

femininity WMS missionaries were rather carrying them to their logical extreme: sacrificing what might be considered their own "natural condition" for a higher purpose.

This criticism aside, *A Sensitive Independence* is an important book which offers a comprehensive view of missionary life at the turn of the century. By focusing on the way in which religious values both shaped and were shaped by these women in their quest for personal and professional fulfillment, the author utilizes a cultural framework which is not often employed in Canadian historical writing. The study has indeed accomplished the goals stated in the first chapter: to demythologize women missionaries by examining their experiences, to bring to light their durability and their role in shaping their church and their society, and to place them among the front ranks of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canadian professional women.

Cathy L. James
Ontario Institute for Studies in
Education

J.D. Purdy. *Townshend of Huron.*
London, Ont.: The Althouse Press,
1992. Pp. 166. \$18.95 Cdn. paper.

The construction of a good biography is not an easy task. Unless the individual was a seminal thinker like Dewey or a builder like Ryerson, educational biography can be dull,

with authors claiming greater influence for their subjects than is warranted. This is not the case in Jud Purdy's study of the Right Reverend William Townshend, which contributes to our understanding of the transformation of education in Ontario from the early twentieth century to the 1970s. It is significant for illustrating the way in which the family man, priest, diocesan administrator, and school trustee intersected to form a life "not lived in water-tight compartments" but as a "unity," with each element influencing the other.

William A. Townshend, teacher and Anglican prelate, was an exceptional man. Born in southwestern Ontario in 1898, Townshend overcame significant barriers to fulfill his teenage ambition to become an Anglican minister and he eventually rose to become suffragan to the bishop of Huron. While he was a respected and loved parish priest in the 1920s and 1930s, his central contribution to the Church was as an administrator, fund-raiser, and trouble-shooter. His efforts served to undermine congregationalist tendencies within the ecclesiastical body.

Townshend also made important contributions to public schooling. Purdy relates effectively the way in which his subject enhanced the educational life of Ontario, as a teacher in Manila from 1921 to 1926; as a school trustee and six-time chairman of the London School Board from 1934 to 1980; and as a member of the Royal Commission on Education (Hope Commission). In these capacities Townshend helped transform education in the province, locally by promoting reforms in the classroom,

improving teachers' working conditions, and assisting the systematic acquisition and financing of property for the London Board; and provincially by extending the debate on education through the Hope Commission.

As an advocate of pension programmes, improved salaries and equitable treatment for teachers, free textbooks, and curriculum reform, especially in high schools, Townshend appeared to be in the forefront of educational reform. But, as Purdy notes, his views were generally those of the mainstream of school reformers. Pension reform and improved salaries were perennial issues and ones that eventually were approved by the Board.

It was over curricular reform that Townshend was in advance of his trustee colleagues in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. Here he promoted the alteration of the curriculum of high schools to encourage cultural, vocational, and technical training and to undermine the stranglehold of the academic curriculum on the collegiate institutes—that is, making the schooling experience “more practical and relevant to adolescents' needs...[to help] them to prepare for life, not just for more academic study.” He championed these reforms during his tenure on the Royal Commission and had the pleasure of seeing them implemented throughout Ontario in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, he promoted concern for the individual student and those with learning disabilities.

Yet Purdy does not claim for Townshend the role of an educational radical, for the changes he advocated in education were in the mainstream of

reform and were being implemented elsewhere in Canada, the United States, and Europe. We do not learn whether or not Townshend was influenced by these developments or whether he read widely or visited on-going experiments in alternative education. In time he did fall behind the advance wave. In the 1960s and '70s his influence waned as he promoted what many saw as traditional practices, especially in his defence of corporal punishment.

Purdy is sensitive to the way in which religion was a formative element in Townshend's life. As a result, he portrays sympathetically his subject's support for the teaching of religion in public schools. But he is critical of Townshend's antagonism towards the Roman Catholic Church and any extension of the separate school system, a position he retained as late as the 1970s.

Perhaps the element most lacking in this study is an analysis of Townshend's private life. Purdy refers to the burden that Townshend's constant travels and administrative duties placed on his wife and how his absences meant a certain neglect of the younger children, but we learn little of how Kathleen Townshend coped or whether their marriage became strained as a result. Yet it is clear that without her assistance, Townshend would not have had such a successful career in the Church or contributed so much to the educational life of London.

A second gap in the study, some might argue, is the lack of a theoretical framework with which to analyze Townshend's ideas and work. Purdy

provides little critique of the positions adopted by his subject, whether on vocational education or on the progressivism of the 1960s.

This is not hagiography, however. Purdy clearly respects and admires Townshend, but is aware of his many shortcomings, especially his attitude towards Catholic schools and his indifference to bilingualism and biculturalism in the 1960s. He implies, and should have made more explicit, how these sentiments reflected the views of a large percentage of Ontario's Anglo-Protestants at the time. Thus the major shortcoming of the volume is the lack of context and the assumption that the reader is intimately familiar with the province's religious, educational, and social history. But this shortcoming is not a major flaw and serves to demonstrate just how difficult the writing of biography can be.

Michael Owen
The University of Saskatchewan

Barry Ferguson, ed. *The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada 1820-1970*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1991. Pp. vii, 193. \$20.00 paper.

This book, based on the papers delivered at the "Anglican Church in Western Canadian History" conference held in Winnipeg, recalls the history of the Anglican church in western Canada. The collection is fairly coherent. The papers coalesce

around four themes: the relation between the church and the Natives; the creation of schools and the spread of education; the role of the church in assisting immigrants; and, the role of women in the church's missionary outreach. The brevity of each paper suggests that there was no selection of only the best papers from the conference. The omission of weaker papers which were merely factual accounts and not engaged with current historiography would have given scope for the better papers to be more extensive.

The two studies about Anglicanism in the West that currently hold the field, T.C.B. Boon's *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies* (1962) and Frank Peake's *The Anglican Church in British Columbia* (1959), are seriously dated histories. They do not integrate the story of the denomination with social and intellectual history. Moreover, as Frits Pannekoek points out in his challenging essay, recent historical scholarship on western Canada does not incorporate church sources. Most historians, he charges, have fallen into a "secularist trap" by failing to reach a balanced view of the role of clergy and missionaries. The important process of integrating Canadian religious and secular history is now being undertaken but most of these studies have concentrated on central Canada. For example, William Westfall's *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario* (1989) and Curtis Fahey's *In His Name: The Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (1990) situate Anglicanism at the very core of intel-