw the purpose of scholarly endeavour as consistent with the ameliorative goals of the social gospel; that is, it “rested firmly on the application of Christian service to the solution of problems raised by modern capitalism.” In fact, Skelton was (with J. W. Macmillan of Victoria University and others) a member of a committee of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches charged with the responsibility of developing a reading list on “economics, the history of trade unionism, socialism, and practical sociology” that was to be used for the curriculum of prospective sociology courses to be taught at Protestant church colleges across the country (1996: 89). The reading list included works by social gospelers Francis Peabody (1900) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1907) as well as works by C. R. Henderson (1909), E. A. Ross (1901, 1905), and Albion Small and George Vincent (1894) (*UCA, Presbyterian Church, Minutes of Board of Moral and Social Reform*, 9 September 1908, 6 September 1910; *NAC, Canadian Council*

of Churches, “Minutes of Moral and Social Reform Council of Canada,” 26 September 1911; cited Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 284 n. 50).

The question of course textbooks and other literature as indicators of the interests and intellectual orientation of the course instructor is worth some attention. The conventional wisdom is that many of the pioneers of American sociology were Christian sociologists influenced to varying degrees by social Christianity in general and the social gospel in particular. According to Cecil Greek (1992: 105–75) and others (see e.g. Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 93), Albion Small, Edward Ross, Charles Ellwood, and Charles Henderson were Christian sociologists. They had grown up in pious homes and attended Christian institutions of higher education. Their sociology allegedly reflected this background and training. Under the influence of the Baconian inductionism²⁶ that was common at the time, they “saw in scientific laws the orderly manifestation of divine laws” (Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 93).

However, Christian Smith (2003) and Michael Evans (2009) have disputed this claim. They argue that the “Christianness” of the sociology taught by Small, Vincent, Ross, Giddings and Ward was more apparent than real. They point out that Small and the others were at the time engaged in important boundary work at the university designed to stake out an exclusive area of scientific scholarly activity in which they could claim special expertise. This would allow them, in turn, to justify the institutionalization of sociology as an academic subject. To do so, they had to distance themselves from the practices and claims of numerous unscholarly religious reformers – not university professors – who were advocating the use of an assortment of unscientific iterations of “sociology” as the basis for religious and political reform (Evans 2009). Smith (2003) and Evans (2009) demonstrate that Ward, Small and others cut their ties with church-based reformers by reframing religious beliefs as a personal matter which allowed them to be critical of faith-based sociology (Evans 2009: 111–14). In this way they tried to make sociology more scientific and bolster their claims-making efforts in the university. The textbooks by Small and the others were used to further these goals. While authors such as Small sometimes employed religious language and talked about the importance of reaching Christian goals in their respective textbooks, Smith (2003) and Evans (2009) contend that the sociology they described was scientific rather than religious in character. Indeed, it was often dismissive of religion as a way of “knowing” and as a source of guidance in an increasingly secular and scientific world. Greek (1992), by comparison, argues that while Small and the others tried to maintain some separation sociology

26. Baconian inductionism was the argument that the empirical evidence gathered by scientists that revealed the existence of patterns, even laws, in Nature did not constitute a challenge to faith in God’s power. Rather, the order discovered was regarded as evidence of God’s design.

and religion, they nonetheless used Christian faith and doctrine as a moral guide.

This dispute in the literature is noteworthy because many of Canada's early "social gospel" sociologists employed American books as texts. However, a review of course descriptions reveals that we should be careful about drawing firm conclusions both about the messages that instructors intended to impart and the potential impact these texts might have had on students. To begin, the data about course texts is relatively meagre. Only 10 of the institutions that offered sociology courses during the period 1889–1921 specified a course text (or texts).²⁷ Of the 10, nine listed at least one American text. Over the period 1889–1921, 23 different US texts were mentioned (total number of "mentions" = 36). A few instructors provided an extensive list of course texts/references (e.g. McCrimmon at McMaster listed 12) that swelled the numbers overall, but most courses listed just one textbook and, often, the same text was used several years in a row. A tally of the texts reveals that only six authors, all Americans, got three or more "mentions" (though in some cases the text was used several years in a row): Giddings (5), Ellwood (3), Blackmar and Gillin (3), Small (3), and Ross (3). These authors held to a mixture of religious and secular reformist beliefs. For them, sociology was a scientific discipline that could contribute to the rational solution of social problems. Gillin, Blackmar, Ross, Ellwood and Henderson came from Christian backgrounds and were variously influenced by the social gospel. By contrast, Giddings was among the first influential American sociologists to adopt a secular (though reformist) orientation to the discipline (Lyman and Vidich 1985).

Is it possible that the sociology taught in Canada's church colleges was critical of religion – and of a sociology rooted in religious motives and beliefs? Clearly, these textbooks were increasingly secular and scientific. Likewise, those teaching sociology in the denominational colleges drew on the prestige of science to bolster the claims they made about sociology's usefulness in the drive to Christianize Canada. However, the texts require close reading because the messages they convey about the relationships among religion, science and sociology were complex, even ambiguous. As we have no access to the lecture notes of the men who taught early sociology courses, we have no real sense of how they interpreted the texts. Thus, as interesting as the analyses by Smith (2003) and Evans (2009) are, they do not seem particularly relevant in the Canadian case. The "Christianness" of most of those who taught sociology during this period in Canada is not in doubt. Many were clergy; many others taught in Protestant denominational institutions. In these settings science was doubtless used as a complement or supplement to religion, not as a

27. Only 15 of 28 of those who taught sociology during the period specified a course text or texts.

replacement for it – whatever the intentions of the American secularizers might have been. The institutionalization of sociology had proceeded much farther in the US than it had in Canada at this time and, in consequence, the movement to make sociology (and similar disciplines like political economy and psychology) “scientific” was not as advanced in Canada as in the US (Burke 1996; Jewett 2012). The most likely scenario is that instructors gave students the message that sociology was a practical discipline that mixed religious and scientific ways of knowing and served an important practical or applied purpose.

This practical orientation explains the fact that of the 15 first courses titled sociology, 10 mentioned the study of “social problems” and examined various progressive policies and practices, including socialism, as possible solutions to them. Curiously, however, despite the reformist and applied character of the sociology being taught at these institutions, only two – Victoria and McMaster – required students to complete an applied social service component (e.g. required them to work at a settlement house) (*VicUC 1915–16*: 30; McMaster University Archives, Box 402: McMaster University Annual Reports 1906/07–1923/24; McMaster University Annual Report 1906-07, A.L. McCrimmon to Chancellor McKay, 16 April 1907).²⁸

In summary: a look at practices across the country²⁹ reveals that sociology emerged as an autonomous subject in a gradual, stepwise fashion. It appeared first as a topic in a course devoted to another subject, often philosophy or political economy (1890–91/1908–09). It then appeared as a subject in its own right, but usually as part of offerings in another subject/department, usually theology, philosophy or political economy. Typically, institutions experimented with one course, which often had a “social problems” focus, before expanding their offerings. Nonetheless, by 1921, several institutions had multi-course programs in place (see the discussion of “Programs Established,” below). No institution had established an independent department of sociology.

Faculty members appointed

At least 28 persons taught sociology for two years or more between 1889–1890 and 1921–22 (average = 6.6 years). All were male. Of the 26 whose

28. Doubtless, other schools encouraged and facilitated community work. For example, the calendar of Presbyterian College (Montreal) noted that its curriculum, which included “occasional courses in sociology,” would “fit men for the ministry.” Such courses were designed to be “as practical as possible.” Students would have “abundant opportunities ... to gain experience in the church missions” (*PresCC 1910–11*: 5).

29. Sociology courses were taught right across Canada: the Maritimes (three institutions), Ontario and Quebec (six institutions), the prairies (four institutions), and the west coast (one institution).

nationality I have been able to confirm, 17 were Canadian. The rest were natives of Scotland (four), United States (three) or England (two). While for some of them sociology was a passing interest or an obligation imposed, and they taught it for only a couple of years, 14 men taught it for five years or more and, of those, five taught it for more than 10 years. Some taught it for a very long time indeed during the period ending 1922: the Rev. Byron Borden for 27 years, William Caldwell for 18 years, and A. L. McCrimmon for 16 years. In fact, many of them continued to teach sociology long after 1922. McCrimmon, for example, taught sociology every year until 1935 (i.e. 29 years).

TABLE 3: Professors who taught sociology for two or more years, 1890–91/1921–22¹
(listed alphabetically)

NAME	Inst	Denom (if clergy, C)	Taught Sociology
Balcom, A.B.	Ac	Bap	1913–1922
Borden, B.C.	MtA	Meth (C)	1895–1922
Caldwell, W.	McG/PresC	Unit	1904–1922
Davidson, J.	UNB	NK	1899–1903
Dean, S.W.	VicU(TO)	Meth (C)	1915–1919
Donald, W.J.	McM	NK	1913–1918
Falk, J.T.W.	PresC (McG)	Unit	1920–1922
Hill, E.M.	PresC (McG)	Cong (C)	1913–1915
Keirstead, W.C.	UNB	Bap (C)	1909–1922
LeDrew, H.H.	OnAgC	NK	1908–10, 1921–22
Logan, H.A.	Bran	Bap	1919–1922

¹. Including courses with “sociology” in the course description and those titled “sociology.” Religious denomination of the person, not the institution. “NK” means not known.

MacDonald, M.S.	UNB	NK	1905–1909
MacGibbon, D.A.	Bran	Bap	1910–12, 1913–17
MacLaren, A.	OnAgC	NK	1916–1920
Macmillan, J.W.	ManC	Pres (C)	1917–1919
	VicU(TO)		1919–1922
McCrimmon, A.L.	McM	Bap	1906–1922
Michell, H.H.	McM	NK	1920–1922
Murchie, R.W.	ManAgC	Pres (C)	1916–1922
Newman, A.H.	McM	Bap (C)	1896–1901
Paisley, C.H.	MtA	Meth (C)	1898–1904
Riddell, J.H.	Wes	Meth (C)	1896–1904
Riley, I.W.	UNB	Pres	1903–1905
Scrimger, J.	PresC (McG)	Pres (C)	1909–1912
Skelton, O.D.	Qu	Pres	1910–14, 1918–20
Taylor, G.	CCC	Cong (C)	1899–1903
Tufts, J.F.	Ac	Bap	1899–1913
Watson, J.	Qu	Pres (C)	1889–1890

TOTAL = 28

Of the 28, nine were appointed to a position that had “sociology” in the job title.³⁰ However, only four (Graham Taylor at Congregational College, Alex MacLaren at the Ontario Agricultural College and S. W. Dean and J. W. Macmillan at Victoria) were hired to teach sociology exclusively. Macmillan’s posting was the only one to remain in place for long. The other 24 were hired with a primary responsibility to teach political economy, economics, political science, philosophy or theology.

Perhaps this is the place to deal with the unusual case of Robert MacIver. Those familiar with the history of Canadian and American sociology will wonder why he is not included in my analysis. He taught sociology at Aberdeen before coming to Toronto in 1915, published sociology books while at Toronto (MacIver 1917, 1921, 1926) and, after leaving Toronto for, first, Barnard College and, then, Columbia University, became one of America’s foremost sociologists. Moreover, he is treated as a sociologist by A. B. McKillop (1994) and others who have written about this period in the history of English-language sociology. However, while at Toronto, MacIver taught political science/political economy and social service. University *Calendars* for the period indicate that he never taught a course with sociology in the title or the course description and never used a sociological textbook – even his own. As these are the criteria I have used for operationalizing the notion of the “institutionalization” of sociology, he does not qualify. For his part, S. D. Clark claims that MacIver never taught a sociology course while at Toronto (J. Joyner to V. Tomovic, 18 October 1972; see Tomovic 1975: Appendix B: “Correspondence re Data Collection”) and MacIver himself notes that he “failed” to establish sociology at Toronto while there (1968: 96). In the end, I did not include him because while at Toronto he did not teach sociology – whatever his qualifications were and whatever he did before and after.

30. The nine were William Caldwell (Presbyterian College), S.W. Dean (Victoria), W. J. A. Donald (McMaster), Alexander MacLaren (Ontario Agricultural College), J. W. Macmillan (Victoria), A. L. McCrimmon (McMaster), H. Humfrey Michell (McMaster), R. W. Murchie (Manitoba Agricultural College) and Graham Taylor (Congregational College, Montreal).

TABLE 4: First named appointment in sociology, by institution, 1899–90/1919–20¹

Year	Insttn	Instructor	(C)	Denom
1899	CCC	Taylor	(C)	Cong
1906	McM	McCrimmon		Bap
1915	VicU(TO)	Dean	(C)	Meth
1916	ManAgC	Murchie	(C)	Sec
1916	OnAgC	MacLaren		Sec
1918	PresC (McG)	Caldwell		Pres
1919	Bran	Logan		Bap

¹. Only the first such appointment at a particular institution is listed. Some institutions made more than one named appointment in sociology, 1889-1921. Sometimes this meant they had two persons with appointments in sociology at the same time (e.g. McCrimmon and Donald at McMaster). At other institutions the person holding the named appointment departed and was replaced by another person holding a named appointment in sociology (e.g. at Victoria University, Dean was replaced by Macmillan). Denomination of the institution at the time the appointment was made. “Sec” means the university or college was a secular institution at the time the appointment was made. The denotation (C) after the instructor’s name means he was a clergyman.

Theology and political economy/economics were important companion disciplines for those who taught sociology during this early period. Of the 24 who held earned graduate degrees, 11 had degrees in political economy or economics and six had degrees in theology. Nineteen of 28 taught at a denominational college and two others (Kierstead at UNB, Murchie at Manitoba Agricultural College) were Protestant clergy who taught at secular institutions. At least 12 of the 28 were Protestant clergymen, and one (McCrimmon) took the training but was never ordained.³¹ Of the 12 clergymen, four were Methodist, four Presbyterian, two Baptist, and two Congregationalist. Of the remaining 17 who were not clergy, I have been able to determine the religious denomination of only seven; four were Baptists and three were Presbyterians.

Of the 28, 23 had earned graduate degrees.³² Sixteen were doctoral degrees; 11 had a PhD and five had a Doctor of Divinity (DD). Only one had a PhD in sociology (Murchie at Manitoba Agricultural College); the rest were in philosophy, theology, economics, or political economy. Of the 11 with a PhD, five had graduated from Chicago and one from Yale, both of which were American centres of the social gospel. Of the remaining five, three graduated from US schools (Harvard, Cornell, Minnesota) and two graduated from the University of Edinburgh.³³ Four of the five Doctors of Divinity graduated from universities that had a social gospel orientation (Mount Allison, Manitoba College, Andover, Rochester Baptist Theological Seminary).

31. More than this were likely ordained clergy, but did not have the BDiv or BTh degree. John Watson at Queen's is an example.

32. Many of them had one or more honorary degrees.

33. John Davidson (UNB) had two PhDs, one from Edinburgh and one from Berlin.

TABLE 5/ Earned Graduate Degrees for those who taught sociology for two or more years, 1889–1890/1921–22 (listed alphabetically)

Instructor	(Insttn)	MA (Univ)	PhD/DD/STD (Univ)
Balcom	Ac	MA (Harv)	
Borden	MtA	MA (MtA)	DD (MtA)
Caldwell	McGill	MA (Edin)	PhD (Edin)
Davidson	UNB	MA (Edin)	PhD (Edin) PhD (Berlin)
Dean	VicU	None	
Donald	McM		PhD (Chi)
Falk	PresC (McG)	None	
Hill	PresC (McG)	MA (Beloit)	DD (Andover)
Holt	PresC (McG)	None	
Keirstead	UNB	MA (UNB)	PhD (Chi)
LeDrew	OnAgC	None	
Logan	Bran		PhD (Chi)

MacDonald	UNB	MA (Dal)	PhD (Cornell)
MacGibbon	Bran	MA (McM)	PhD (Chi)
Mackintosh	Bran/Qu	MA (Qu)	PhD (Harv)
MacLaren	OnAgC	None	
Macmillan	ManC/VicU(TO)		DD (ManC)
McCrimmon	McM	MA (McM)	
		MA (TO)	
Michell	McM	MA (Oxf)	
		MA (McM)	
Murchie	ManAgC	MA (Glas)	PhD (Minn)
Newman	McM		DD (RochBapThSem)
Paisley	MtA	MA (UNB)	
Riddell	WesC/UnC	None	
Riley	UNB	MA (Yale)	PhD (Yale)
Scrimger	PresC (McG)	MA (TO)	DD (Knox)
Skelton	Qu	MA (Qu)	PhD (Chi)
Taylor	CCC	None	
Tufts	Ac	MA (Harv)	
Watson	Qu	MA (Glas)	PhD (Glas)

TOTAL = 28

To summarize: just as courses in sociology emerged in a stepwise fashion out of other disciplines, so, too, did those that taught the subject. Early on, faculty taught sociology as a secondary part of a larger teaching load in another discipline. Few had formal training in the discipline other than what they might have received as part of their own training as clergy. Only four had taken graduate training in sociology: the Rev. W. C. Keirstead (UNB), A. L. McCrimmon (McMaster), and the Rev. J. H. Riddell (Wesley) had studied at Chicago; the Rev. R. W. Murchie had studied at Minnesota. It was not until the 1920s that universities began to hire scholars trained in the field and establish sociology as an independent discipline.

Programs established

As I use it here, the word “program” refers to a slate of three or more courses. One could argue that to use the word program I should use a larger number of courses as a cut-off. Indeed, an argument could be made that no department, even McGill, with three courses in 1922, had a true program. However, given the modest size of most programs even in more established and prestigious subjects such as political economy, it made sense to choose three as a cut-off. The first offering was often introductory sociology, followed by a course in “social problems” or “applied sociology.” The subsequent direction of the program would be indicated by the third and subsequent courses.

As of 1921–22, none of Canada’s English-language universities or colleges had established an independent department of sociology. However, four institutions had established joint departments. UBC had a department of “Economics, Sociology and Political Science”³⁴, McMaster had a department of “Political Economy, Education and Sociology,” Manitoba Agricultural College had a department of “Rural Sociology and Civics,” and Ontario Agricultural College had a department of

34. The UBC case is unusual. As early as 1915–16, UBC had a department of Economics, Sociology and Political Science, even though it had no sociology or political science courses. The 1917–18 UBC calendar lists a sociology course (“Principles of Sociology”; texts: Fairbanks [1896] and Fairchild [1916]), indicating that course may have been taught in 1916–17 (*UBCC 1917–18*: 74) and notes that it would not be taught (again) until 1918–19. No instructor is listed. The same course description appears in the 1918–19 calendar noting different texts, but no instructor is listed (*UBCC 1918–19*: 76). The same appears in the 1920–21 calendar (*UBCC 1920–21*: 95). Not until 1921–22 does the calendar indicate a course instructor (S.A. Beckett, hired as a “lecturer”) (*UBCC 1921–22*: 6, 103). It appears that Beckett taught sociology every second year until 1928–29 when he died. He was replaced in 1929–30 by the Rev. Coral W. Topping who was the first person appointed to a named position in sociology at UBC (see Helmes-Hayes (2014)).

“Political Economy and Sociology.” Though there were no departments of sociology, by 1921–22, six institutions – Acadia, Brandon, Victoria, McMaster, Presbyterian College (really the United Theological Colleges) and Manitoba Agricultural College – had established a program of three or more courses in sociology. With the exception of Manitoba Agricultural College, all were Protestant denominational schools. Of the five denominational schools, three were Baptist (Acadia, Brandon, McMaster), one Methodist (Victoria), and one interdenominational (the United Theological College in Montreal).

A survey of the courses taught at the six institutions with a “program” in sociology indicates that aside from a standard introductory course, the most common offering was “social problems,” taught at all six places, though under different titles. For example, at Acadia the Rev. A. B. Balcom used the term “Practical Sociology” (*AcUC 1921–22*: 58) and at Manitoba Agricultural College, the Rev. R. W. Murchie discussed social problems under the heading “Rural Sociology” (*ManAgC 1921–22*: 37). Courses offered exclusively at just one institution included *inter alia* “Principles of Individual and Social Development” at Brandon College (*BCC 1921–22*: 49), “Family” at McMaster (*McMUC 1921–22*: 79), and “Methods of Rural Survey Work” at Manitoba Agricultural College (*ManAgCC 1921–22*: 37). Only Brandon and McMaster offered “Ecclesiastical Sociology” (*BCC 1921–22*: 56; *McMUC 1921–22*: 97) and only Brandon and McMaster offered the MA (*BCC 1921–22*: 55–6; *McMUC 1921–22*: 97).³⁵

At each of the six institutions, a named appointment in sociology had been made. Indeed, at two of them, multiple appointments in sociology were in place, if temporarily. At McMaster, McCrimmon and H. H. Mitchell taught a combination of four courses: introductory, family, social problems, and “ecclesiastical” sociology (*McMUC 1921–22*: 29, 97). At Presbyterian College in Montreal (really United Theological College) three instructors (William Caldwell, J. H. T. Falk, Gordon Dickie) offered a slate of three courses: “Principles,” “A study of the social problems of the city,” and “A study of the social problems of the country,” though under the heading “Social Service” and only for the year 1921–22 (*PresCC 1921–22*: 6, 9, 13, 16, 18, 24).³⁶

35. UNB had no MA in sociology but its MA program in philosophy and political economy included some sociological readings (*UNBC 1921–22*: 75, 77). The programs at McMaster and Brandon are similar because the latter was an affiliate of the former.

36. In 1922–23, the course offerings were retooled slightly (*PresCC 1922–23*: 17, 19, 21). A course called “Practical Missionary Sociology” was added (24) and Caldwell, Falk and Dickie disappeared from the faculty roster. Carl Dawson, newly hired at McGill, took over as the instructor.

The most ambitious program in the country in 1921 was that offered at Victoria University in Toronto. In 1915, Victoria had hired the Rev. S. Wesley Dean as “Special Lecturer in Practical Sociology,” a position he held for four years (*VicUC 1915–16*: 14). In 1919, he was succeeded by the Rev. John Walker Macmillan, who was appointed “Professor of Sociology” (*VicUC 1919–20*: 12; re Macmillan, see Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 83–4).³⁷ Macmillan immediately set up a slate of five courses. One – a two-term course required of all applicants to the ministry – had two components. The first component dealt with the “Social Gospel of the New Testament and Its Application to Modern Life”; the second component dealt with “Applied Christianity”: “relief, criminology, industrial accidents, child welfare” and the like. As well, Macmillan taught four “electives.” One – “Modern Social Theories and Movements Examined and Tested by the Social Teachings of the Bible” – was religious in orientation: The others were secular; one was a standard introduction to the “Elements of Sociology,” a second dealt with the social and industrial history of England, and a third familiarized students with sources of data (“The New York Survey, the Canada *Labour Gazette*, etc.”) helpful for documenting and understanding social issues and problems (*VicUC 1919–20*: 23). As well, Macmillan taught a short course in sociology to “YMCA and YWCA secretaries and social welfare and Christian workers” of all types (*VicUC 1919–20*: 49; see also Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 307) and required “probationers” (those studying to become certified as clergy but not yet registered at the college) to be examined on a series of sociology/social work books³⁸ and to undertake a social survey in their community as a part of their training (*VicUC 1919–20*: 29). By 1921, Macmillan had modified the curriculum, adding courses on “Social Legislation” (i.e. social insurance, minimum wages, etc.) and “Current Events” in their “sociological aspect” (both in *VicUC 1921–22*: 32).

37. In 1915, Macmillan had been appointed “Professor of Social Ethics and Practical Theology” at Manitoba College (*ManCC 1917–18*: 10) and, in 1917, established a multi-course program in sociology (*ManCC 1917–18*: 24). However, the program was short-lived. When Macmillan left for Victoria University, the Manitoba program was abandoned. It is not included in the analysis of sociology programs.

38. Probationers read E. Devine, *The Spirit of Social Work* (1976) [1911]; E. L. Earp, *The Rural Church Movement* (1914); and H. F. Ward and R. H. Edwards, *Christianizing Community Life* (1917) (*VicUC 1919–20*: 29).

CONCLUSION: A NEW FIRST CHAPTER FOR THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ACADEMIC SOCIOLOGY IN CANADA

There was much more sociology taught in Canada's English-language universities and colleges before 1922 than we have heretofore appreciated. While it appeared first and was institutionalized most firmly in Protestant denominational colleges and theology schools, it made some inroads in secular institutions as well. Sociology had a sufficient presence in the post-secondary institutions of the period that it warrants a chapter of its own – the first chapter, in fact – in the writing of the history of the discipline. This essay begins that task.

At the time, the social gospel was a potent theological and political force among Protestants. Most of the sociology taught in Protestant theological colleges was, thus, influenced by the social gospel. However, most of the sociology incorporated into the curricula of Canada's Protestant universities was not, strictly speaking, *social gospel* sociology. Rather, most of it was *progressive evangelical sociology*, taught and practised by Protestants of all denominations who, while often progressive on political, social and economic issues, nonetheless held fast to the traditional belief that the mass salvation of individual souls via evangelism was more important than institutional change. In that sense, then, to use the term “social gospel sociology” is, strictly speaking, to use a misnomer. For the most part *these men did not adopt the theological first principle of the social gospel*; i.e. that structural change via institutional regeneration must take precedence over the saving of individual souls. The most we can say is that they adopted some of the economic and social ideas of the social gospel, in particular the view that some degree of institutional change was essential to the proper, i.e. Christian, functioning of society.

The sociology curriculum taught in Canada's English-language, Protestant universities and colleges during the period seems to have been of three types, all of which advocated piecemeal changes that would humanize the worst aspects of the nation's capitalist economy.

At the most conservative end of the reformist continuum, where the commitment to the social gospel was weakest, were courses which, despite their titles, were essentially ethics courses not much influenced by sociology – or for that matter the social gospel – but so named, nonetheless, because of their focus on social change and social justice. The courses taught by Riddell at Wesley in 1896 and Dean at Victoria in 1915, both of which used Newman Smyth's text, *Christian Ethics* (1892), are examples.

Further along the continuum would be the courses taught by idealist gradualists such as the Rev. Byron Borden at Mt. Allison. According to

J. G. Reid, author of the history of Mt. Allison, Borden was “a preacher of the social gospel” who was critical of unbridled capitalism and “denounced materialism as a basis for social relations” (Reid 1984: 262). Borden structured his sociology course around the idea of protecting “democracy” and regarded sociology as a tool for studying “the social problems that beset it [democracy].” The textbooks he used as late as 1916–17 were social gospel classics: Peabody’s *The Approach to the Social Question* (1909) and Rauschenbusch’s *Christianizing the Social Order* (1912) (*MtAUC 1916–17*: 52). However, Borden maintained there was “no necessary antagonism between capital and labour” and argued that the problem of properly Christianizing the social order depended on Christian integrity and “the gospel of unselfishness” (Reid 1984: 225).

The third, and most progressive variety of social gospel-influenced sociology taught at the time is based on a more structuralist version of the doctrine and its practices. The Rev. J. W. Macmillan at Victoria University is perhaps the clearest example of this orientation.³⁹ According to the author of Macmillan’s obituary, the young Macmillan thought in terms of “concrete” issues rather than theological or philosophical ones. “His great religious passion was to see the Holy City come down on earth. In his youth, like most young ministers of his day, he had been deeply influenced by Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. Men’s bare backs and empty stomachs were more challenging to his faith than the attacks of unbelievers or the speculations of philosophers” (UCA, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, J.W. Macmillan Biography file, O.G.S. (author), [obituary] “Rev. John Walker Macmillan,” 21 August 1932: n.p.). However, by his own admission, Macmillan never adopted the theology of the social gospel, arguing that it should never and would never “devour the individual gospel” (Christie and Gauvreau, 1996: 83–4; citing Macmillan, 1922: 11, 15–16, 69, 154). So he was not a “true” social gospeler in the sense of being a theological and political radical. He was, nonetheless, moved by the progressive humanism and real-world focus of the social gospel to become a public intellectual of sorts. As a young student at the New York Theological Seminary (a centre of the social gospel), Macmillan had studied the city’s tenements. Upon his return to Canada he had “started a movement in Winnipeg” that led to the passing of “a model housing law in that city” (UCA, Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, J.W. Macmillan Biography file, O.G.S. (author), [obituary] “Rev. John Walker Macmillan,” 21 August 1932: n.p.). Indeed, according to Christie and Gauvreau (1996: 83), Macmillan “forged close links” with Bland

39. Two other good examples are R.W. Murchie and W.C. Kierstead. Examples from a slightly later period are Samuel Henry Prince and C.W. Topping.

and Woodsworth while at Manitoba College. He continued to work in this practical, meliorist vein throughout his life. While in Manitoba, he introduced mothers' allowances and helped to frame and then administer the province's minimum wage legislation. He then duplicated these feats when he arrived in Toronto. At various times during his career, he served as a member of research and policy bodies of the Social Service Council of Canada⁴⁰ and from 1921–32 served as chair of the Ontario Minimum Wage Board (Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 83, 121, 177; *VicUC 1919–20*: 12; *VicUC 1932–33*: 14). He was an advocate of rural planning and social surveys (Christie and Gauvreau 1996: 177) and published several works on various aspects of progressive social reform (Macmillan 1918a, 1918b, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1930a, 1930b, 1930c). Beginning in 1921–22 and for six years thereafter, he taught as a special lecturer in the Department of Social Service at the University Toronto, responsible for teaching a course on "Industrial Legislation" (*UTC 1926–27*: 59).

This seems to be as far as Canada's reformist Christian sociologists were willing to go. Many toiled as "public sociologists," organic and traditional alike (see Burawoy 2005a), to help create social justice in the form of better legislation and state agencies of oversight. As well, many were somewhat familiar with the socialist literature of the period and discussed various programmes of social and economic reconstruction, including socialism, with their students and other audiences. But there is no evidence that any of them advocated radical social change. What we can say is that like public intellectuals from other secular and religious traditions of the time, they helped create an intellectual and political environment conducive to the growth of the welfare state (Christie and Gauvreau 1996; Burke 1996).

Christie and Gauvreau (1996: 86) argue on this account that the Protestant churches forestalled the secularization of Canadian society throughout the 1920s in part by taking control of the social sciences inside the church college curriculum. My findings offer qualified support for this claim. Scholars who taught sociology during this period generally did not do research. The churches themselves took on that task. Nonetheless, teachers of sociology played a role in establishing, shepherding and legitimizing the discipline. As they did, they pushed it in two

40. He was a member of the Industrial Life and Immigration Committee of Social Service Council of Canada 1920, 1922, 1923, 1924 (LAC, Canadian Council of Churches, Social Service Council of Canada, MG 28 I 327 vol. 32 file 32-7; "Minutes of Industrial Life and Immigration Committee," 1919–22, Minutes of the Committee ... 14 December 1922; also 1928 (LAC, Canadian Council of Churches, Social Service Council of Canada, MG 28 I 327 vol. 32 file 32-14; Social Service Council of Canada Minutes, Committee on Industrial Life, 1925–30, n.d.).

directions, framing it as both: 1/ a practical or applied endeavour closely related to mission work, evangelization, and social work – a “weak” version of the social gospel; or 2/ a vehicle of structural social change via policy analysis and advocacy (the “strong” version). In *The Evangelical Century*, Gauvreau argues that until the early years of the twentieth century, the Protestant church colleges (especially the Methodist and Presbyterian colleges) rejected sociology as a social science (1991: 184–6) and linked “college teaching and the pulpit ... to social reform not via social science [sociology in particular] but via the traditional saving of individual souls” (185). The evidence I have gathered accords largely with this claim. However, after 1910 or 1915, those that taught sociology in Canadian colleges and universities seemed ever more willing to draw on both increasingly secular and scientific American textbooks and increasingly secular and scientific materials written by British progressives. This suggests that like much else in the curriculum of early twentieth-century universities, sociology was a discipline which stood in a precarious and contested intellectual space between science and religion, attempting to accommodate/ incorporate both. It was not yet science, remained in some respects rooted in religion, and had not yet abandoned moralisms – religious or secular – for alleged value freedom. But it was sociology for all that. Those who taught it in this confusing and conflict-ridden period of rapid social, economic, political and intellectual change deserve to be acknowledged as the true pioneers of academic English-language sociology in Canada.

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