The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, creating a modern, layered effect. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some semi-transparent, set against a white background.

Social Gospel, Holiness, Progressivism: Contesting Passion in the Early 20th Century

Berwick Camp

Wednesday July 29, 2015

Agenda for Wednesday Morning

- ▶ Fissures in North American “Evangelical Christianity”
 - ▶ Social Gospel - the Labour Church and the Sociologists
 - ▶ Holiness - Revive us Again?
 - ▶ Liberal Progressivism - Chautauqua and its many children

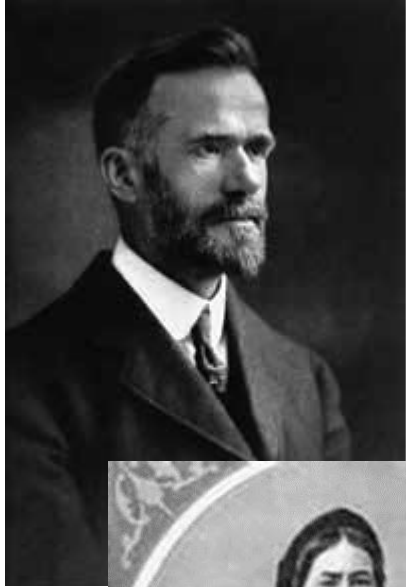
BREAK

- ▶ Activity Time

Changing Times for “Evangelical” Christianity

- ▶ Who was “Evangelical” in Late 19th Century North America?
 - ▶ Most Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists; Some Anglicans
- ▶ Challenges for Methodists:
 - ▶ Methodism had moved into the middle class: less likely to approve of loud and unseemly displays of religious fervor
 - ▶ Most potential “converts” were already converted/churched
 - ▶ Unregulated capitalism, boom/bust economies, large waves of immigration were increasing social inequality
 - ▶ *Some* Methodists found it difficult to support “old” Methodist practices: street preaching, emotional conversion, focus on the individual rather than society
 - ▶ *Other* Methodists deplored the “lukewarm” bourgeois Methodism of the late 19th century and the endless “backsliding” of converts

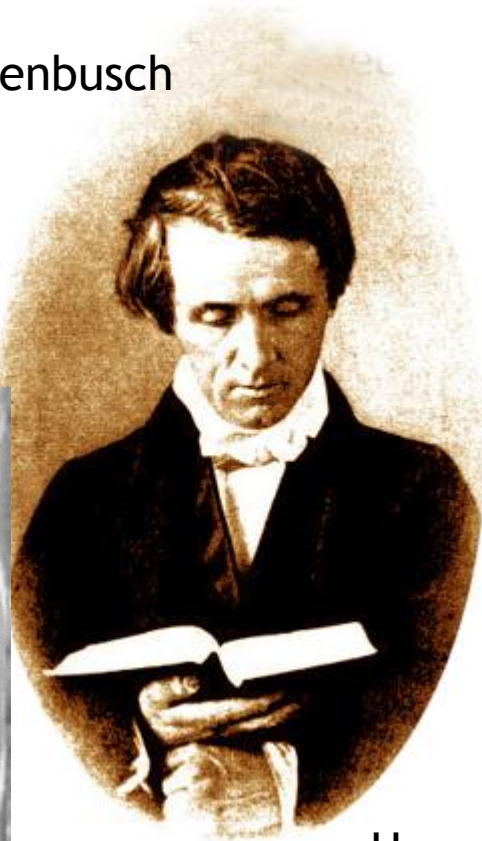
Divisions Emerge



Walter
Rauschenbusch



Phoebe Palmer



Horace Bushnell

Sandra Beardsall/July 2015 Berwick Camp

- ▶ SOCIAL GOSPEL
- ▶ HOLINESS
- ▶ LIBERAL
PROGRESSIVE

Elements of Social Gospel Faith

- ▶ Believed they were living in a time of crisis and new order
- ▶ Importance of human fulfillment (“personality”)
- ▶ Faith in science and social analysis - the first sociologists were Social Gospellers
- ▶ Focus on Jesus’ Life and the Kingdom of God
- ▶ “Millennial” Optimism
- ▶ “Social Salvation”

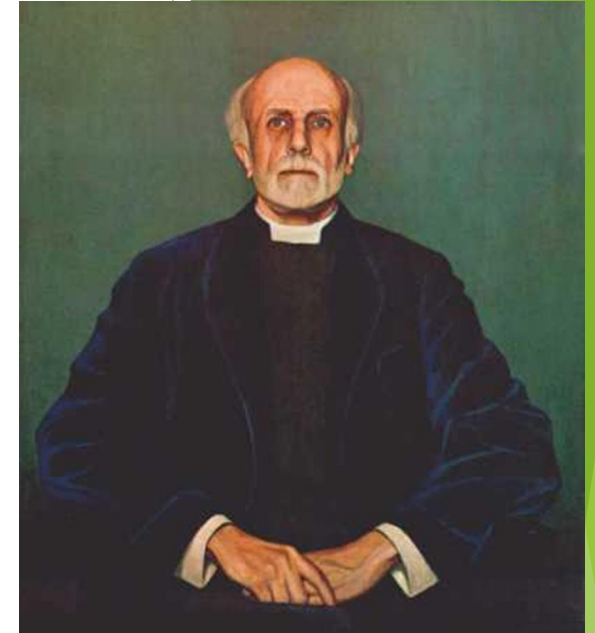
Sandra Beardsall/July 2015 Berwick Camp



Nellie McClung



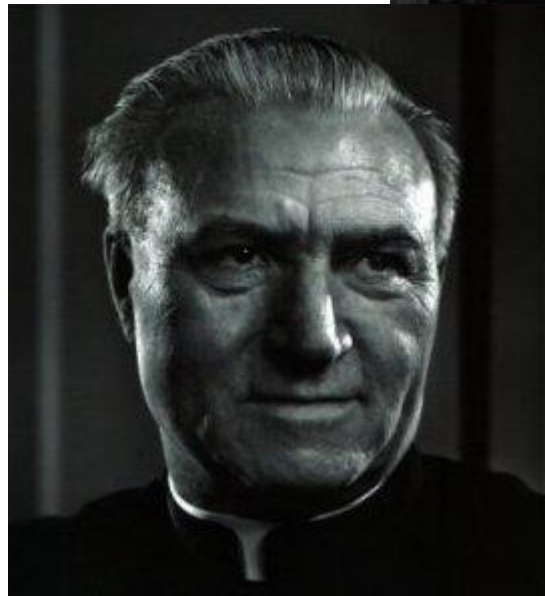
J.S. Woodsworth



Salem Bland

Some Canadian Social Gospel Highlights

- ▶ Antigonish Movement (1890s-1950s)
- ▶ Social Service Council of Canada (1913)
- ▶ Social Service Congress (1914)
- ▶ Winnipeg Labour Churches (1918-1925)



Fr. Moses Coady

The Holiness Movement - Mid 1800s

- ▶ **John Wesley** had preached “Perfection” or “Entire Sanctification”
- ▶ **By 1820s** emphasis on sanctification has faded from Methodist life
- ▶ **American Methodists** begin to call this the need for “Holiness”
- ▶ **By 1840s** - “Holiness” has become significant in Methodism (and appears in other denominations to a lesser extent)
 - ▶ Not all Methodists concur: **35% of American Methodists were “holiness”**
 - ▶ **Free Methodists** form breakaway denomination to promote holiness
- ▶ **Other Holiness denominations follow** - inc. Nazarenes, Apostolic, Brethren in Christ, Church of God, Wesleyans

Holiness to Pentecostalism

- 1900 - Thomas Parham of Bethel Bible School (Topeka, Kansas) - singles out glossolalia as the only evidence that one had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- Student Agnes Ozman asks for baptism in the Holy Spirit, with tongues as evidence; begins speaking in the “Chinese language”
- WJ Seymour (African American) - student of Parham in Texas - moves to L.A.
- April 1906 - Seymour begins revival preaching in abandoned Methodist church - attracts both blacks and whites
- Worshippers see divine connection between SF earthquake and their own message of doom to an unbelieving city
- Denounced for their “excesses”, and because they were poor and of mixed races
- Revival meeting closes 1915, but Pentecostalism thrives in various places (mostly segregated)



20th Century Revivals

- Revivals continue into 20th Century
- FOR EXAMPLE: Aimee Semple McPherson 1890-1944
- Born on Salford, ON farm; mother was Salvation Army
- Married Pentecostal missionary (Semple) and after his death an accountant McPherson (NYC)
- 1915 - Began a preaching and revival career
- Sought to eradicate modernism and secularism in homes
- “Four Square Gospel” message:
 - Jesus as Saviour; Baptizer; Healer; Coming King
- Became a colourful media evangelist
- Believed in tongue-speaking, but did not emphasize it



Liberal Progressive Christianity

▶ LATE 19TH CENTURY LIBERALISM VALUES:

- ▶ Freedom of thought and individual expression
- ▶ Progress, history, education
- ▶ Faith in humanity
- ▶ Scientific advance

▶ LATE 19TH CENTURY LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY EMBRACES:

- ▶ Critical study of the Bible
- ▶ Sunday School Education
- ▶ Para-church organizations (e.g., YMCA)
- ▶ No conflict between science and faith
- ▶ Shift from Atonement to Incarnation
- ▶ Shift from “Premillennial” to “Postmillennial” Eschatology
- ▶ Christianity reflected in material progress, cultural assimilation

United Church of Canada: A Passionate Liberal/Social Gospel Project



- ▶ “Let us remember as we cast our ballots [for or against union]; that this Canada of ours is God’s last opportunity of building up a Christian nation upon virgin soil, and we cannot allow little things to stand in the way of the best means for accomplishing this great purpose.”

- ▶ Samuel Dwight Chown
General Superintendent of the
Methodist Church Canada
(sermon, 1912)

Camp Meetings Respond: Holiness Movement

- ▶ Camp Meetings were essential to the development of the holiness movement
- ▶ 1867 - **HOLINESS** Christians form the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Christian Holiness
 - ▶ These new camp meetings help found holiness denominations
 - ▶ Many still exist with a “Scriptural holiness” focus



God's Holiness Grove Camp Meeting,
Central Pennsylvania, 1920

Camp Meetings Respond: Progressive Christianity

- ▶ **LIBERAL PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANS** develop camp meetings with **educational and cultural focus, rather than revivalism and conversion**
- ▶ **Evangelists** tend to take liberal approach
- ▶ **CHAUTAUQUA** Institution founded in 1874 as “Chautauqua Lake Sunday School Assembly” in New York State
- ▶ Set up like a camp meeting, but focused on training for Sunday School teachers
- ▶ Broadened almost immediately to include academic subjects, music, art and physical education



Operates today with full 9-week program

The Chautauqua Movement Spreads

- ▶ “Chautauqua Assemblies” spread throughout rural USA and Canada
- ▶ Brought entertainment and culture for the whole community, with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers and specialists of the day
- ▶ 1916 - Chautauquas comes to Canada, organised by J.M. Erickson, backed by a chautauqua businessman from Chicago, and encouraged by the United Farmers of Alberta
- ▶ The company puts on chautauqua events in communities in British Columbia, the three prairie provinces, Ontario, Quebec, and Alaska from 1917 to 1935.
- ▶ A Pennsylvania company takes chautauquas to the Maritime provinces.



... And Berwick?

Evidence of “Progressive” Protestantism:

- ▶ **1903** - Young People’s Summer School
- ▶ Consistent emphasis on education for Sunday School teachers and children
- ▶ **1910** - Morning hours devoted to Bible Study led by professor from Victoria College
- ▶ **1912** - “The public meetings have been devoid of unhealthy, effervescing enthusiasm.”
- ▶ **1902-1922** - No public admittance on Sunday
- ▶ **1923** - “One of the *quietist and most orderly* Sundays in all the history of the Camp Meetings”
- ▶ **1928** - Sunrise Prayer meeting (6:30 AM) “is attended by the faithful, and *there are not many at this hour*”



1930 - The Lotus Male Quartet (with Miss Jean Wright) sings “Song of the Jolly Roger,” “Kentucky Babe,” “The Indian Love Call,” “The Rosary,” “Nobody Knew,” and “Three for Jack” at the closing concert (Monday).

BUT it's complicated ...

- ▶ **Berwick Evangelists** represent a range of theological perspectives, for example:
 - ▶ Charles Gordon (1926) is a liberal progressive/Social Gospel preacher
 - ▶ James A. Ramsay of Moncton (1934) urges his hearers to *“wake up, wash up, push up and lift up, as steps toward bringing perfection to the church... Slightly soiled Christians are greatly reduced in value.”*
- ▶ **“Progressive” Christians** still appreciated appeals to personal faith and commitment
- ▶ And they were very committed to **Temperance**
 - ▶ 1930: Passed a resolution against Robert Steppanski (who had proposed a distillery in Berwick) by a unanimous standing vote.

Activity Time for...

- ▶ **ACTIVE BODIES:** Practice and perform a Social Gospel hymn and a Holiness hymn (music and words provided)
- ▶ **ACTIVE MINDS:** “Social Christianity and Personal Religion” -- discussion of a short excerpt from Walter Rauschenbusch (see handout)
- ▶ **ACTIVE IMAGINATIONS:** “Beulah Land” - compose a prayer (see handout)