

Centring the Suburb, Focusing on the Family: Calgary's Anglican and Alliance Churches, 1945–1969

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During the postwar period, suburbanization shaped the relationship between church and family in the Anglican and Alliance churches of Calgary, Alberta. As churches ran ministries that reached out to suburban families, they also weighed in on the challenges modernity posed to family life. Though family was central to both the Anglicans and the Alliance, it was understood and addressed in different ways by the two communities.

Durant l'après-guerre, la suburbanisation occupait une place charnière dans les relations entre l'église et la famille pour les églises anglicane et de l'Alliance de Calgary, en Alberta. Tout en dirigeant des ministères tendant la main aux familles des banlieues, les églises réfléchissaient également aux défis de la modernité pour la vie familiale. Si la famille était capitale tant pour les Anglicans que pour l'Alliance, les deux communautés la comprenaient et l'abordaient différemment.

[W]e have been in a pleasant place “in the heart of the city for the hearts of the city.” A forward look challenges our hearts to a more energetic and effective ministry of outreach in a new location. . . . With the relocation, we will have to re-evaluate and re-think our entire ministry. With the new home and new approaches to our ministry will come new faces and new families.¹

WITH THESE WORDS, the pastor of First Alliance Church in Calgary, Alberta, reflected on the philosophical implications of the church's relocation in 1969. The move entailed a rethinking of the church's outreach philosophy, which had been “Christ, Cross, City-Centred.” It did not mark an abrupt change, but rather the culmination of two decades of shift away from an urban-based ministry in favour of family-focused, suburb-centred ministries. The pastor's remark highlights one of the most significant questions Canadian churches faced in the postwar period: how to

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1 First Alliance Church, Calgary, Alberta [hereafter FAC], *Annual Report*, “Pastor's Report,” 1968.

respond to the changing social geography and culture of Canadian cities. Focusing on the relationship between churches, families, and the postwar suburb, this study considers the efforts of two Protestant churches to come to grips with the physical and social impact of suburban life and explores the ways in which religious rhetoric reflected, reinforced, and reframed broader social discourses regarding family life in postwar Calgary.

One of the most iconic and pervasive images of postwar North American life is the suburb. While suburbs were not a creation of the postwar period, appearing in a variety of forms in North American cities beginning in the late nineteenth century, the rapid spread and homogeneity of the postwar corporate suburb marked a departure from earlier suburban development. According to Richard Harris, through measures such as the *National Housing Act* (1938) and the creation of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (1946), “[d]iversity was slowly ironed out by the growing influence of the [Canadian] state.”² By 1960, large-scale corporate housing development dominated the urban landscape, with significant ramifications. Suburban living became “both the norm and the ideal” for Canadians, in a process of “creeping conformity, not only of the suburbs but also of certain aspects of Canadian society.”³ Notably, Harris points to the lack of class diversity in postwar suburbs and their uniformity in terms of age and family structure that was to a degree greater than perhaps ever before or since.

Suburbanization coincided with the postwar baby boom, and the purchase of a suburban home was part of a “child-centred strategy” that many Canadians embraced.⁴ In this period, perhaps like no other, the family was invested with individual and social significance. According to Doug Owsram, “Though family has always been central to social institutions, during the fifteen years or so after the Second World War the values of marriage and family were exalted to new levels. The young adults of the 1940s were the most domestically oriented generation of the twentieth century.”⁵ Even more significant than the relative importance of family on an individual level was the “intensely pro-family climate” of the postwar era.⁶ Historians have demonstrated that the family was a topic of considerable public discussion and concern, and domestic life was

2 Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada Became Suburban, 1900–1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 106.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 6–7.

4 Veronica Strong-Boag, “Home Dreams: Women and the Suburban Experiment in Canada, 1945–60,” *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 72, no. 4 (1991), p. 488.

5 Doug Owsram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 12.

6 Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920–1960* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 129.

believed to be of great political, economic, and social consequence.⁷ The family was seen as the most significant form of social organization and as the foundation for the future well-being of the nation.

Churches were not incidental to family life or to suburbanization in postwar Canada, nor were they unaffected by the currents of change. Church leaders had long concerned themselves with the place of religion in the urban environment. The urbanization that had accompanied nineteenth-century industrialization in Western Europe and North America had evoked both condemnation of cities as sites of sin, darkness, and irreligion — “the myth of the unholy city” — and optimism about cities as places of promise and possibility — “a city on a hill.”⁸ The changing nature of Canadian cities in the postwar period demanded a rethinking of the church’s role in the city, made all the more necessary by the popularity of suburbs among Protestantism’s target constituency, the family. Just as significant as the question of how to adapt to changes in the social geography of the cityscape was the question of what it all meant for family life and religious practice.

While scholars have examined the postwar family with respect to popular culture, psychological discourse, and educational and legal systems, the relationship between family and church during this period has received little in-depth analysis.⁹ There are excellent studies of religion and family in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Canada, including the work of Lynne Marks and Marguerite Van Die, but religious faith and practice are notably absent from social histories on the postwar period.¹⁰ This is particularly striking in light of the growth that took

7 Notable examples include Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Joy Parr, *Domestic Goods: The Material, the Moral, and the Economic in the Postwar Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics: Montreal Families and Postwar Reconstruction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

8 On “the myth of the unholy city” in late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, see Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800–2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 18–30, 145–149. The phrase “a city on a hill” is that of Puritan John Winthrop, cited in Etan Diamond, *Souls of the City: Religion and the Search for Community in Postwar America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 4.

9 These include Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*; Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women*; Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

10 Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Small Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Marguerite Van Die, *Religion, Family, and Community in Victorian Canada: The Colbys of Carrollcroft* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005). See also the collection of articles in Nancy Christie, ed., *Households of Faith: Family, Gender and Community in Canada, 1760–1969* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002). Of the 11 articles in the volume, two deal with the postwar period. One of these is by Michael Gauvreau, whose recent work is an exception to my characterization here, in that it addresses the relationship between family and

place within Canadian churches following the Second World War. Consequently, there is risk that we may be obscuring the degree to which churches remained a central component of postwar life and may fail fully to understand modern discourses on “the family” — a conversation of which churches, their leaders and members, were very much a part.

Articles by Tina Block and Nancy Christie have begun “to consider the ways in which Canadian churches and religion helped to shape the sexual, gender, and family norms” of the postwar period.¹¹ Block explores the construction of heterosexual norms in the context of two urban Victoria churches, one United and one Pentecostal. She argues that, while both churches underscored Christian “family values” based on heterosexual marriage, the United Church did so while embracing modern notions of companionate gender relations. In contrast, the Pentecostals rejected secular discourses regarding heterosexual relationships and, by “insist[ing] that the individual’s relationship with God take precedence over family relationships,” they “subtly undercut the significance attached to heterosexual couplehood.”¹² Like Block, Christie considers ideas about marriage and sexuality within the postwar United Church, but at the national rather than the local level. She exposes a remarkable shift in United Church theology, arguing that within a few short decades clergymen came to promote the sexual fulfilment of both men and women within the marital relationship as a spiritual act with legitimacy even apart from procreative purposes. According to Christie, male church leaders believed that, if women were emotionally and sexually fulfilled at home, they would be less inclined to pursue paid work outside the home. Ironically, in their attempt to contain societal change, mainstream Protestant churches led the way in redefining family and sexual relations. Block and Christie offer insight into the ways churches negotiated and shaped assumptions about gender and sexuality in Canadian society. This discussion shifts the focus to parenting and family life. I ask, how did churches envision their relationship to postwar families and their members? How did religious rhetoric relate to broader social discourses of the family? In what ways did Protestant ideas about the family change in the postwar context?

church in mid-twentieth-century Canada: *The Catholic Origins of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution, 1931–1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006). The other article, by Nancy Christie, is discussed below.

11 Tina Block, “‘Boy meets Girl’: Constructing Heterosexuality in Two Victoria Churches, 1945–1960,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 10 (1999), p. 279; Nancy Christie, “Sacred Sex: The United Church and the Privatization of the Family in Post-War Canada” in Christie, ed., *Households of Faith*.

12 Block, “‘Boy meets Girl,’” pp. 295, 282.

These questions are addressed through a comparison of the discourse and activities within two Protestant denominations — the Anglican Church of Canada and the Christian and Missionary Alliance — in one particular city setting — Calgary, Alberta — between 1945 and 1969.¹³ While the arguments made here reflect particular aspects of the Calgary experience, the approach shares in a growing interest in the history of the urban Prairie West and its commonalities with other Canadian urban centres.¹⁴ Between 1951 and 1971, Calgary's population swelled from 129,000 to 403,000. Likewise, the Canadian population surged during these decades as a result of the postwar baby boom and high levels of immigration. A growth factor particular to Calgary was the oil boom that began in Alberta in 1947 when the Leduc oil well blew, giving rise to an array of exploration, production, processing, and distribution industries in Calgary that stimulated the economy as a whole.¹⁵ Calgary surpassed Edmonton to become the leading financial centre in Alberta, and economic opportunity drew people to Calgary from nearby rural areas, across Canada, and beyond. As Max Foran explains, through the city of Calgary's willingness to give developers free rein and their shared belief that land annexation was necessary to supply affordable family housing, the area occupied by the city sprawled from 40 square miles to 151 square miles between 1956 and 1961.¹⁶ The variables contributing to Calgary's growth were distinct, but its urban development mirrored that of other Canadian cities in that it was increasingly suburban in nature.

Through a consideration of two distinct expressions of Protestantism, this study reveals the difficulty of characterizing a generic Protestant discourse of the family. As a confessional church, Anglicanism stressed "the corporate, doctrinal, and liturgical idiom of historic Protestantism"; participation in corporate worship and, in particular, the sacraments of

13 Sources on the Anglican Church include proceedings of the biannual synod meetings of the Anglican Diocese of Calgary, the monthly diocesan publication *The Sower*, and minutes from regional branches of organizations such as the Women's Auxiliary. While the Anglican Diocese of Calgary included much of southern Alberta, the Cathedral was located in the city, making it the heart of the diocese functionally and geographically. Sources on the Alliance Church in Calgary include minutes from church board meetings, annual reports, district conference proceedings, and church membership applications. Special permission has provided me access to these sources, and I have agreed not to use individual names. Because this study is concerned with the Anglican and Alliance communities in Calgary, rather than particular figures within these groups, I do not believe that this commitment detracts in any way from my findings.

14 I am influenced by the reflections and project of Valerie Korinek, who critiques a "misplaced notion of prairie solitude" in "A Queer Eye View of the Prairies: Restoring Queer Histories to the West" (paper presented at the Western Canadian Studies Conference, Edmonton, June 19, 2008).

15 Richard P. Baine, *Calgary: An Urban Study* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1973), p. 30.

16 Max Foran, *Expansive Discourse: Urban Sprawl in Calgary, 1945–1978* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009), p. 46.

baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist formed the foundation of Christian life and community.¹⁷ Anglicanism enjoyed a long, distinguished history in English-speaking Canada, the colonial legacy of the church reflected in the name it held until 1955, the Church of England in Canada.¹⁸ The Christian and Missionary Alliance, on the other hand, was a relatively young movement that had emerged in the United States and nearly simultaneously in Canada in the late nineteenth century. In the postwar period it remained closely tied to the United States as a division of the “national” organization based in New York.¹⁹ The Alliance embraced a theology consistent with George Marsden’s simple definition of evangelicalism, one centred on “the proclamation of Christ’s saving work through his death on the cross and the necessity of personally trusting him for eternal salvation,” with a particular emphasis on home and foreign missions.²⁰ The doctrine of the four-fold gospel, “Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King,” was the cornerstone of the Alliance movement.²¹

Both denominations experienced numerical growth nationally and locally over the course of the fifties and sixties, although the number of Anglican adherents expressed as a percentage of the population declined

17 D. G. Hart, *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), p. xxiv.

18 Special Collections, University of Calgary Library [hereafter SCUCL], Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, “General Synod 1955,” October 1955.

19 Lindsay Reynolds has authored a two-volume history of the Alliance in Canada: *Footprints: The Beginnings of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada* (Toronto: Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1982) and *Rebirth: The Redevelopment of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada* (Willowdale, ON: Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, 1992). The origins of the movement are discussed by Darrel R. Reid, “Towards a Fourfold Gospel: A. B. Simpson, John Salmon, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada” in George Rawlyk, ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), pp. 271–288. Organized as an inter-denominational “fraternal union of believers,” the CMA did not officially become a denomination until 1974, but it had functioned as such for some time, having its own churches, ordaining ministers, and running institutions to train Christian workers. A church magazine article about the 1974 decision declared: “After 87 years as a para-denominational organization dedicated to missionary activity, the Christian and Missionary Alliance has officially recognized what many people have known for years: the Alliance is a denomination.” See “CMA Converts to Denominational Status,” *Eternity*, August 1974, p. 8, cited in Eugene Francis Rivard, “The Hymnody of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (1891–1978) as a Reflection of its Theology and Development” (DMA thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1991), pp. 225, 44. For this reason and for ease of terminology, I use the term “denomination” in reference to the Alliance.

20 George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 2.

21 Faith-healing within the Alliance tradition is one strand of the practice explored by James Opp in *The Lord for the Body: Religion, Medicine, and Protestant Faith Healing in Canada, 1880–1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005).

during this period. In Calgary, the number of Anglicans grew from 27,341 to 55,200 between 1951 and 1971, but declined as a percentage of the population from 21.2 per cent to 13.7 per cent (a drop that brought it more in line with the national figures, in which Anglicans represented 14.7 per cent of the Canadian population in 1951 and 11.8 per cent in 1971). The Alliance was a small religious group, but it experienced dramatic growth in the postwar period. Between 1951 and 1971, the number of Canadians affiliated with the Alliance denomination nearly quadrupled, from 6,396 to 23,630; by the end of the period it accounted for 0.1 per cent of religious adherence in Canada, slightly higher than the percentage of Unitarians or Free Methodists. The Christian and Missionary Alliance was strongest in Western Canada. In Alberta, it grew from 0.20 to 0.34 per cent of religious affiliation during this same period.²² The First Alliance Church in Calgary was established in 1939; from a charter membership of 20, it grew to approximately 120 members by 1951 and maintained an average membership of around 450 throughout the 1960s. In the 1971 census, 1,055 Calgarians declared affiliation with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Among the members of First Alliance Church were those with a wide variety of prior church connections, including Baptist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and United. It would also become the “home church” of such distinguished Alberta personalities as Ernest and Preston Manning.²³

While family was central to both groups, practically and theologically speaking, it was understood and addressed in different ways by Calgary’s Anglican and Alliance churches. As they erected new buildings in areas of suburban growth and reached out to families through their messages and their programmes, they also weighed in on the meaning of modern life and how families could best face the challenges that it posed. Calgary’s Anglicans espoused somewhat conflicting views of the family. On one hand, they idealized its mutually supportive relationship

22 Census data taken from the 1971 Census of Canada, Bul.1.3–3, Tables 9–10 and 13, and *1971 Census of Canada Profile Studies*, Vol. 5 (Part 1), Tables 1–2. Canadians of no religious persuasion were classified as “other” or “no religion,” 1961 being the first year the latter appeared as a category on census forms. As Bruce Curtis’s work makes clear, census records are political creations and not to be mistaken for “objective data.” See Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). Census figures for denominational distribution, for example, do not convey the level of attachment or participation by Canadians who declared themselves Anglican or Alliance. Given the historical prominence and mainstream position of Anglicanism in Canada in comparison to the Christian and Missionary Alliance, it seems likely that a greater proportion of Canadians who identified as Anglican had loose church affiliation than those who associated themselves with the Alliance.

23 After moving to Calgary upon retirement, Ernest Manning and his wife Muriel joined their son Preston’s family in attending First Alliance Church. Lloyd Mackey, *The Pilgrimage of Stephen Harper* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2005), p. 65.

to the church and promoted the Christian family as a solution to contemporary social problems. In doing so, Anglicans drew on popular psychological discourse to make claims about the church's ability to partner with parents in raising "healthy," "normal" children. On the other hand, however, Anglicans feared that the family was being jeopardized by modern life. Of special concern were suburban values that appeared to threaten church involvement, particularly leisure activities, consumerism, and permissive parenting styles. Efforts to shore up the modern family and strengthen its church ties were largely directed at adults, as the parents and teachers of the next generation. In contrast, the Alliance held a vision of the Christian family as one that was, by definition, free from social problems such as divorce and juvenile delinquency. While Anglicans embraced psychological discourse in discussions of the family, members of the Alliance Church defined the issues in spiritual terms and presented conversion as the solution. They looked to Christ as the means of redemption from personal and familial unhappiness and strife. Alliance Church ministries were family-focused, but they also appealed to children as individuals in their own right in need of salvation.

Discussions of family life within the Calgary Anglican diocese went hand-in-hand with suburban growth. In his study of churches and suburbanization in postwar Indianapolis, Etan Diamond suggests, "As an institution structured around community and rooted to particular places of worship, religion could not help but be shaped by the constant swirl of physical and social mobility that dominated the metropolis . . . metropolitan changes sparked changes in the religious landscape and, in particular, in the ways people experienced a sense of community."²⁴ For established, centrally located churches, suburbanization altered the nature of the community and sometimes led to a loss of members. In 1961, one such parish reported decreased attendance and suggested the cause was "due mainly to migration of young Anglican families to popular residential areas."²⁵ Suburbanization also presented an opportunity, however: in new neighbourhoods lacking public institutions such as schools, libraries, and community centres, churches could provide a focal point for community interaction. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Anglican Diocese of Calgary embarked on a Church Extension Programme to erect churches in new suburbs such as Forest Lawn and to build additions to existing churches now filled with young families. The experience of Christ Church is exemplary of the kind of expansion underway during the postwar period. Located in the suburb of Elbow Park, not far from the downtown core, it reported growth in affiliation from 300 families to 825

24 Diamond, *Souls of the City*, pp. 2–3.

25 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Problems Come With Parish Changes," March 1961.

between 1944 and 1960. To accommodate the growth, the church was rebuilt and a parish hall added; in addition, a mission operated by Christ Church in south Calgary became the independent parish of St. Philip's during this period.²⁶

Anglican clergy were among those who felt the pull of suburbia. An article on the new rectory at one of the parishes in the diocese, tellingly entitled "Model Rectory — Good for Church and Community," highlighted some of the specific features of suburban homes that many postwar Canadians found attractive. The article read:

[T]he house combines convenience and space for gracious, comfortable living, and for the business and social activities required of a clergy residence. Feature[d] is the rector's study with direct access from the front hall. Three bedrooms on the main floor, and attractive sleeping quarters in the fully finished basement make provision for the overnight guests so often accommodated at rectories. The kitchen is roomy, with built-in cupboards and all the fixtures.

The house was declared "a credit to the Church and the pride and joy of St. Mark's rector . . . and his family."²⁷

"Convenience" and "space" were valued by this Anglican rector and, it would appear, by many other Anglicans in Calgary as well. The Anglican Church was drawn to new suburban areas by their key constituency — families. Calgary developers did not specifically allocate property for churches within neighbourhood zoning, so it was up to the initiative of religious organizations and suburban residents themselves to secure space for churches in the new suburbs. In January 1962, *The Sower* gave a report on the dedication of The Church of the Holy Nativity, located "in Calgary's newest parish of Fairview and Acadia." According to the article, a church worker surveyed the neighbourhoods in late 1960 and identified 135 Anglican families already living there. A little over a year later, a church was erected and dedicated in the area. The diocesan magazine reported, "Bishop C. dedicated Holy Nativity on St. Nicolas' Day, Dec. 6, in praise of the patron saint of children, the church having been named Holy Nativity by the bishop because there are so many children in the new southern suburbs."²⁸

26 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Consecration," March 1960.

27 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Model Rectory — Good for Church and Community," September 1960.

28 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "'Expansion' Watchword in Acadia," January 1962.

Why were Calgary's Anglican churches so eager to expand into the new suburban areas? For the most part, the Anglican Diocese of Calgary did not engage in active evangelism outside the church; rather, it emphasized Christian nurture and saw the family as central to the transmission of faith from one generation to the next. As such, the Christian family was a vital partner to the Church. Parents were expected to play a central role in introducing children to the faith and supporting them in their Christian development. This was plainly demonstrated in the service of baptism, which included a commitment by parents to fulfil the following duties

Use all diligence . . . to see that he [the child] be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life; and to that end you should teach him to pray, and bring him to take his part in public worship.

Take care that he be taught the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism; and then that he be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him; so that he may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and may come to receive the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, and go forth into the world to serve God faithfully in the fellowship of his Church.²⁹

The home was presented as the place where the seeds of faith should first be instilled. A group called "Little Helpers" was a department of the Anglican Church specifically concerned with equipping parents to provide religious instruction to children younger than seven. The Little Helpers department was described as the "link between the Church and home." A Little Helpers worker visited the homes of parents of young children and distributed "Parents' Kits," the stated purpose of which were "to lead the child into the presence of God by relating God to the events of every day life."³⁰ The programme was based on the belief that parents held primary responsibility for the religious instruction of their children and was designed to play a supportive role in this endeavour.

Church leaders had long recognized that, in the words of Cynthia Comacchio, "'the family' is not only a product of the larger society . . . but also its producer and reproducer."³¹ Historians of the Victorian era have demonstrated that domestic religion was exalted to new heights during the nineteenth century, and a mutually supportive relationship

29 *Canadian Book of Common Prayer* (General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, 1962), p. 522.

30 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27-29, *The Sower*, "The Little Helpers," January 1955, and "Little Helpers' Conference," March 1956.

31 Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 6.

between church and family was idealized.³² These values continued to be expressed in the Anglican Diocese of Calgary during the postwar period. Families were to nurture a new generation of church members and church leaders, and Christianity, in turn, would form the basis of happy homes. What was innovative about the nature of the rhetoric in this period was Anglicans' embrace of contemporary psychological discourse and some of the tools of psychology in promoting their partnership with postwar families.

The scope and influence of psychology in postwar Canada is the subject of important studies by Mary Louise Adams and Mona Gleason. Both scholars explore the construction of "normal" as a regulatory category — one promoted by professional psychologists, educators, and the popular press. While Adams focuses in particular on the normalizing of heterosexual marriage and Gleason examines the advice of child psychologists, both suggest that prescriptive literature idealized a particular kind of family — white and middle-class with stay-at-home mothers — and constructed those who fell outside these categories — including immigrants, homosexuals, or the working class — as deviant, abnormal, or deficient. The task set before parents in the postwar years was to raise children to be healthy adults, physically and, more importantly, mentally.

Gleason locates postwar psychologists within the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social reform efforts directed towards families. Unlike Doug Owram, who takes the view that in the postwar period the "religious viewpoint" simply gave way to the social sciences in the areas of marriage and family life, Gleason critiques the "myth of the modern family" as one "bonded by emotion rather than by religious, economic, or legal constraints," noting that these influences evolved but did not disappear.³³ In fact, rather than appearing threatened by the growing authority of psychology with respect to parenting and family life, Calgary's Anglicans seemed to welcome it as another tool in promoting family and social stability.

Illustrative of the way psychological discourse was employed alongside religious discourse is a parenting column called "Heavenly Washing," which ran in *The Sower*, the monthly periodical of the Calgary diocese, between 1954 and 1956. The column was authored by the wife of a local Anglican priest and was evidently well received.³⁴ The writer addressed

32 See Lynne Marks, "'A Fragment of Heaven On Earth?': Religion, Gender, and Family in Turn-of-the-Century Canadian Church Periodicals," *Journal of Family History*, vol. 26, no. 2 (April 2001), p. 253; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class* (London: Routledge, 1987); Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

33 Owram, *Born at the Right Time*, p. 20; Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, p. 88.

34 When the column ended after the writer moved from the diocese, the editor noted that it had sparked a number of appreciative comments from readers. SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada,

a range of issues related to child-rearing, but focused on the religious education of children, such as how to teach children to pray, how to convey the meaning of repentance, and how to talk to children about death. The writer's perspective was that children "must be taught how an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven acts, just as he must be taught how to eat properly and dress himself."³⁵ The column highlighted the practical, as well as the spiritual, benefits of parents providing religious instruction to their children. After suggesting that children should be taught to say prayers before bed, the writer reflected on her own experience with her son: "There was an added advantage which we didn't realize at the time. After prayers were said he was expected to go to sleep. And he did!"³⁶

In addition to religious instruction, the column addressed more general parental concerns with the objective of finding "a Christian standpoint." One article discussed comic books, observing that "in recent years . . . their content has become more and more lurid and immoral." The writer argued that "even if we do not agree with those child-psychologists like Dr. F. Wertham who believe that these things lead to an increased and more sadistic juvenile delinquency, we surely cannot say that they do any good." Her primary concern was that comic books were mainly filled with pictures and did not encourage children to read. She informed readers, "We parents have a Christian duty to help our children find the fun in reading. . . ."³⁷ Good families and good parents were presented as synonymous with Christian ones, and the Church was cast as the natural partner of the family in raising healthy, well-adjusted children.

That the Christian family was conceptualized as a healthy, happy one was also reflected at the 1958 Lambeth Conference in London, England. The international gathering of Anglican bishops passed resolutions on the family including a "summary of the marks of a Christian family." First among these characteristics was that a Christian family "seeks to live by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ," "joins in the worship

Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, "Heavenly Washing," October 1956.

35 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, "Heavenly Washing," October 1954.

36 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, "Mother's Column," November 1954.

37 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, "Heavenly Washing," February 1955. Dr. Fredric Wertham was a prominent American psychiatrist during the 1940s and 1950s who argued that the reading of crime comics contributed to criminality and sexual deviancy among the young. For more on Wertham, see Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*, pp. 150–156; Bart Beaty, *Fredric Wertham and the Critique of Mass Culture* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005). While confirming Adams's use of Wertham as relevant to Canadian discourse, this comment also suggests a considerable amount of scepticism about his claims. Nonetheless, the overall discourse supports Adams's assessment that "normality" became the standard by which social adjustment was measured in postwar Canada.

of Almighty God on Sundays in church,” and “joins in common prayer and Bible reading, and grace at meals,” but it went on to define a Christian family as one that “[i]s forgiving one to another,” “[s]hares together in common tasks and recreation,” and “[i]s a good neighbour, hospitable to friend and stranger.”³⁸ In a similar vein, the Diocesan Board of Religious Education promoted filmstrips on family life that included the topics “Family Give and Take,” “Family Recreation,” and “Family Togetherness.”³⁹ In 1970, two Calgary clergymen and two female parishioners participated in a Family Life Education Conference organized by the Vanier Institute of the Family, an organization created following the 1965 Canadian Conference on the Family convened by Governor General Georges Vanier. The conference participants wrote positively in *The Sower* about their experience, suggesting that the church should embrace “any program or opportunity we can give families that makes it possible for each member to develop the inner strength to cope . . . to be responsible to others . . . to be creative . . . to go forth with imagination and daring.” One participant emphasized that “this type of therapy is not geared just to the problem family but to the normal, healthy, everyday situation.”⁴⁰ Calgary Anglicans drew on the popular psychological rhetoric of the day, appropriating the language of “normality” and embracing the parenting goals set out by experts in promoting the church’s role as partner to parents in the task of child-rearing.

In turn, Christian family life was promoted as a solution to the social problems facing modern families. A synod motion in 1953 suggested the following as a remedy for juvenile delinquency: “be it resolved that this Synod of the Diocese of Calgary, urge all Anglican parents to spend as much time as possible with their children, with a view to creating an environment in which the members of the family will pray, play and work together, in an atmosphere of Christian discipline and simplicity.”⁴¹ Ten years later, 1963 was declared “The Christian Family Year” by an international Anglican organization called the Mothers’ Union, and was also affirmed at the Canadian annual meeting of the Woman’s Auxiliary. The Dean of Calgary’s Cathedral Church of the Redeemer commended the move and highlighted its relevance to the city of Calgary. He argued:

38 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, “Lambeth Conference 1958: Recommendations to the Anglican Communion,” October 1958.

39 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, “Religious Education’s Filmstrip Library is Free,” July-August 1967.

40 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, “Implications of Family Life Education,” March 1970.

41 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, File 23a.7, Synod Proceedings, 1953, p. 21.

If any reader should think that this city has no need of the Christian family year campaign, then, my friend, you know little of the grievous problem that confronts your clergy every day — the appalling increase in the divorce rate, the desertions, the unwed mothers, the delinquent parents and the children, who did not ask to come into this world, who find here very little love or appreciation.⁴²

This statement echoed widespread public discourse on the state of the postwar family. Adams and Gleason reveal that moral panic surrounding issues such as divorce, juvenile delinquency, and working mothers functioned as a powerful social force during this period.⁴³ The Christian Family Year emphasized the redemptive role of the Christian family in this context. It also served to reinforce a vision of the Christian family as one that conformed to the normalized ideal outlined by Adams and Gleason — a nuclear family based on heterosexual marriage, supported by a bread-winning father and stay-at-home mother. Within this framework, mothers assumed primary responsibility for the emotional and spiritual nurture of children, while fathers' main duty was to meet the family's financial needs. Calgary's bishop described the Christian family as one "where mothers teach their little ones to pray and bring them up in the Christian tradition, where fathers work to provide a Christian home and where their daily life is given over to truth and righteousness."⁴⁴ While Anglicans embraced a gender ideology that saw men and women as fundamentally different and emphasized the primacy of women's role as mothers, it should be noted that much of the child-rearing advice considered here was directed at "parents" in general. In contrast to psychologists' tendency to blame mothers for delinquent or "poorly adjusted" children (especially boys), Anglican rhetoric did not hold mothers more responsible than fathers in its criticism of parents for perceived shortcomings.

Paired with the idealization of the Christian family and emphasis on the role of parents in raising the next generation of believers was a profound anxiety about parents' commitment and ability to do so. One writer in *The Sower* argued, "[I]n these days when family life in many cases is disintegrating, it is of vital importance to reach the child as an individual and to bring him or her in contact with the Living Saviour."⁴⁵ Anglican leaders in Calgary as well as nationally feared that religious "illiteracy"

42 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "A Crusade for the New Year: Make it a Christian Family Year," January 1963.

43 Adams, *The Trouble with Normal*; Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*.

44 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Bishop's Letter," September 1960.

45 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Boys Learn Christian Way Through Games," May 1962.

among church members, particularly those who were the parents and Sunday school teachers of the baby-boom generation, posed a serious threat not only for that generation but for their children. In response, Calgary's Anglican diocese worked to provide greater educational opportunities for adults so that parents would be better equipped to fulfil their responsibility for the spiritual instruction of their children. In 1957 the Board of Religious Education noted, "Many are concerned today about the near-hypocrisy of infant baptism, when sponsors glibly make promises which they neither understand nor accept." As a solution, the board commended several churches that had begun offering classes for parents and godparents in preparation for baptism.⁴⁶ Citing concern over the low church attendance by parents of recently baptized infants and children in the Sunday school programme, one parish began a monthly "Children's Eucharist" in 1960. *The Sower* reported: "The parish feels that the addition of this children's Eucharist, with its instruction for children and their parents (and for regular church attenders who would like to refresh their understanding of the meaning of the Eucharist), will work for more solid teaching and worship in God's Church."⁴⁷ While its name implied that children were the focus, the service appeared to be directed at parents as much as at children. In 1964, the secretary of the Diocesan Board of Religious Education again emphasized the need for adult education and expressed her fears about the potential consequences if the Church failed to meet this need more effectively. First, she argued, "Adults will not be able to give adequate Christian training to their children in their homes." Secondly, she stated, "Adults will not be prepared to act as teachers and leaders." Finally, she argued, "Adults will not be able to witness as fully to their faith in Christ in their life in the community."⁴⁸

Concern about the quantity and quality of religious instruction in the home expressed in Calgary's postwar Anglican community was hardly a novel one. Particularly from the Victorian period forward, historians observe among clergy a discourse of decline, a tendency to look back longingly on a mythical golden age of domestic religion. Patricia Dirks suggests that "in the socially disruptive and materialistic environment of the opening decades of the century, unsatisfactory Protestant church membership gains were increasingly linked to a deterioration in family life and

46 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27-29, *The Sower*, "Diocesan Board of Religious Education," June 1957.

47 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Parish Institutes Regular 'Instructed' Communion," November 1960.

48 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 30, *The Sower*, "Long and Careful Development Features New Curriculum Plan," October 1964.

parental neglect of children's religious training."⁴⁹ During the 1920s, leaders of the United Church concluded that "secularization of life in the home denied the young a primary Christian influence" and called for "a return to family worship and prayer."⁵⁰ According to Lynne Marks, at the turn of the twentieth century there was general agreement among Canadian church leaders that the practice of family prayer had declined significantly in recent years. She suggests that their level of anxiety was a testament to how vital a link was seen to exist between the church and the family. "The hand-wringing engaged in over this subject underlines just how important the churches saw the Christian family as being in providing the basis for strong churches and a Christian society."⁵¹

In addition to generalized anxiety about the viability of the Christian family that echoed those of church leaders of the past century, Calgary's Anglican community also expressed worries that reflected its specific postwar context. While Anglicans were generally pleased with the building and growth in suburban areas of Calgary, they also criticized some of the features associated with postwar suburban life. An editorial regarding the approval of commercial sport on Sundays in Vancouver's 1956 civic elections declared: "This generation has more leisure time than any of its predecessors and it spends more time and money on its pleasures. We MUST, for the peace of the world, for the sake of our children and because of God's love for us, set aside our Sabbath for that for which it was intended."⁵² The Calgary bishop's 1963 address to synod was similar in message. He denounced "haphazard attendance" and "looseness of obligation." He reflected, "One of the most difficult problems is that of continuance among those who have been led to a belief in Christianity . . . especially we face it in family life where the worth of pleasure, sport and business is so magnified that religion becomes an appendage to life and not that which gives real meaning to life."⁵³ Anglican leaders expressed concern about the ways people spent their leisure time and disposable income and what impact this might have on church involvement.

In light of this concern, the importance of church attendance to the well-being of children was stressed repeatedly. An article by J. Edgar Hoover reprinted in *The Sower* criticized the "timidity" of parents in enforcing regular church attendance. Hoover suggested that, if a dirty child resisted

49 Patricia Dirks, "Reinventing Christian Masculinity and Fatherhood: The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1900–1920," in Christie, ed., *Households of Faith*, p. 290.

50 David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 188.

51 Marks, "A Fragment of Heaven On Earth?" p. 261.

52 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, "Editorial," February 1956.

53 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, File 23a.12, Synod Proceedings, 1963, p. 41.

a bath, parents would not give in, but he believed that too often the same did not hold true for church-going. He argued, “Your firmness and example will furnish a bridge over which youthful rebellion may travel into rich and satisfying experience in personal religious living. Parents can strike a telling blow against the forces which contribute to our juvenile delinquency, if our mothers and fathers will take their children to Sunday School and Church regularly.”⁵⁴ Through family church-going, parents resisted the temptations of alternative leisure pursuits — ones that lacked the character-building attributes of religious participation — and taught their children to do the same. Family church attendance also signalled that parents were in charge, not giving in to the whims of children who lacked the maturity to appreciate its long-term value. In these respects, church attendance was constructed as an end in itself, an effective means of curbing youthful rebellion and raising good children.

Hoover’s call for firmness in parenting was echoed in an editorial in *The Sower* lamenting the lack of readership of the “Children’s Corner” column. The writer of the children’s column had asked children to write to her on two different occasions, but had received no replies. Consequently, the editor accused parents, grandparents, and godparents of exhibiting “a sad laxity” in regard to the spiritual education of children. He observed, “It is apparent in these present days that the parents are kind, generous and even indulgent to their children, but do practically nothing to interest and instruct their offspring in the Bible and in church matters relating to our Christian Family.”⁵⁵ Like Hoover, the editor expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of a permissive approach to child-rearing. Permissive parenting was a philosophy popularly associated with American paediatrician Dr. Spock, author of the bestselling 1946 child-care manual, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, and was premised on a belief that children were naturally predisposed to good behaviour.⁵⁶ Reacting against this parenting model, Hoover and the local Anglican editor emphasized the value of parental “firmness,” in contrast to “timidity” and “laxity,” and suggested that parents should be actively involved in the training and discipline of their children.

In the Anglican Church, the Christian life was envisioned as corporate and participatory. It relied on an intimate partnership between the church and the family. The church presented itself as a helpmate to

54 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, “I Don’t Want to Go to Sunday School,” May 1958.

55 SCUCL, Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Calgary fonds, Synod Office Records, Box 27–29, *The Sower*, “Editorial,” October 1955.

56 For more on Dr. Spock and his child-care advice, see Katherine Arnup, *Education for Motherhood: Advice for Mothers in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Ann Hulbert, *Raising America: Experts, Parents, and a Century of Advice about Children* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

parents in raising children who were “healthy” physically, emotionally, and spiritually. These children were the future of the church. For members of the Alliance Church, in contrast, faith was essentially individual and experiential, but family was nevertheless an important component of religious socialization. This was acknowledged in the church’s 1960 *Annual Report*, which noted that “the church of tomorrow came by dedication,” in reference to the 21 baby dedications performed in the church that year.⁵⁷ The 90 membership applications from the 1960s that survive in the records of Calgary’s First Alliance Church also attest to the role of parents in nurturing the Christian faith of their children. The heart of the application was the question about spiritual conversion. Applicants were asked to “describe the date (if possible) and circumstances” of their conversion. Members of First Alliance shared a conception of conversion characterized by Randall Balmer as a “sudden, instantaneous, datable experience of grace.”⁵⁸ Eighty-four of the applicants could pinpoint a particular year or their age at the time of their conversion, and many referenced an exact date. This personal encounter with God marked the beginning of their Christian lives. While the answers to the question about conversion were generally short, two or three sentences, the influence of parents is made clear, explicitly or implicitly, in many.

One man wrote, “Having been born and raised in a Christian family I have had the importance of salvation impressed upon me since an early age.” Another applicant said, “I was saved in 1947 in my home as a result of a Bible Time my mother provided for us each afternoon.”⁵⁹ A. W. recalled, “Having been brought up under the influence of the Gospel I was saved at 5 years of age. Even at this young age I realized that I had sinned and needed forgiveness from God.”⁶⁰ For others, it is evident that a Christian home laid the foundation for an early conversion. D. T. recounted, “I first asked Christ to be my Saviour when I was seven years old at home but later I fully realized the decision I had made at a Bible camp at Gull Lake when I was eleven and re-dedicated my life to Christ.” One woman who dated her conversion to “early childhood” wrote, “We were taught of Jesus Christ and early learned to love and trust him. At a children’s meeting . . . I publicly committed my life to Him.”⁶¹ Decisions made at religious gatherings like church, Sunday school, or Christian summer camp were often the culmination of years of Christian influence in the home.

57 FAC, *Annual Report*, 1960.

58 Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. xiv.

59 FAC, Membership Applications, W. P., 1966, and J. D., 1964.

60 FAC, Membership Application, A. W., 1964.

61 FAC, Membership Applications, D. T., 1966, and S. P., 1968.

A quantitative assessment of the age of applicants at the time of their conversion yields a striking result: younger people were much more likely to undergo a spiritual conversion than adults middle-aged or older. Seventy-one per cent of applicants dated their conversion to their childhood or teenage years, and an additional 20 per cent had experienced conversion in their twenties. None of those applying for membership had converted after the age of 40. The youthfulness of these men and women at the time of their conversion suggests the likelihood that family had been influential in the process. Demographic patterns observed in the records of First Alliance Church are consistent with the observations of sociologist Sam Reimer, whose book on contemporary evangelicalism in Canada and the United States was based on extensive polling. Of the respondents in his study, 65 per cent had experienced conversion during their childhood and teenage years. Reimer notes, “Most respondents grew up in the church, or had strong religious ties, indicating that conversion was a natural consequence of religious socialization.”⁶²

The family had always been important to religious socialization within the evangelical Alliance Church. In the postwar period, however, family became increasingly central to church discourse. During this time, the Alliance Church underwent a transition from an urban to a suburban church, a shift that was both spatial and philosophical. First Alliance moved location twice in fewer than 20 years, in 1953 and 1969, each time building a larger new facility and moving further from the downtown core. The 1952 church report noted the purchase of a new lot and the sale of the old building and reflected: “We trust the day is not far off when we shall have a new church with ample room for our Sunday School to expand and the church as a whole to be a greater light in this dark world.”⁶³ The following year’s report called “the erection of this new beautiful church . . . one of the biggest milestones in the history of the Calgary Alliance Church.”⁶⁴ As early as 1960, however, the church leadership reported,

We must secure additional property and additional space to assure growth commensurate with the growth of the congregation and the growth of the city. . . . The present structure was thought to be adequate for many years. Growth has come beyond what the church dared to “ask or think.” Under God we can! Remember our present structure was built to accommodate

62 Sam Reimer, *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide: The Conservative Protestant Subculture in Canada and the United States* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), p. 61.

63 FAC, *Annual Report*, “Report of Church Secretary,” 1952.

64 FAC, *Annual Report*, “Report of Church Secretary,” 1953.

300 in Sunday School. We are consistently well over 400. With larger facilities we can expect rapid growth.⁶⁵

The problem was initially addressed by the erection of a new Christian Education building, but by 1967 the church once again began to consider relocation. This time, lack of space was a concern, but the desire for a better location was the senior pastor's main motivation to move. With respect to the church's present site, he observed, "[T]he area does not yield much to a family church."⁶⁶ First Alliance Church's location on 17th Avenue and 1st Street West, although several blocks south of its original downtown site, remained centrally situated in an area of mixed commercial and residential zoning; the 1969 relocation put the church in the heart of suburbia. In choosing to emphasize family-centred ministries and relocate to the suburbs, the church shifted away from an urban-based ministry that had been reflected in the slogan: "Christ, Cross, City-Centred."

In contrast to the multiple parish-based ministries of Calgary's Anglican churches, there was only one Alliance Church in Calgary until 1966, when Foothills Alliance Church opened in the north end of the city. As a result, the church drew members from across the city, and its 1969 relocation to the intersection of Glenmore Trail and Elbow Drive meant that it was more easily accessed by car. Glenmore Trail intersected Crowchild Trail to the west and McLeod Trail to the east, highways that facilitated the movement of suburban dwellers around the city. While Anglicans saw in suburbanization the opportunity to extend the parish model to new neighbourhoods, the Alliance saw in suburbanization the separation of the faithful from local communities and their gathering in one location for Sunday services and mid-week activities. From here, they were sent back into their neighbourhoods to reach the unsaved in their respective corners of the city.

The shift from urban to suburban church was a gradual process at First Alliance. Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, the church became increasingly family- and child-focused, both in its outreach and in the ministries it operated. New mid-week clubs for children, youth, and young couples were launched during this period. Suburbia was cast as presenting not so much a challenge as an opportunity, and the ideal was to reach the whole family. A pastor at First Alliance stressed this point. "Since our families come from a distance from the church, it is necessary for each family to penetrate their own neighbourhood through personal contacts and to concentrate on the winning of families to Christ."⁶⁷ The objective

65 FAC, *Annual Report*, "Report of the Executive Board and Elders," 1960.

66 FAC, *Annual Report*, "Pastor's Report," 1967.

67 *Ibid.*

of a 1956 Sunday school attendance campaign entitled “Come Together to Sunday School!” was “to bring complete families into the Sunday School.”⁶⁸ The 1969 relocation was intended to support this endeavour and bring the church’s physical setting in line with its priority of reaching out to children and families.

While the ideal was to reach the entire family, leaders of children’s programmes at First Alliance reported the presence of children whose parents did not attend the church. One girls’ club report noted that “approximately half the girls attending are from non-church homes”.⁶⁹ There was no hesitation about encouraging the participation of these children. Children’s and youth programmes run by the Alliance Church, including Sunday school, girls’ and boys’ clubs, and the Alliance Youth Fellowship, were all designed to encourage each young person to develop a personal relationship with God. Children were viewed as individuals in need of personal salvation just like anyone else. The 1969 report from the girls’ club stressed, “Evangelism is the heart of Girls Club. Each activity, whether it be a game, hike, handcraft or Bible study provides a natural opportunity for witnessing. The emphasis is on personal evangelism.” Similarly, leaders of the boys’ club declared, “The main aim of Christian Service Brigade is to win and train boys for Christ.”⁷⁰ Leaders of the various children’s programmes at First Alliance regularly reported the number of children who had made “decisions for Christ.” The emphasis began at a young age and continued through the teenage years.

While family played a significant part in the conversion of many members of First Alliance Church, the church did not leave the religious instruction of children primarily to parents. It took its own role in this respect very seriously. In fact, the Christian Education department was its largest ministry and a priority at both the local and district levels during the 1950s and 1960s. At First Alliance the average Sunday School attendance throughout the 1960s was around 450, approximately equal to the number of church members.⁷¹ The Alliance actively evangelized children outside the church and attempted to get them regularly involved in Sunday school and mid-week programmes.

The evangelical Alliance viewed the world as a fallen place, where the situation was deteriorating. In 1946, the district superintendent declared, “As we gather in this holy convocation in Regina all our hearts are burdened for the one thing that will be the solution for our every

68 Western Canadian District Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance [hereafter WCDO], *Proceedings of the Western Canadian District Conference*, 1956.

69 FAC, *Annual Report*, “Report of the Christian Education Committee,” 1968.

70 FAC, *Annual Report*, “Report of the Board of Christian Education,” 1969.

71 FAC, *Annual Reports*, 1960–1969.

problem. Many of us have prayed for over 20 years that it may please Almighty God to give us an old-fashioned, Holy-Ghost revival."⁷² An address to the 1958 district conference echoed these themes: "Our generation finds itself in one of the most sordid eras of time this world has ever experienced. Never was the world in greater need of an adequate spiritual message and experience."⁷³ Sin was identified as the source of every problem and salvation as the answer. God's intervention, through the Holy Spirit or the second coming of Christ, was the only hope for change in the temporal world.

Beyond the spiritual salvation of the soul, personal conversion was believed to have a transformative power that would permeate all aspects of one's life. As a result, the Alliance Church defined social issues in spiritual terms and presented conversion as the means of redemption from personal and familial unhappiness and conflict. One woman highlighted the practical impact of her conversion and attested to Christ's transformative influence on her family life: "My life was a failure, home broken — then made whole in the Lord."⁷⁴ A 1948 report by the district Sunday school secretary likewise identified social problems as features of secular society that required a simple, spiritual solution:

As we are faced with the condition of juvenile delinquency, with two out of three children still outside of Sunday School, an increased effort should be made to reach these lost ones. In our contacts we have urged churches to conduct a community census and to use every possible means to contact prospects. . . . Further, it is necessary not only to find them but to win them to Christ and then to hold those who have been reached.⁷⁵

The secretary drew a correlation between juvenile delinquency and lack of Sunday school attendance, echoing discourse within the Anglican community; rather than blame the inadequacies of family life or turn to psychological insights, however, she indicated that the problem required a spiritual solution.

As was the case in Anglican discourse, discussions of family life in the Alliance Church were based in part on an assumption that gender difference informed parenting roles and religious faith. In the early 1950s, the church deaconess reported that home visits to young mothers provided the opportunity "to bring home to tender mother hearts the great responsibility before God to train these little lives that they might early walk in

72 WCDO, *Proceedings of the Western Canadian District Conference*, 1946.

73 WCDO, *Proceedings of the Western Canadian District Conference*, 1959.

74 FAC, Membership Application, J. A., 1965.

75 WCDO, *Proceedings of the Western Canadian District Conference*, 1948.

the ways of righteousness.”⁷⁶ In a subsequent report, she described aspects of her work that gave her the greatest joy, including “to see the Word of God cause the skeptical [*sic*] father in the home to take off his hat, mutely reverencing the God he denies.”⁷⁷ Read alongside one another, the two observations indicate that the Alliance deaconess viewed religious faith as flowing more naturally to women and, like the Anglicans, assumed that mothers would “teach their little ones to pray.” In contrast, men’s rationality predisposed them to scepticism, although ultimately this was a challenge that God could overcome.

Perhaps the most striking expression of faith in Christ’s ability to bring social as well as spiritual renewal was reported coming from the mouth of a young girl. A church worker in the district wrote, “We have a young people’s prayer meeting, the children from this home attend and it is so good to hear them praying for their father. The girl (14 years old) prayed, ‘Lord, help daddy to get what I’ve got, so we may all come to church as a happy family.’”⁷⁸ In this account, a happy family was synonymous with a Christian family. Also noteworthy is the way in which the traditional hierarchy of domestic religion was turned on its head. While children’s programmes in the Anglican Church were designed to support the Christian family and took a secondary role to parents in the instruction of children, the Alliance Church operated its Sunday school and children’s programmes with the clear objective of bringing children to Christ, with or without the help of their parents. Should parents fail to lead their children to Christ, children might become the spiritual leaders of their parents. By reaching children with the Christian message, Calgary’s Alliance Church leaders hoped children might be the means by which the entire family was saved. At the very least, the children would draw spiritual and moral direction from their membership in the family of God.

The theme of family in crisis was not new to Canadian churches; what was unique about postwar discourse in the Anglican Church was the concern that features of suburbia potentially compromised church involvement, specifically leisure activities, consumer society, and permissive parenting, as well as the way in which Anglicans embraced psychological analyses of family life. Within the Anglican community, there was tension between a vision of the family as the solution to contemporary social problems, on one hand, and as an institution threatened by modern life, on the other. Ideas about the family were more black and white at Calgary’s Alliance Church. Jesus was the solution to problems such as juvenile

76 FAC, *Annual Report*, “Deaconess Report,” October 1950. For the first half of the 1950s, the deaconess was a paid position at First Alliance Church, with responsibility for children’s work, visitation, and secretarial duties.

77 FAC, *Annual Report*, “Deaconess Report,” October 1951.

78 WCDO, *Western Workers’ Witness*, April 1953.

delinquency, divorce, and family conflict; a Christian family was a happy family, and a family set apart by God. Faced with family breakdown and religiously lax parents, the Alliance Church did not hesitate to reach out to children directly, subverting the traditional hierarchy of domestic religion out of concern for young souls.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, church leaders made extensive efforts at the grass-roots level to make the church relevant to modern families, to make it a vital presence in the suburbs, and to maintain an active role in the lives of children. Sharing in this concern, Calgary's Anglican and Alliance churches embraced distinct spatial strategies that paralleled their differing discourses on the family. The Anglicans offered a parish-centred, community church in the suburbs and support for parents in their task of child-rearing, including religious education, advice on child-rearing, and resources and seminars promoting "healthy" family life. Like the Anglicans, the Alliance Church moved into the suburbs, but not to become part of a local community. Rather, church leaders chose a location close to major thoroughfares that enabled the church to draw people together from across the city, conquering distance to set apart the faithful. During the postwar period, First Alliance Church became increasingly child- and family-focused in its philosophy and also positioned church involvement as the heart of Christian family life, offering numerous activities throughout the week for each member of the family. Saved congregants, old and young, were then sent back out to carry the gospel to every corner of the city.