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Evangelicalism, Enlightenment and 'Race' on the Frontiers of Mission: Scottish-Canadian Encounters with Chinese in Montreal[1]

Rosalyn Trigger

Canadians of Scottish origin were major participants in the Chinese Sunday schools established by both Presbyterian and Congregational churches in Montreal in the late nineteenth century. The most visible outcome of this endeavour was that it led to cordial interactions between Protestant women and Chinese men at a time when large segments of North American society had become deeply hostile to Chinese immigrants (Figure 1).[2] Shored up by social Darwinism, this hostility reflected a growing acceptance within the English-speaking world over the course of the nineteenth century – and particularly from mid-century onwards – that innate and fixed physical, moral and intellectual disparities existed between different human groups.[3] In this context, it is tempting to see Montreal's Chinese Sunday schools as progressive institutions that anticipated the mid-twentieth century's firm rejection of biological racism. Yet a growing body of literature suggests that this type of mission work instead remained committed to an earlier view of

[1] Initial research for this paper was completed while holding a *Fonds Québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture* Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the University of Waterloo, and I would like to thank Jeanne Kay Guelke for the helpful insights that she provided at this stage in the research.

[2] For an empirically and theoretically informed study of anti-Chinese racism in Canada, see Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal and Kingston, 1995).

[3] For further discussion of the growing influence of racial biological determinism see: Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver, 2002), 3–16; Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester, 2004), 283–4; Andrew C. Ross, 'Christian Missions and the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Change in Attitudes to Race: The African Experience' in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880–1914* (Grand Rapids, 2003), 87–9; Andrew C. Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* (London and New York, 2006), 71–4; Brian Stanley, 'Christianity and Civilization in English Evangelical Mission Thought, 1792–1857' in Brian Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2001), 170–1; Bruce G. Trigger, 'Daniel Wilson and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 122 (1992), 71.

Figure 1. A Chinese Sunday School Class (Source: *The Montreal Daily Witness,* 7 October 1899).

human nature that was firmly rooted in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century evangelical and Enlightenment thought.[4]

This paper will explore these ideas further, focusing in particular on the pathways and mechanisms by which understandings of human difference were carried forward through space and time. As it will demonstrate, the published life stories of pioneering foreign missionaries with personal connections to Montreal, such as Henry Lyman and William Chalmers Burns, served as an inspiration for the city's Chinese Sunday school work and as a bulwark against the rise of racial biological determinism in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In adopting this approach, an attempt is made to respond to Brian Stanley's suggestion that it is not enough simply to assert the purported influence of 'the epistemological method characteristic of the Scottish Enlightenment' on the Protestant missionary movement. Instead,

[4] See, for example, Michael C. Coleman, 'Not Race, but Grace: Presbyterian Missionaries and American Indians, 1837–1893', *The Journal of American History*, 67 (1980), 57, 59–60; Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874–1939* (New York and Oxford, 1990), 117; Ross, 'Christian Missions', 85–6; Stanley, 'Christianity and Civilization', 171; and Trigger, 'Daniel Wilson', 71–2.

Stanley calls for an examination of the diverse ways in which this tradition 'intersected both with long-established Christian traditions of thinking about barbarism and civilisation and with the "facts" thrown up by the new experience of evangelisation along and across the extending imperial frontier of the nineteenth century.'[5]

Scottish-Canadian participation in a pan-denominational phenomenon of American origin such as the Chinese Sunday schools also provides an opportunity to investigate what John MacKenzie has described as the 'heterogeneous religious arrangements in empire'.[6] Scottish Presbyterianism served as an important means of maintaining the ethnic distinctiveness of Scots in Canada, and yet there is also a need to consider the extent to which shared evangelical commitments broke down boundaries between different denominations and national groups. Such explorations are especially relevant in a city such as Montreal, in which Protestants from a variety of different national backgrounds came into contact with one another.

I Origins of the 'Chinese Sunday School'

Montreal's Chinese Sunday schools existed as part of a wider North American phenomenon. As Chinese immigrants fanned out across the continent in search of employment in the second half of the nineteenth century, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists rapidly established Sunday schools to reach out to this largely adult male population. The earliest Chinese missions had been initiated by Presbyterians in California in the 1850s, with Chinese Sunday schools operating in cities such as New York and St Louis by the late 1860s and in Boston by the late 1870s. A survey of Chinese Sunday schools in North America dating from 1892 lists 271 schools, heavily clustered on the eastern seaboard and in California, with 6,229 adult Chinese 'regularly under Christian instruction'.[7]

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[5] Stanley, 'Christianity and Civilization', 196.

[6] John M. MacKenzie, 'Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds? A Four-Nation Approach to the History of the British Empire', *History Compass*, 6 (2008), 1251.

[7] Nineteen of the schools listed were located in Canada. Chinese Sabbath School Association of New York, *Statistics of the Chinese Churches, Missions, Schools and Institutions of North America* (New York, 1892), 15. The origins of mission work amongst Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, St Louis, New York and Boston respectively are discussed in Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850–1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford, 2000), 131; Huping Ling, '"Hop Alley": Myth and Reality

In Canada, as the Canadian Pacific Railway neared completion in 1884–5, many laid-off Chinese workers moved eastwards in search of new employment rather than returning to China.[8] Perhaps not coincidentally, it was in 1884 that Emmanuel Congregational Church became the first church in Montreal to open a Chinese Sunday school, and soon after invited the nearby American Presbyterian Church to assist it in this work.[9] It was not until the early 1890s, however, that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada decided to become involved, hiring the experienced Scottish-American missionary Dr Joseph Clarke Thomson to supervise its Chinese mission work in Canada. Having organised Chinese Sunday schools in New York during his years as a student at the Union Theological Seminary in the late 1870s, Thomson had gone on to work as a medical missionary in South China. His fluency in Cantonese was an asset and by 1904 there were as many as seventeen schools under his supervision in Montreal alone, each associated with a different Presbyterian congregation.[10]

Montreal's predominantly male Chinese population, large numbers of whom came from the Guangdong region and worked as laundrymen, were drawn to the schools primarily by their desire to learn English – although for some the social and spiritual dimensions may also have grown in importance over time.[11] Within each school, the regular church members who served

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of the St Louis Chinatown, 1860s–1930s', *Journal of Urban History*, 28 (2002), 209–12; Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton, 2005), 118–21; John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882* (Baltimore and London, 1999), 242–7; and D.W. Waldron, 'The Chinese', *The American Missionary*, 38 (December 1884), 393–5.

[8] This led the Canadian federal government to impose a $50 head tax in 1885 (raised to $100 in 1900 and $500 in 1903) in order to discourage further immigration from China. Jiwu Wang, *'His Dominion' and the 'Yellow Peril': Protestant Missions to Chinese Immigrants in Canada, 1859–1967* (Waterloo, 2006), 11–2.

[9] *Emmanuel Church Outlook*, 2 (December 1909), 5.

[10] *The Acts and Proceedings of the Thirtieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, St John, N.B., June 1–9, 1904* (Toronto, 1904), 180. See also Hugh Angus Becking, *A History of the United Church of Canada's South China Mission* (B.Div. thesis, St Stephen's Theological College, University of Alberta, 1955), 18, 21; William Warder Cadbury and Mary Hoxie Jones, *At the Point of a Lancet: One Hundred Years of the Canton Hospital 1835–1935* (Shanghai, 1935), 167–73; K. Chimin Wong, 'Joseph Clarke Thomson (1853–1926)' in *Lancet and Cross: Biographical Sketches of Fifty Pioneer Medical Missionaries in China* (Shanghai, 1950), 65–8.

[11] Overpopulation, political unrest and natural catastrophes encouraged Chinese emigration from Guangdong province during this period. The fact that the provincial capital Canton [Guangzhou] had been the only Chinese port open to

as teachers saw their goal as instructing Chinese immigrants in the English language, western ways and the Christian gospel. As a result, just over half of the approximately 800 Chinese Montrealers listed in the 1901 census of Canada identified themselves as Presbyterian. This number does not reflect actual conversions, which were relatively few in number. It does imply, however, that the Sunday school movement succeeded in creating a large number of what John Tchen has described as 'missionary-associated' Chinese.[12]

The volunteer teachers, many of whom were middle-class women of Scottish origin, were only partly motivated by a desire to acculturate Chinese immigrants to Protestant Canadian society. Instead, anticipating that the vast majority of Chinese men who attended the schools in Montreal would eventually return to their home villages in Guangdong, they fervently hoped that their efforts would assist missionaries working on the front lines in China. The volunteer teachers were aware, for instance, that returned migrants often enabled foreign missionaries to gain access to villages where they would not otherwise have been welcome. Some returnees also served as colporteurs and evangelists in their home districts, while others sought out more formal theological training at institutions such as the American Presbyterian Seminary in Canton [Guangzhou].[13] These transnational connections became

foreign traders prior to the First Opium War of 1840 had also heightened awareness of opportunities available abroad. Laundries and restaurants became an important source of employment for Chinese migrants in urban areas in part because such businesses required little capital and few skills, but more importantly because white workers sought to exclude Chinese from more desirable industrial occupations. Even prior to the introduction of a Chinese head tax in 1885, the expense of the trans-Pacific journey meant that relatively few Chinese could afford to bring their families with them to Canada. See Wang, *'His Dominion'*, 9–10, 15–6, as well as Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery*, 55–6. On the transnational character of Chinese migration during this period, see Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882–1943* (Stanford, 2000).

[12] Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown*, 246. For further information on the history of Montreal's Chinese community during this period, see Denise Helly, 'Les buandiers chinois de Montréal au tournant du siècle', *Recherches sociographiques*, 25 (1984), 343–65, and idem, *Les Chinois à Montréal 1877–1951* (Québec, 1987). The census information comes from the 1901 Manuscript Census of Canada, and I would like to thank Sherry Olson for providing me with access to her digital compilation of this information.

[13] See, for example, *The Acts and Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Toronto, June 4–11, 1913* (Toronto, 1913), 128–30; *Knox Church Montreal Annual Reports 1912* (Montreal, 1913), 17–8, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives (Toronto), Knox, Crescent, Kensington & First Presbyterian Church (Montreal, Quebec) Collection, 1978–4001–6–5; *Thirty-First*

increasingly important once the Presbyterian Church in Canada officially inaugurated its Macao Mission (later known as the South China Mission) in the early years of the twentieth century.[14] Family commitments may have bound the city's Chinese Sunday school teachers to Montreal and to their homes, but their efforts nevertheless enabled them to participate vicariously in what was happening on the missionary frontier in China.

II The Missionary Frontier through Space and Time

The ambitions of Montreal's Presbyterian and Congregational churches in relation to the city's Chinese community can be seen as a product of the Protestant commitment to foreign missions that had taken root in Britain in the late eighteenth century, in close association with the rise of evangelicalism.[15] A significant development within the historiography of evangelicalism in recent years has been the recognition that evangelical Christianity – which had traditionally been seen by historians 'as an enthusiastic, heartwarming, and experiential reaction against the aridity and skepticism of the Age of Reason' – in fact owed an important debt to the culture and thought of the Enlightenment.[16] As George Marsden explains, what lived on – particularly in the United States – during the nineteenth century 'was not any explicit commitment to the "Enlightenment" as such, but rather a dedication to the general philosophical basis that had undergirded the empirically-based rationality so confidently proclaimed by most eighteenth-century thinkers.'[17]

Annual Report for Year 1912 of the Women's Missionary Society (Home, French and Foreign) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Montreal, n.d.), 33–4, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives (Toronto), Montreal Women's Missionary Society Collection, 1988–7007–1–4.

[14] Becking, *A History of the United Church of Canada's South China Mission*.

[15] On Britain's entry into the Protestant missionary awakening, see Andrew F. Walls, 'The Eighteenth-Century Protestant Missionary Awakening in its European Context' in Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, esp. 34–5.

[16] Brian Stanley, 'Christian Missions and the Enlightenment: A Reevaluation' in Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, 2. Colin Kidd expresses a similar idea from a different perspective when he writes that 'many participants in the Enlightenment, not least within the Protestant Atlantic Enlightenment of the British Isles and North America, aimed not so much to make the world anew as to effect a reconciliation between the best of the new philosophy and the core truths of Christianity'. See *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600–2000* (Cambridge, 2006), 83.

[17] George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids,

This confidence in 'the elevating and illuminating capacity of knowledge and rational argument' was clearly visible within the early missionary movement, although evangelicals deemed such things to be of little value unless accompanied by faith in Jesus Christ.[18] Despite intense debates between Moderates and Evangelicals within the Church of Scotland in the early decades of the nineteenth century over whether education or preaching should be emphasised by missionaries, in practice both aspects became integral to Scottish Presbyterian missions.[19] Enlightenment thought also reinforced the sustaining ideology of the foreign missionary endeavour through its emphasis on the psychic unity of humanity.[20] While a diversity of opinion existed amongst Enlightenment thinkers regarding the nature of human difference, it was the Scottish Common Sense philosophy – embraced by individuals such as James Beattie who argued, contra Hume, that all people shared the same capacity for civilisation – that exerted the greatest influence amongst English-speaking evangelicals in Britain and North America.[21] Evangelicals may have placed less faith in the underlying goodness of human beings than many Enlightenment thinkers, emphasising instead the sinfulness of humanity, yet this did not prevent them from sharing in the optimistic belief 'that humanity enjoyed great potential for improvement'.[22]

1991), 129.

[18] Stanley, 'Christian Missions and the Enlightenment', 12.

[19] Natasha Erlank, '"Civilizing the African": The Scottish Mission to the Xhosa, 1821–64' in Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, 165. For further discussion, see D. Chambers, 'The Church of Scotland's Nineteenth-Century Foreign Missions Scheme: Evangelical or Moderate Revival?', *Journal of Religious History*, 9 (1976), 115–38; Ian Douglas Maxwell, 'Civilization or Christianity? The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750–1835' in Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, 123–40; and Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 94, 105–6.

[20] The doctrine of psychic unity posited that 'all human groups shared the same general kind and level of intelligence and the same basic nature, although it was recognized that individuals within groups differed from one another to some extent.' See Bruce G. Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution: Calculation and Contingency* (Oxford, 1998), 32.

[21] James Beattie, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, In Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism* (2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1771), esp. 507–12. As Colin Kidd observes, Hume has been labelled as a 'racist' on the basis of a footnote that appeared in a revised version of his essay 'Of National Characters' in 1753, the content of which is at odds with many of his fundamental philosophical commitments. Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 93–4, 120; Stanley, 'Christianity and Civilization', 171. For a discussion of the influence of the Scottish Common Sense philosophy in English-speaking British North America, see A.B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (Montreal and Kingston, 2001).

[22] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), 60.

As suggested above, publications that recounted earlier exploits on the frontiers of mission may have served as one means of propelling these ideas into the latter part of the century, thus providing a buffer against the rise of racial biological determinism. In order to explore how this actually worked in practice, this paper will now proceed with an examination of the way in which the missionary philosophies of two early nineteenth-century missionaries – American Congregationalist Henry Lyman (1809–34) and Scottish Presbyterian William Chalmers Burns (1815–68) – continued to inspire the much later Chinese Sunday school movement through published accounts of their endeavours. Both Lyman and Burns had experienced conversions during the evangelical revivals of the 1820s and 1830s, and both had personal ties with Montreal which made their life stories of particular interest to the city's Congregational and Presbyterian communities.

III Henry Lyman: Marytr of Sumatra

We turn first to Henry Lyman, whose niece Grace Lyman initiated the first Chinese Sunday school in Montreal, at Emmanuel Congregational Church, in 1884. The Lyman family had originally emigrated from England to New England in the 1630s. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a number of members of the family moved north to Montreal, including Grace's father Theodore Lyman, a silversmith and jeweller. Grace's aunt, Hannah Willard Lyman, also moved to Montreal where she became a well-known ladies educator prior to taking up the position of first Lady Principal of Vassar College in 1865.[23] The member of the family most closely associated with the missionary frontier, however, was Grace's uncle Henry Lyman.

Born in Northampton, Massachusetts, Henry Lyman had a conversion experience in 1827 during the Second Great Awakening while studying at Amherst College. Having completed his theological training at Andover Theological Seminary, Lyman embarked on an exploratory mission to Sumatra in 1833 on behalf of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He had a strong desire to go where no missionary had gone before, and excitedly wrote in his diary on 9 May 1834 that he and his companion

[23] Arthur Lyman (ed.), *Genealogy of the Lyman Family in Canada: Ancestors and Descendants of Elisha Lyman From the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present Time* (Montreal, 1943); 'Hannah Lyman', *Vassar Encyclopedia*, http://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/index.php/Hannah_Lyman, accessed 24 March 2008.

Samuel Munson now stood 'on the verge of civilisation, just poising for a leap among the untamed savages, and the perils of exploring a new country.'[24] While Lyman survived for only a few months in Sumatra before being killed and devoured by cannibals, two book-length accounts of his experiences on the missionary frontier transmitted the story of his life and death to subsequent generations. The first to appear was the Reverend William Thompson's *Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Munson and the Rev. Henry Lyman, Late Missionaries to the Indian Archipelago, with the Journal of their Exploring Tour* (1839). This was followed in 1856 by *The Martyr of Sumatra: A Memoir of Henry Lyman*, an anonymous work commonly attributed to Hannah Willard Lyman.

It seems reasonable to assume that these accounts, as well as family stories about Henry Lyman, were familiar to his niece Grace. While it is impossible to track the wider circulation of these works within Montreal's Protestant community, some suggestive evidence is available. The copy of *The Martyr of Sumatra* that is currently housed in the Victoria University–Emmanuel College Library at the University of Toronto, for example, appears to have belonged during the 1860s to Mary Helen Dougall, the daughter of John Dougall–the Paisley-born editor of the evangelical *Montreal Daily Witness* newspaper.[25] The Dougall and Lyman families attended Henry Wilkes' Zion Congregational Church together for many years, with members of both families subsequently moving to Emmanuel Congregational Church in the more desirable uptown part of the city in the 1870s. It is therefore possible to state with some certainty that *The Martyr of Sumatra* was read beyond the confines of the Lyman family, while it also seems likely that the book circulated within the evangelical Congregational community in Montreal.

The Martyr of Sumatra draws extensively on Lyman's personal diaries and correspondence to emphasise his belief in the compatibility of Christian proclamation and the elevating capacity of rational knowledge. In one instance, the book quotes a letter written by Henry Lyman to his parents in

[24] William Thompson, *Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Munson and the Rev. Henry Lyman, Late Missionaries to the Indian Archipelago, with the Journal of their Exploring Tour* (New York, 1839), 108.

[25] 'M.H. Dougall, Jan. 1, 1866' is inscribed in pencil at the beginning of the book. There are also a number of additional stamps in the book bearing Montreal addresses. On the Dougall family, see 'John Dougall', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=5487&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=2k16b6lhkf23mkh2geb394s9i2, accessed 25 March 2009, as well as the recent biography of novelist Lily Dougall, one of John Dougall's daughters: Joanna Elizabeth Dean, *Religious Experience and the New Woman: The Life of Lily Dougall* (Bloomington, 2007), 17–33.

1830 from Andover Theological Seminary in which he argued that missions not only bring religious benefits to the heathen and raise standards of piety at home, but also give 'an impulse to science, literature, the arts, and the business of life'.[26] Elsewhere, the book quotes a letter written by Henry Lyman to his cousin Charles in January 1831. Having ransacked the bookstores and libraries of Boston in search of facts related to 'the woes and miseries of paganism' in order to write a dissertation on 'The Condition of Females in Heathen Countries', Henry Lyman reported that he had emerged 'fully confirmed in the missionary faith.' He attributed what he viewed as the degradation and immorality of women living in heathen countries to 'the ignorance in which they are kept', with most unable to either read or write.[27]

Other than through his reading, Henry Lyman's New England upbringing provided few opportunities for encounters with those of backgrounds and cultures different to his own. The sole exception to this was his work as a teacher in a 'colored' Sabbath school, which Lyman described as having given him a 'foretaste of missionary labor'.[28] Thus, it was only during his missionary travels that Lyman had the opportunity to put his beliefs to the test regarding the transformative potential of Christianity and education on those of other cultures and religions. *The Martyr of Sumatra* shares with its readers Lyman's impressions of encounters with Chinese, Malays and Javanese, as well as with members of the Nias and Batak tribes. He described Nias emigrants living on the Batu islands, for example, as being fairer in skin color than the Javanese or Malays and as having a 'cast of countenance … far superior to any other Asiatics I have met, many of them reminding me strongly of friends

[26] *The Martyr of Sumatra: A Memoir of Henry Lyman* (New York, 1856), 126–7.

[27] Ibid., 177–8. Henry Lyman delivered an address based on this research to a Montreal audience when visiting his sister in the spring of 1832. It was also published as a tract entitled *The Condition and Character of Females in Pagan and Mohammedan Countries* (2nd edition, Boston, 1831). As this publication makes clear, Henry Lyman consulted the works of authors holding views very different to his own in composing his dissertation. One footnote, for example, references the Jesuit and early French ethnographer Abbé Jean-Antoine Dubois. Dubois was a follower of Montesquieu whose *Letters on the State of Christianity in India; In which the Conversion of the Hindoos is Considered as Impracticable* (London, 1823) caused controversy in England for suggesting that large numbers of conversions were unlikely to take place in India because of the difficulty of undermining Hindu beliefs. See Paul Hockings, 'The Abbé Dubois, An Early French Ethnographer', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 11 (1977), 330, 334, 338–40. Lyman did not, however, draw attention to these doubts in his own publication.

[28] *The Martyr of Sumatra*, 61.

at home.'[29] He also praised them for their 'superiority of mind and elevation of character, their present exemption from vice, the looseness of their bonds to heathenism, their respect for foreigners, their love for the English,' all of which he thought made them 'white for the harvest.'[30] During his later visit to the Nias islands off the west coast of Sumatra, Lyman was so surprised to discover Malays who 'in point of intelligence and vivacity' approach 'so much nearer than the Malays of Java to Europeans' that he found it difficult to persuade himself that they were indeed 'pure Malay'.[31]

While such comments showed an awareness of skin colour, as well as a tendency to stereotype entire ethnic groups both positively and negatively, they did not reflect a belief in fixed and immutable racial hierarchies. Instead, they were a product of Lyman's mandate to discern which groups offered the best prospects for future mission work by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Schools and education were an integral part of this vision, and *The Martyr of Sumatra* leaves its readers with every reason to believe that Henry Lyman shared his missionary companion Samuel Munson's vision of mission schools as 'the engines with which God designs to break down the strongest bulwarks of superstition and idolatry'.[32] Similar sentiments were embedded in the Chinese Sunday schools in Montreal, and it is perhaps not surprising that Grace Lyman should have been inspired by some of the same ideas that led her uncle, fifty years earlier, to an early and memorable death on the missionary frontier.

Despite the pronounced American influences on the Chinese Sunday schools in Montreal, the ethnically-diverse character of the city's Congregational community meant that these ideas diffused rapidly amongst individuals of varied national origins. The important role played by such national synergies within the Congregational Church in Montreal is exemplified by the life of Henry Wilkes, the long-time minister of Zion Congregational Church. Born in England, Wilkes emigrated to Upper Canada with his parents in 1820 and moved to Montreal a few years later to take up a career in business. In the absence of a Congregational place of worship, he attended the American Presbyterian Church, which in 1825–6 participated in a northern extension of the revival responsible for Henry Lyman's conversion. Determined to enter

[29] Ibid., 353.

[30] Ibid., 359. Lyman was quoting Jesus' words from John 4:35: 'Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for the harvest'.

[31] Ibid., 383.

[32] Thompson, *Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Munson and the Rev. Henry Lyman*, 126.

the Congregational ministry as a result of this experience, as 'a loyal British subject' Wilkes decided to undertake his studies in Scotland rather than the United States and enrolled at the University of Glasgow as well as the Glasgow Theological Academy.[33] In the latter institution, Wilkes came under the tutelage of Greville Ewing and Ralph Wardlaw, individuals credited with having shaped 'a Scottish school of mission theory that combined evangelical zeal with confidence in the capacity of reason to support the claims of revelation.'[34]

Having lived in England, Canada and Scotland, and having been exposed to American influences, Wilkes was well placed to minister to First Congregational Church (later known as Zion Congregational Church)—a mixed congregation containing evangelicals of American, Scottish and English origin—upon his return to Montreal in 1836. Emmanuel Congregational church, which was an off-shoot of Zion, was an equally diverse congregation, with a membership in the late 1870s that was approximately 42 per cent Scottish, 41 per cent English, 12 per cent Irish and 3 per cent American.[35] For Congregationalists of Scottish origin in Montreal, this situation meant that their churches served as places of fusion and exchange between evangelicals of various national backgrounds to a much greater extent than was the case for their Presbyterian counterparts. It was in this environment that the city's earliest Chinese Sunday schools took root.

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[33] John Wood, *Memoir of Henry Wilkes, D.D., LL.D., His Life and Times* (Montreal and London, 1887), 46. See also 'Henry Wilkes', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=5900&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=3bf82t5fdn54hfg7eife8a9063, accessed 25 March 2009.

[34] Stanley, 'Christian Missions and the Enlightenment', 19; also Wood, *Memoir of Henry Wilkes*, 47–8. Biographies of Ewing and Wardlaw can be found in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9018 and http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28723, accessed 25 March 2009. Wilkes' reciprocal impact on Scottish Congregationalism should not, however, be underestimated. In the early 1830s, he delivered an evangelical sermon that was heard by Neil Livingstone, father of missionary-explorer David Livingstone. This sermon is said to have drawn the Livingstone family away from Presbyterianism and into the Congregational Church. See Wood, *Memoir of Henry Wilkes*, 52–3, and John Waddington, *Congregational History: 1850–1880*, vol. 5 (London, 1880), 78.

[35] 1881 Manuscript Census of Canada in digital format; *Yearbook of Emmanuel Church Montreal, for 1878, with Reports for 1877* (Montreal, 1878), 21–2, Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Conférence de l'Eglise unie du Canada, Emmanuel Congregational Church, P603 S2 SS13, contenant 157, doc. EMM/6. The percentage of Americans is likely to have been somewhat higher, given that many would have claimed to have been of English, Irish or Scottish origin. This is confirmed by the fact that approximately 8 per cent of the membership was born in the United States.

IV William Chalmers Burns: Scottish Revivalist and Missionary to China

In establishing their much larger network of Chinese Sunday schools in Montreal from the 1890s onwards, members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada – like their Congregationalist counterparts – drew inspiration from biographical accounts that connected the Montreal churches to earlier, and in this case Scottish, undertakings on the frontiers of mission.[36] One such narrative was to be found in the Reverend Islay Burns' exhaustive biography of his missionary brother, William Chalmers Burns, entitled *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns, M.A., Missionary to China from the English Presbyterian Church* (1870).

A son of the manse, William Chalmers Burns grew up in Kilsyth before pursuing further studies at the Aberdeen Grammar School and Marischal College. He subsequently moved to Edinburgh intending to become a lawyer, but a conversion experience in 1831 led him instead into the ministry. After returning to Aberdeen to complete his degree, Burns studied divinity at the University of Glasgow and developed a strong desire to devote himself to the foreign mission field. While awaiting a posting abroad, he became renowned for the great revivals that followed his preaching in Dundee and Kilsyth in 1839. After a number of years working as an evangelist in Scotland, Ireland, England and Canada, Burns finally received the foreign posting he had been longing for when he was appointed as the English Presbyterian Church's first missionary to China in 1847. An exceptionally dedicated missionary, he remained in China until his death over twenty years later.[37]

While Burns had less of an enduring family connection with Montreal than did Henry Lyman, he nevertheless devoted considerable attention to the city during his two years in Canada as a Free Church missionary in the wake of the Great Disruption in 1843. During his time in Montreal, he preached to

[36] The Presbyterian Church in Canada was formed in 1875 and brought together Church of Scotland and Canada Presbyterian Church congregations. The Canada Presbyterian Church had itself been formed in 1861 as a merger of the Canadian Synods of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church in Canada.

[37] Biographical information on William Chalmers Burns comes from 'William Chalmers Burns', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4095, accessed 25 March 2009, and Islay Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns, M.A., Missionary to China From the English Presbyterian Church* (3rd edition, London, 1870).

a number of congregations including the newly-established Coté Street Free Church as well as to Henry Wilkes' congregation.[38] His uncle, the Reverend Dr Robert Burns, also became well-known in Presbyterian circles in Montreal, having played an important role in the development of the Free Church in British North America.[39] The family connection was maintained into the early 1870s, when the Reverend Robert Ferrier Burns – Robert Burns' son – served as minister of the Coté Street Church for a five-year period.[40] During his time in the city, Robert Ferrier Burns observed that, despite having left Canada over a quarter of a century earlier, his late cousin W.C. Burns had nevertheless left 'footprints' wherever he had preached, such that 'in many part of the backwoods eyes will yet fill, and hearts heave, and voices become solemn and tender, when his name is spoken.'[41] W.C. Burns' association with Montreal was still remembered as late as 1897 when Presbyterians in the city commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of his appointment to China alongside the ninetieth anniversary of the arrival in China of pioneer Protestant missionary, Dr Robert Morrison.[42]

Given Burns' personal and family connections with Montreal, as well as his ability to make an enduring impression, the *Memoir* published by Islay Burns in 1870 seems likely to have been read with some interest within Presbyterian circles in the city. In doing so, those seeking to resist the racist ideologies of the later nineteenth century would have found much to reassure them. Prior to his departure for China, W.C. Burns accumulated considerable experience working on what might be described as the internal missionary frontiers of Scotland, Ireland and Canada. As well as evangelising French Canadians, Highlanders (in Scotland and Canada) and Irish Catholics (in Ireland and Canada) – picking

[38] Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns*, 262–3.

[39] Much to the regret of Montreal's 'Free Church Committee', Robert Burns turned down a call to become minister of the Coté Street Church in 1844 and instead agreed to leave his church in Paisley to become minister of Knox's Free Church in Toronto. See Robert Ferrier Burns, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Robert Burns … Including an Unfinished Autobiography* (Toronto, 1872), 201–3; also 'Robert Burns', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=4334&&PHPSESSID=hvq2uoju1tsbjvug6vvqn9m655, accessed 25 March 2009.

[40] William Jordan Rattray, *The Scot in British North America*, vol. 3 (Toronto, c.1880–1884), 862–3.

[41] Burns, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Robert Burns*, 209.

[42] *The Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Montreal, June 8–17, 1898* (Toronto, 1898), 205; *Crescent Street Presbyterian Church, Montreal (Presbyterian Church in Canada)–Annual Reports for the Year Ending 31st December, 1897* (Montreal, 1898), 27. A notable feature of the Morrison-Burns celebration was the participation of local Chinese Sunday school scholars.

up some French and Gaelic as he did so—Burns also preached to First Nations people in Sarnia (Canada West) as well as to former American slaves in Amherstburg (also in Canada West). Thus, in stark contrast with Henry Lyman, Burns had extensive intercultural experience and a proven facility with language upon which to draw when faced with China's varied regional cultures and dialects. By juxtaposing these encounters with one another and with his brother's later work in China, Islay Burns' narrative implicitly reinforces a belief in a universal humanity by implying that all peoples are equally capable, and in need, of conversion to Protestant Christianity.

Likewise, the narrative emphasises that all converts, regardless of whether they are Highlanders or Cantonese, must expect to abandon elements of their culture not seen as being compatible with evangelical Protestantism. Citing the testimony of the Reverend Alexander Cameron of Ardersier, who had worked among the Highlanders of Glengarry (Canada West) just after W.C. Burns' visit in the 1840s, the *Memoir* describes how Burns' preaching contributed to the demise of 'old customs and inveterate habits' such as balls, merry-making and New Year's festivals. More dramatically, it relates how 'some of the leaders in such things with their own hands cast their fiddles and bagpipes into the fire; and instead of the sounds of revelry the voice of praise and spiritual melody began to be heard in their dwellings.'[43] Burns' letters to his mother back in Scotland, which are extensively quoted in the *Memoir*, nevertheless demonstrated an awareness that the work of an evangelist in China differed considerably from that of an evangelist in Scotland. This was not because Chinese people were fundamentally different in any way, he suggested, but because they lacked prior knowledge of God, the Sabbath and the Bible.[44]

As was the case with Henry Lyman, Burns described some groups as more barbaric and less morally advanced than others. He had a low opinion of Malays, for example, who he considered to be 'awfully deceitful' and 'a simple people, rather fitted to obey than to rule'.[45] Likewise, he found the people in the district around Swatow [Shantou] in eastern Guangdong 'more blind and hardened in idolatry and sin' than any others he had encountered bar the denizens of Canton [Guangzhou], and was critical of the way in which local fishermen, boatmen and people working in the fields 'pursue their work in summer in a state of savage nudity'.[46] The *Memoir* even relates how, during

[43] Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns*, 284.
[44] Ibid., 359.
[45] Ibid., 318.
[46] Ibid., 452.

his stay in Canton [Guangzhou] in 1850–1, Burns had been tempted 'to doubt if the Chinese were in their present state even susceptible of those deep spiritual impressions which he had seen in former days and longed to see again'. This was not a rejection of his belief in the convertibility of all peoples, however, but rather a reflection of his willingness to consider the possibility that cultural and religious obstacles might make necessary 'a lengthened period of preparation, and the long and patient sowing of many labourers'.[47] Ultimately, however, the biography leaves its readers with a more encouraging description of Burns' participation in a successful awakening at Pechuia (near Amoy [Xiamen]) in 1854. Largely the initiative of Chinese convert Ong Chhiengchoan, the awakening resulted in many converts publicly destroying their idols and ancestral tablets.[48] 'What I see here,' wrote a reinvigorated Burns, 'makes me call to mind former days of the Lord's power in my native land.'[49] Scots and Chinese were not so different after all. Years later, the participation of Chinese Sunday school scholars in events such as the Morrison-Burns commemoration of 1897 served to reaffirm this belief within Montreal's Presbyterian community.

Given the sizeable Scottish Presbyterian community in Montreal, it is not surprising that they derived much of their foreign missionary impulse from Scottish sources. An 1854 tour of British North America by Scotland's famous missionary to India, Dr Alexander Duff, played an important role in raising the profile of foreign mission. Duff's visit inaugurated the movement that eventually led to George Leslie Mackay (who also studied under Duff while pursuing postgraduate studies in Edinburgh) being sent as the Canada Presbyterian Church's first missionary to China in 1871.[50] Duff's influence was not, however, confined to Canada's Scottish Presbyterian community. He presented his three-hour address at the St James Street Methodist Church in Montreal to an audience composed of Protestant Montrealers of all

[47] Ibid., 374.

[48] Ibid., 407. For more on the Pechuia awakening, see David Cheung (Chen Yiqiang), *Christianity in Modern China: The Making of the First Native Protestant Church* (Leiden, 2004), esp. 208–25, 236–49.

[49] Burns, *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns*, 410.

[50] John S. Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto, 1987), 149–50. On the lives of Alexander Duff and George Leslie Mackay, see 'Alexander Duff', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8167?docPos=1, accessed 25 March 2009, and 'George Leslie Mackay', *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=6874&interval=25&&PHPSESSID=ofh1ufatlnvmh7jnp1rvfs34m2, accessed 25 March 2009.

denominations, including the Reverend Henry Wilkes of the Congregational Church.[51] Likewise, however significant the Scottish missionary impulse may have been, Montreal's Presbyterians were not immune to American influences. Their commitment to missionary work in China not only led them to participate in the pan-denominational Chinese Sunday school movement, which had its origins in the United States, but also to look to Joseph Clarke Thomson, an American – albeit one of Scottish origin, when seeking an experienced missionary to lead their Chinese mission work in Montreal in the 1890s.

V Looking Backwards: Chinese Sunday Schools in the late Nineteenth Century

Henry Lyman's and William Chalmers Burns' experiences on the missionary frontier lived on, not only in the published accounts of their lives, but also in the work of the Chinese missions in Montreal. An important strand of their influence can be found in the active efforts of those involved in Chinese Sunday school work in Montreal to counter racist attacks on Chinese Canadians, accompanied by their continued adherence to a conversionist outlook. In many other sectors of society, faith in the ability of missionaries to serve as agents of civilisation had been undermined by mounting evidence that even sustained efforts to educate and convert indigenous peoples did not necessarily lead them to embrace European ways.[52] For some, this lent credence to the belief that pronounced biological differences existed between different human groups, a view which – when combined with the much longer time frame of Darwinian evolution – could now be adopted without having to abandon a monogenic theory of human origins.[53] While the idea

[51] Wood, *Memoir of Henry Wilkes*, 165.

[52] See Harris, *Making Native Space*, 10–4; Alan Lester, 'Review Article: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 29 (2003), 280; Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 283; and Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, 64.

[53] Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, 63–4. Such beliefs reflected the understanding of human evolution that existed in the late nineteenth century. As archaeologist Bruce Trigger explains, 'No one realized in the late nineteenth century [just] how long human evolution had taken and hence how wide was the gap between all living apes and humans. It is now accepted that what human beings are today, both intellectually and emotionally, has been shaped by natural selection operating for millions of years on scavengers and hunter-gatherers who lived in small groups. Hence it is not surprising that the biological basis for human behaviour is everywhere much the same, even if human beings in different parts of the world have come to look different from one

that such differences were insurmountable was incompatible with missionary endeavour, the attitudes of missionaries who had come to the conclusion that 'lesser' peoples could only be improved over very long periods of time were often virtually indistinguishable from those of scientific racists.[54]

Even within the Presbyterian Church in Canada there were those who had come to the conclusion that Chinese immigrants were effectively unassimilable. Thus, in his influential 1912 publication, *Our Task in Canada*, Presbyterian minister Roderick George MacBeth presented a range of arguments favouring the $500 head tax designed to prevent Chinese from entering Canada. While not abandoning his belief that it would ultimately be possible to turn immigrants belonging to 'inferior races and lower civilizations' into 'Christian citizens of Canada', MacBeth nevertheless feared that uncontrolled immigration would prove overwhelming.[55] Such arguments contributed to the eventual implementation of the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act in 1923 just as much as the more explicit racism of biological determinists.

In contrast, those participating in the Chinese missions in Montreal were some of the most vocal critics of discriminatory policies. They criticised and in some cases protested against the Canadian government's head tax, as well as a municipal water tax designed to put Chinese laundrymen out of business. They also condemned violent attacks on Chinese Montrealers and on their property, and took a stand against anti-Chinese advertising in local newspapers.[56]

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another as a result of natural selection adapting them to various environments.' See Trigger, 'Daniel Wilson', 71.

[54] For further discussion of the impact of changing attitudes towards 'race' on Protestant missionary thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Ross, 'Christian Missions', 93–101.

[55] Roderick George MacBeth, *Our Task In Canada* (Toronto, 1912), 21; for his arguments in favour of severely restricting Chinese immigration, see 80–3. For further discussion of MacBeth's views, see Wang, *'His Dominion'*, 97–8.

[56] Examples can be found in the following sources: Minutes Monthly Congregational Meetings including Committee Reports 1899–1902, 21 January 1901, Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Conférence de l'Eglise unie du Canada, Emmanuel Congregational Church, P603 S2 SS13, contenant 155, doc. EMM/1/7/3; Presbytery of Montreal (Presbyterian Church in Canada), *Minutes of Meeting of the Presbytery of Montreal (of the Presbyterian Church in Canada) 1884–1900* (Montreal, 1884–1900), December 1895, March 1896, September 1896, June 1899 (a copy of these minutes can be found in The Joseph C. McLelland Library, Presbyterian College, Montreal); American Presbyterian Church Men's League Minutes 1912–1920, 18 February 1915, 23 February 1915, 3 March 1915, Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Conférence de l'Eglise unie du Canada, American Presbyterian Church, P603 S2 SS14, contenant 168, doc. AME/15/3 A65.

At a congregational level, such activities rarely led to the recording of profound reflections on issues of race, culture, evolution or theology, with racist actions frequently being denounced primarily on the basis of the negative impact that they had on the mission work itself both at home and abroad. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that these actions in defence of Chinese reflected active resistance to the doctrines of biological racism. Speaking of the mission work among Chinese in nearby Toronto in 1904, the Reverend A.B. Winchester attributed the 'bright promise' of this field to the community at large not being 'tainted with the heresy that the Chinese are made of a different kind of clay from the Anglo-Saxon'.[57] Those involved in Chinese mission work in Montreal received a similar commendation from an unnamed 'distinguished Chinese official': 'I am fully convinced,' he reported, 'that towards the Chinese they truly practice the precept "Love thy neighbour as thyself", and do not discriminate on account of difference of race.'[58] Underpinning such behaviour was an ongoing commitment to the value of human beings as individuals. Addressing the Montreal Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1900, Vice President Mrs R. Campbell reminded her audience that while social scientists might be preoccupied with the rights of individuals in relation to the nation or to the state, Christian thinkers and workers were instead concerned with the value of the person as 'an individual soul which can only be saved or lost'.[59]

While those participating in the Chinese Sunday schools refused to endorse the idea that Europeans were biologically superior to other human groups, their belief that all people were capable of benefiting from cultural and religious development along western lines nevertheless remained profoundly ethnocentric. Evidence of this included a tendency to view Montreal's emerging Chinatown as highly objectionable, although for different reasons than their mainstream racist counterparts. Mission workers were particularly upset when a Chinese temple containing what was described as a large gilded 'idol' was established in Montreal's Chinatown in 1899. Having called a special meeting, they expressed regret that a 'heathen place of worship' had been opened in their midst and called upon the city's Chinese population to have the

[57] *The Globe* (Toronto), 16 February 1904.

[58] *The Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Montreal, June 8–17, 1898* (Toronto, 1898), 206.

[59] *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Montreal, 1900), 11, The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives (Toronto), Montreal Women's Missionary Society Collection, 1988–7001–1–2.

temple closed.[60] In other words, Chinatown was seen as undesirable because it was understood as a rejection of western cultural and religious influences. In contrast, the Presbytery minutes of 1902 waxed lyrical about a special gathering of Chinese at Knox Presbyterian Church, recounting how their 'neat, cleanly appearance, their intelligent looking faces, [and] their appreciation of the exercises, showed them to be men capable of great usefulness, were they truly enlightened and regenerated by the gospel of Jesus Christ.'[61]

Similar tensions can be found in the missionary literature on the plight of women in China, a genre that was consumed avidly by members of the women's missionary societies in Montreal. Despite attempting to contradict some of the worst stereotypes that existed in western minds about Chinese women and their family lives, books such as *China's New Day* (1912) by American missionary Isaac Headland portrayed even educated Chinese women as lacking developed faculties of reason.[62] As was the case in Henry Lyman's much earlier publication on *The Condition and Character of Females in Pagan and Mohammedan Countries* (1831), such caricatures were necessary because they left vital space for the gospel and western civilisation to liberate Chinese from their perceived backwardness.[63] While Chinese Christians and missionary-associated Chinese in North America are known to have publicly expressed their objections to the way in which some western missionaries portrayed their home culture, the attitudes that had underpinned Protestant missionary endeavour for over a century proved highly resistant to change.[64]

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[60] *The Montreal Daily Witness*, 2 June 1899.

[61] Montreal Presbytery Records 1895–1905, March 1902, Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Église presbytérienne, P602, contenant 53, doc. P/9/3.

[62] Isaac Taylor Headland, *China's New Day: A Study of Events That Have Led to its Coming* (West Medford, 1912), 48–9. Members of the women's missionary societies at both the American Presbyterian Church and St James Methodist Church in Montreal selected this book for study in 1912. See Minutes of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society 1910–1913, 16 September 1912, Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Conférence de l'Eglise unie du Canada, American Presbyterian Church, P603 S2 SS14, contenant 173, doc. A148, and Minutes of the St James Auxiliary of the W.M.S. 1912–1922, 10 December 1912, Archives nationales du Québec, Fonds Conférence de l'Eglise unie du Canada, St James United (Methodist) Church, P603 S2 SS42, contenant 312, doc. STJ/26/2.

[63] For further discussion of this idea, see Stanley, 'Christianity and Civilization', 170.

[64] Huie Kin, 'Reminiscences of an Early Chinese Minister (1932)' in Judy Yung, Gordon H. Chang and Him Mark Lai (eds), *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Berkeley, 2006), 60–1.

VI Conclusions

American historian Peggy Pascoe has argued that mission work very similar to that performed by the Chinese Sunday schools served in the United States as a bridge between the liberal-evangelical humanitarianism of the early nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth-century attack on biological determinism.[65] Those involved in the Chinese Sunday school work in Montreal did indeed promote anti-discriminatory policies that would gain more widespread support during the second half of the twentieth century. From a nineteenth-century perspective, however, they are perhaps more accurately seen as having fallen behind the times, holding onto an earlier understanding of human nature largely derived from evangelicalism's reconciliation of the core truths of Christianity with the insights of the Scottish Enlightenment. It was their belief in the doctrine of universal salvation, combined with their commitment to the unity of humankind and the illuminating capacity of rational knowledge, which made them optimistic that they could transform those deemed to be backward and heathen into civilised Christians very much like themselves. This perspective commendably resisted more racist formulations, but has been described by Canadian historical geographer Cole Harris as 'allowing next to no room for continuing cultural difference, and hardly a hint of the idea that there were different forms of civilised human societies.'[66]

As has been demonstrated above, narratives of pioneering endeavours on the missionary frontier, such as *The Martyr of Sumatra* and the *Memoir of the Rev. Wm. C. Burns*, helped to perpetuate this vision. Such narratives carried additional weight due to the fact that both Lyman and Burns were personally known to members of the Congregational and Presbyterian communities in Montreal. This suggests that personal, familial and denominational networks may have played an important role in ensuring that older beliefs about a common humanity and the convertibility of all peoples remained strong in the face of the growing racism of the nineteenth century.

Finally, this study raises the question of whether past research on Scottish diaspora communities may not have been overly-committed to identifying the realms in which both authentic and inventive expressions of 'Scottishness' can be found. This has led to emphasis being placed on overtly 'ethnic' expressions of Scottish identity such as Caledonian Societies and Highland Games, and on the isolation of explicitly Scottish contributions to overseas

[65] Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 117.
[66] Harris, *Making Native Space*, 9.

societies. In doing so, however, it has diverted scholars from also exploring the myriad ways in which Scottish Canadians were themselves transformed by their encounter with North America and with the wider world.[67] The present study has drawn attention to the importance of transatlantic evangelicalism in spurring interactions across national and denominational borders. Despite living in the United States, Scotland and Canada respectively, young men such as Henry Lyman, William Chalmers Burns and Henry Wilkes went through very similar conversion experiences during the evangelical revivals of the 1820s and 1830s. The ministries of these individuals then contributed to the further convergence of Protestant evangelicalism within a transatlantic context, with Lyman preaching in Canada, Burns evangelising in Ireland, Canada and England, and Wilkes advocating a more American style of revivalism during his time in Scotland.[68] Ethnically and religiously mixed communities such as that in Montreal provided further opportunities for migrants of Scottish origin to exchange ideas with those of other national backgrounds. This was especially true for Scottish Congregationalists in Montreal who, in contrast with their Scottish Presbyterian counterparts, generally found themselves worshipping in churches in which no single ethnic group formed a clear majority. These transnational and interethnic interactions played a vital role in creating the common ground that enabled later North American evangelical undertakings such as the Chinese Sunday schools to secure support across denominational, ethnic and national boundaries.

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[67] While the emphasis of this paper is on interaction and mutual transformation rather than assimilation, Edward Cowan has identified 'the Scottish desire to assimilate' as 'a subject which has received far too little attention'. Edward J. Cowan, 'The Myth of Scotch Canada' in Marjory Harper and Michael E. Vance (eds), *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory: Scotia and Nova Scotia c.1700–1990* (Halifax and Edinburgh, 1999), 66.

[68] Based on his experience at the American Presbyterian Church in Montreal, Henry Wilkes published a series of articles in *The Christian Herald* (a Scottish Congregationalist publication) in order to inform Scottish readers about the revivals of religion then taking place in North America. See *The Christian Herald*, April 1829, 138–9, and May 1829, 175–6. I would like to thank Dr William D. McNaughton, historian of Scottish Congregationalism and minister of the West End Congregational Church, Kirkcaldy, for providing me with photocopies of these articles.