

A Denomination's Dealings with Difference:
Considering Recategorization and Mutual Intergroup Differentiation in
the Context of The United Church of Canada

By

Matthew J. Heesing

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Approved: Dr. Rob. Fennell
Supervisor

Approved: Dr. HyeRan Kim-Cragg
Examiner

Approved: Dr. Jim Cameron
Reader

Date: August 25, 2015

Abstract

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This thesis, in a novel interdisciplinary fashion, examines The United Church of Canada (UCC) from a social-psychological framework of Social Identity Theory and Categorization. Focusing on four broad ingroup-outgroup case studies—ecumenical, interfaith, overseas mission and First Nations-UCC relations—this study surveys and subsequently analyzes the UCC's national discourse and initiatives with respect to two specific, well-supported strategies for reducing intergroup conflict: Recategorization and Mutual Intergroup Differentiation. Looking at the denomination's historical development through the lens of these social-psychological models not only highlights a normative pattern of moving from initial positions of ingroup bias to recategorized and mutually differentiated partnerships, but also proposes new understandings of past, present, and possible future issues relevant to the UCC.

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Introduction

The United Church of Canada (UCC), Canada's largest Protestant denomination from 1925 to the present, has played a significant role in the history of the country and wider Christianity.¹ Formed by the amalgamation of four Canadian denominations—Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist and independent Local Union churches—and joined later by the Evangelical United Brethren Church, the UCC is both “uniquely Canadian and unique within Canada.”² Its governance structures, liberal stances, and autonomy from other global ecclesial bodies distinguish the UCC from other denominations within Canada; its roots and prominent roles in Canadian history, identity, and politics showcase the UCC's pointedly Canadian character. Even a cursory look at the UCC's ninety years, to expand on the latter, shows a clear and mutually-formative relationship with the wider social imaginary of Canada: from “influencing foreign and domestic policy, provoking public debate, and shaping the moral character of many Canadian citizens,” in the words of Don Schweitzer, to consistently striving to adapt and address shifting Canadian issues and contexts.³ Despite facing an uncertain future,⁴ given drastically diminishing membership

¹ “Since its founding...the denomination consistently commanded at least the nominal allegiance of more Canadians than any other Protestant church.” Kevin N. Flatt, *After Evangelicalism: The Sixties and the United Church of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 3.

² Don Schweitzer, introduction to *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), xiv. As C.T. McIntire notes, the role of the Local Union Churches in the UCC's formation and inauguration has often been overlooked throughout the denomination's discourse and symbolism; see C. T. McIntire, “Unity Among Many: The Formation of The United Church of Canada, 1899-1930,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 8. It should also be noted that not all Canadian Presbyterians were included in the act of Union: 784 Presbyterian congregations (or seventeen percent) controversially chose “non-concurrent” status and sought to continue the Presbyterian Church of Canada as a separate denomination. See *ibid.*, 8-10. The Evangelical United Brethren amalgamated with the UCC in 1968; see Sandra Beardsall, “‘And Whether Pigs Have Wings’: The United Church in the 1960's,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer, 97-118 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 98.

³ Schweitzer, introduction, xii. Cf. Flatt, *After Evangelicalism*, 1.

numbers over the last half-century,⁵ the UCC persists as a binding agent and common institutional identity for over three thousand congregations across the country.⁶

With the motto “That All May Be One,”⁷ the denomination encompasses an internal spectrum of perspectives alongside increasingly appreciative relationships with various ‘outsiders,’ all while striving to be a “united and uniting church” in a progressively pluralistic Canadian context.⁸ For some, these internal and external dynamics represent a divided church destined to fail, if not already rendered asunder by irreconcilable opinions and overly ambiguous boundaries;⁹ others proudly celebrate the vast and inclusive array of

⁴ Don Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary of the United Church of Canada,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 288.

⁵ As Kenneth Bagnell summarizes, the UCC “[dropped] from roughly 1,064,000 members in 1965 to just under 464,000 in 2012. The rate of decline is accelerating.” Kenneth Bagnell, “‘Canada’s Church,’” *United Church Observer*, April 2014, last accessed March 27, 2015, http://www.ucobserver.org/culture/2014/04/canada_church/. UCC membership numbers for every decade can be found at the beginning of each chapter in Don Schweitzer, ed., *The United Church of Canada: A History* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012).

⁶ The United Church of Canada, “Welcome to the United Church of Canada,” last modified July 30, 2014, www.united-church.ca/welcome.

⁷ An English translation of the Latin phrase “ut omnes unum sint,” taken from John 17:21, this phrase is found within the UCC crest; see The United Church of Canada, “History: United Church Crest,” last modified February 26, 2014, <http://www.united-church.ca/history/crest>. This passage also played a prominent role in the 1925 Inauguration service; see McIntire, “Unity Among Many,” 7.

⁸ The phrase “united and uniting church” was first used in The United Church of Canada, *Year Book and Record of Proceedings (1928)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1928), 80.

⁹ As John Webster Grant wrote a quarter century ago, “. . . after 65 years of union the United Church seems less united than ever before. Our current disagreements have brought to light such a diversity of conviction and such an intensity of emotion that pain, alienation, and a measure of schism have been the only possible results. What can be done in such a situation? Unanimity is not an immediate prospect, and in any case, union was never intended to guarantee it.” John Webster Grant et al., *Voices and Visions: 65 Years of the United Church of Canada*, ed. Peter Gordon White (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1990), 148.

voices as a rich blessing rather than a burden.¹⁰ In any case, when it comes to the UCC, one finds a fascinating, counter-intuitive, and uncommon social phenomenon: whereas many groups and organizations, in an effort to establish and maintain unity, usually emphasize the similarities within and maximize the differences without, the UCC—on the whole—represents an alternative approach. Inside the denomination, distinctiveness is accepted, even valorized, over uniformity; outside, similarities are accentuated and differences respected. Naturally, such a sweeping statement involves both exceptions, formally or not, and instances where reality may not match denominational ideals. Overall, however, clear patterns are observable within the UCC’s history and discourse that deviate from the concept, processes, and norms of categorization proposed by Henri Tajfel et al. in their social-psychological analyses.

As Social Categorization and subsequent, complementary theories of Social Identity and Self-Categorization suggest, the natural tendency to create and maintain collective distinctiveness often leads to aversive or obvious manifestations of intergroup bias and conflict.¹¹ Nevertheless, acknowledging the near-inevitable, unavoidable development of group distinctions, sociologists have noticed multiple strategies to diminish ‘us vs. them’ attitudes and bias. Primarily, these include the well-attested ideas of decategorization,

¹⁰ See, for example, the sentiment expressed by Rob Fennell, ed., *Intercultural Visions: Called to Be the Church* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2012), v: “What an amazing, diverse, blessed denomination we are as The United Church of Canada!”

¹¹ As John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, along with Joel Kovel, explain, “aversive,” or indirect, racism “represents a subtle, often unintentional, form of bias” as opposed to “blatant,” direct, “old fashioned” racial prejudice; see Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Ingroup Identity Model*, *Essays in Social Psychology* (Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books, 2000), 3, and 17-20. See also John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, “On the Nature of Contemporary Prejudice: The Causes, Consequences, and Challenges of Aversive Racism” in *Confronting Racism: The Problem and the Response*, eds. J. Eberhardt and S. T. Fiske, 3-32 (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1998) and J. Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (New York: Pantheon, 1970).

recategorization, and mutual intergroup differentiation.¹² The latter two methods will form insightful frameworks for understanding and analyzing how the UCC has engaged with other, ‘outsider’ groups and reduced intergroup bias over the decades. Detailed below, these concepts are detectable in the UCC’s dealings with external difference; at the same time, since no model corresponds exactly between the isolated laboratory and complexities of life, how the UCC has uniquely embodied and stretched these ideas also offers insight.

Unquestionably, an exhaustive examination is impossible for a study of this size. Therefore, the key focus will be four case studies of the UCC’s interactions with out-groups in areas of ecumenism, interfaith, overseas mission, and relations with First Nations. This thesis will argue that the UCC’s normative pattern is to move from initial positions of ingroup bias to recategorized and mutually differentiated partnerships. No scholarly literature interprets the UCC from this perspective: while publications have addressed aspects of the UCC’s ethos and past, and the church’s own governing councils have recognized distinct areas of concern, there is notable silence when it comes to holistically understanding the issue of insiders and outsiders from an angle of categorization.¹³ In fact, though well-established and accepted within the discipline of social psychology, the theories outlined earlier are only beginning to be applied to religion.¹⁴ As a result, a perceived area for examination is evident: one in which the UCC’s

¹² E.g. Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “Reducing Intergroup Conflict: From Superordinate Goals to Decategorization, Recategorization, and Mutual Differentiation,” *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 4 no. 1 (2000): 101.

¹³ For a sample of popular and scholarly publications on the UCC, see Schweitzer, introduction, xii-xiii.

¹⁴ Philip F. Esler’s work, while situated in a temporal and geographical context completely removed from contemporary Christian movements, demonstrates a recent application of social psychology theory—particularly recategorization—in the area of religious studies. For example, Esler suggests, “‘recategorization,’ the ‘common ingroup identity model,’ offers useful insights into understanding how Paul

particular identity, evolution, and approaches play a unique role, and appear to both reflect and minimally diverge from social-psychological models and expectations.

Admittedly far from comprehensive, this preliminary springboard for further analysis will unpack the UCC's interaction with out-groups in three parts: the first part will offer an explanation and overview of the social-psychological frameworks to be referenced and applied, including categorization, Social Identity Theory, and the two specific models of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation; next, using primary sources, historical shifts or events, and secondary documents, the second part will provide a survey presentation of the UCC's intertwined and fluctuating relationships with the four aforementioned case studies. Finally, tying the previous two chapters together, a third chapter will explore the overarching question of this thesis: how has the UCC demonstrated or contested—intentionally or not—social-psychological models of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation in its dealings with difference? Furthermore, in addition to noting issues of receptivity and effectiveness, what pitfalls and possibilities might such approaches pose for the denomination's future?

crafts his argument in [the Biblical book] Romans.” Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003), 30. Closer to the current era, Ysseldyk et al.'s article “Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective” shows an increasing consideration of religion's role and function from sociological frameworks. As the authors note, “although considerable research has focused on social identities based on race...gender...and nationality...fewer studies have evaluated the psychosocial implications of a social identity from religion.” Renate Ysseldyk et al., “Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion From a Social Identity Perspective,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14 (2010): 60.

Chapter I: Social Psychological Method and Models

Social Groups and Categorization

In order to analyze the UCC's interactions with outgroups from the framework of social psychology, and specifically explore points of intersection with recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation, an initial understanding of groups, categorization, and ingroup bias is required. Within social-psychological literature, the idea of 'groups' carries, as Rupert Brown notes, a "wide diversity of meanings."¹⁵ Inter-dependent definitions include crucial factors such as sharing a "common fate,"¹⁶ to operating within an established "social structure,"¹⁷ to consisting of "face to face interaction."¹⁸ Taking broader embodied and imagined identifications of ethnicity or nationality, among other markers, into account, many theorists extend understandings of groups to include an assortment of self-categorizations.¹⁹ According to John C. Turner, groups form when "two or more individuals...perceive themselves to be members of the same social category."²⁰

¹⁵ Rupert Brown, *Group Processes: Dynamics Within and Between Groups*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 2.

¹⁶ E.g. K. Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper and Row, 1948); D. T. Campbell, "Common Fate, Similarity, and Other Indices of the Status of Aggregates of Persons as Social Entities," *Behavioral Science* 3 (1958): 14-25.

¹⁷ E.g. M. Sherif and C. W. Sherif, *Social Psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

¹⁸ E.g. R. F. Bales, *Interaction Process Analysis: A Method for the Study of Small Groups* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), cited in Brown, *Group Processes*, 3.

¹⁹ Brown, *Group Processes*, 3. For the notion of "imagined" communal identification, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).

²⁰ John C. Turner, "Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group," in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. Henri Tajfel, 15-40 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 15. "This definition," Turner continues, "stresses that members of a social group seem often to share no more than a collective perception of their own social unity and yet this seems to be sufficient for them to act as a group" and thus "can be described as the *Social Identification* model." Ibid. See also Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams,

In the context of discussing relations between groups, however, Brown proposes a caveat to Turner's oft-cited definition: "a group exists when two or more people define themselves as members of it *and* when its existence is recognized by at least one other."²¹ Such a collective conceptualization and cognitive identification is—according to Brown—the "crucial necessary condition" for understanding groups: a criterion that consequently includes small microstructures with a minimal number of connected members, to massive, formal institutions and organizations like, for the purpose of this study, the UCC.²²

This perceptual approach to groups is contingent on the natural process of social categorization, which Brown calls "the foundation stone of all intergroup behavior."²³ A cognitive 'shortcut,' in a sense, categorization is the way in which individuals—often subconsciously—efficiently perceive, come to terms with, and understand others around them, automatically classifying "those they encounter into groups based on age, race, nationality, and other categories."²⁴ In the face of experiencing an infinite number of unique events and people, social categorization functions as a fundamental, inevitable tool for human interaction and communication:²⁵ as Gordon W. Allport once noted, "The

Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes (London: Routledge, 1998), 21: "Self-categorization is the process which transforms individuals into groups."

²¹ Brown, *Group Processes*, 3, emphasis added.

²² *Ibid.*, 4. See also Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 106: "For the social identity approach, a collection of individuals (and here there is absolutely no theoretical restriction on number) becomes a group to the extent that it exhibits group behavior." Cf. William Bezzdek, "Groups," in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Sociology*, eds. George Ritzer and J. Michael Ryan, 273-74 (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

²³ Brown, *Group Processes*, 264.

²⁴ Donelson R. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014), 89. On the usefulness of categorization in social interactions, G. W. Allport says, "...the category enables us quickly to identify a related object." Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954; repr. Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1979), 21.

²⁵ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 19, inter alia.

human mind must think with the aid of categories.... We cannot possibly avoid this process.”²⁶ Far from simply at-a-distance, objective evaluations, the prejudgments of social categorization naturally involve a personal insertion and association: individuals classify others along with themselves, typically comprehending the former from the perspective of the familiar ingroup identity.²⁷ A considerable usefulness of categories, then, is in the delineation of “those who belong and those who do not”;²⁸ in other words, categorization draws a distinction between ingroups and outgroups, “us” and “them.”²⁹

At its most basic level, this is where ingroup bias begins: the recognition of two differentiated groups, and the identification of the self with one or the other. Rarely neutral, this value-laden ordering process frequently reflects a favorable predisposition towards the ingroup.³⁰ As displayed in numerous studies and experiments by Tajfel et al. on the subject of minimal groups, no obvious cause, history, or competitive environment of conflict is necessary for feelings of ingroup favoritism. The sole categorical

²⁶ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 71.

²⁷ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 21: “...the categorization of people is rarely, if ever, conducted in the dispassionate and objective manner.... The categorization of people—social categorization—is overwhelmingly with reference to *self*.... People tend to classify others on the basis of their similarities and differences to *self*; they constantly perceive others as members of the same category as self (ingroup members) or as members of a different category to self (outgroup members).” Paraphrasing the German of Regina Borschel, *Die Konstruktion einer christlichen Identität: Paulus und die Gemeinde von Thessalonich in ihrer hellenistisch-romischen Umwelt* (Berlin and Vienna: Philo, 2001), Esler reminds readers that the “foundational concept [of social-psychological work on “identity”] is that of difference as constituting identity, since something only *is* to the extent that it is distinguished from something else.” Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 19.

²⁸ Brown, *Group Processes*, 266.

²⁹ Or, as Gaertner and Dovidio also call it, “the ‘we’s’ and the ‘they’s’” in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 36. See also: Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio, “Categorization, Recategorization, and Intergroup Bias,” in *On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years After Allport*, eds. John F. Dovidio, Peter Glick, and Laurie A. Rudman, 71-88 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 73-74 and Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 14: “Categories do not exist in isolation. A category is only such in contrast with another.”

³⁰ E.g. Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 75.

establishment and perception of two distinct—even if plainly *ad hoc*—groups is sufficient for fostering ingroup focused activity,³¹ manifesting itself in various observable actions such as reward allocation or aversive prejudice.³² Over the course of categorization, two further processes occur: similarities are emphasized within each separate group—with actual diversity perceptually disregarded—and differences between groups are sharpened, “exaggerated and overgeneralized.”³³ Labeled, respectively, by Brown as “assimilation” and “accentuation,” these parallel movements frequently rely on, deploy, and perpetuate malleable stereotypes contingent on social contexts.³⁴ Such stereotypes, acting as “social categorical judgments,” classify people from the standpoint of certain group prototypes rather than as separate individuals.³⁵ Through all of this, group identity and categorical difference are asserted, with a clear line drawn between insiders and outsiders.

An oft-cited and influential social experiment regarding intergroup bias is the Robbers Cave study conducted in 1954 by Muzafer Sherif et al. What appeared, on the surface, as a typical summer camp for two groups of eleven-year old boys, was, in fact, a carefully

³¹ The “minimal group paradigm” was first devised and published in Henri Tajfel, “Experiments in Intergroup Discrimination,” *Scientific American* 223 (1970): 96-102; see also Henri Tajfel, “Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 33 (1982): 1-39; John C. Turner, “Social Categorization and Social Discrimination in the Minimal Group Paradigm,” in *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, ed. Henri Tajfel, 101-33 (London: Academic Press, 1978), among others.

³² See the extensive list of ingroup favoritism effects and supporting experiments in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 38-39, including reward allocation, esteem, product evaluation, empathy, cognitive encoding and memory, language (e.g. collective pronouns) and the “ultimate attributional error” (citing T. F. Pettigrew, “The Ultimate Attribution Error: Extending Allport’s Cognitive Analysis of Prejudice,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 55 [1979]: 461-76), where negative behavior is more easily associated with outgroup members.

³³ Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” 100. Cf. Brown, *Group Processes*, 264.

³⁴ Brown, *Group Processes*, 264. Accentuation, or “contrast,” according to Brown, is a “sharpening of the perceived differences *between* categories”; assimilation is “a leveling of the distinctions *within* categories.” *Ibid.*

³⁵ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 21.

planned and monitored field study of group dynamics. As soon as either group of boys became aware of the other, intergroup conflict—explicit and implicit—ensued: alongside organized competitive activities between the two teams, verbal insults, cabin raids, fights, and property destruction demonstrated both ingroup favoritism and outgroup hostility.³⁶ Originally, Sherif and his colleagues focused on the functional relation between groups, and the almost-automatic animosity arising out of competitive-oriented encounters, also known as realistic conflict theory.³⁷ Operating from a perspective of social categorization and social identity theory (the latter elaborated on below), Gaertner et al. also note “the mere delineation of an in-group and an out-group, independent of and before competition, was sufficient to instigate intergroup biases,”³⁸ tensions especially evident in recorded derogatory comments among campers preceding the actual physical encounter of their respective ‘rivals.’ The Robbers Cave study, and its controlled interaction of two randomly formed groups, indicates the natural tendency to create and maintain group distinctiveness, and the intergroup conflict that may result.

Social Identity Theory

From the 1970s onward, social psychologists sought and proposed a more satisfactory explanation for the phenomenon of in-group bias between even the most basic group

³⁶ M. Sherif et al., *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Book Exchange, 1961). The copy consulted for this literature review is an authorized facsimile by microfilm-xerography by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI, 1977. For a few examples of competitive and hostile behavior between camper groups, see *ibid.*, 95, 98, 101, 108 and 109. Cf. a helpful overview of the same intergroup conflict in Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 470.

³⁷ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 43-44; Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 38.

³⁸ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 38; See also Brown, *Group Processes*, 247.

divisions.³⁹ As demonstrated in earlier studies, such as the Robbers Cave experiment and Leon Festinger's social comparison theory in the 1950s,⁴⁰ along with later minimal-group scenarios created and analyzed by Tajfel and Turner, individuals in groups, even with no interpersonal connection or meaning existing within and between them, still tended to favor fellow members.⁴¹ The development of social identity theory, primarily by Tajfel and Turner, offers convincing—even if continually modified—insights into the cognitive motivations guiding these apparently instinctive, minimally prompted attitudes and expressions of in-group bias. A non-reductionist approach to group processes and intergroup relations, as opposed to the structuralist, social cohesion model of Sherif and others,⁴² social identity theory is “concerned with the ways in which the members of one group seek to differentiate it from other groups so as to achieve a positive self-identity.”⁴³ This sense of positive self-identity is essential to social identity theory: due to a need for social affirmation and elevated self-esteem, members of groups will seek out favorable comparisons with outgroups, what Tajfel calls “the establishment of positive

³⁹ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 19-20; Brown, *Group Processes*, 311-15.

⁴⁰ L. Festinger, “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes,” *Human Relations* 7 (1954): 117-40. However, as Hogg and Abrams note, the term “social comparison,” as used and understood in social identity theory, is slightly different than that of Festinger, but nonetheless coincides and overlaps in certain areas; see Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 22-23.

⁴¹ See note 32 above.

⁴² Hogg and Abrams provide an overview of social identity theory's structuralist “progenitors” in Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 14-17. In specific reference to Sherif, see Marilyn B. Brewer, “Superordinate Goals Versus Superordinate Identity As Bases of Intergroup Cooperation,” in *Social Identity Processes: Trends in Theory and Research*, eds. Dora Capozza and Rupert Brown (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 117-18.

⁴³ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 20.

distinctiveness.”⁴⁴ Stated otherwise, the personal motivation of self-worth means accentuating distinctiveness through intergroup comparisons in ways that reflect positively on the ingroup. Ingroup bias, “stressing the relative superiority”⁴⁵ of one group to another, is a consistent consequence of this search for self-esteem within the categorical identification side of the social continuum.⁴⁶ Brown notes, “there is no lack of research demonstrating people’s readiness to engage in intergroup comparisons, and, more often than not, these comparisons result in the ingroup being viewed more favourable than the outgroup.”⁴⁷ Marilynn B. Brewer’s optimal distinctiveness theory also supports this notion, since regarding one’s ingroup as particularly positive and apart from surrounding outgroups strikes a balance between two crucial components of individual identity: the desires to both belong and be unique from others.⁴⁸ Yet, as Gaertner and John F. Dovidio note, “one consequence of this process can be intergroup bias.”⁴⁹

The notion of intergroup bias itself continues to be nuanced and clarified. While outgroup hostility can subsequently emerge quite easily, especially in situations of resource competition or conflict, “the type of bias due largely to categorization alone

⁴⁴ Henri Tajfel, “The Achievement of Group Differentiation,” in *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, ed. Henri Tajfel, 77-98 (London: Academic Press, 1978), 83. While the edition consulted for research reads “the establishment of psychological distinctiveness,” this is the quotation consistently found and attributed in later literature.

⁴⁵ Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 92.

⁴⁶ “Continuum” vocabulary, in this context, comes from John C. Turner et al., *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), vii.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Group Processes*, 312, alluding to B. Mullen et al., “Ingroup Bias as a Function of Salience, Relevance, and Status: An Integration,” in *European Journal of Social Psychology* 22 (1992): 103-22.

⁴⁸ Marilynn B. Brewer, “The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different At the Same Time,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17 (1991): 475-82. Cf. Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 74.

⁴⁹ Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 74.

primarily represents a pro-ingroup orientation.”⁵⁰ Rather than intentionally antagonistic discrimination of outgroup individuals, the intergroup bias initiated by social identity and categorization processes—for the most part—reflects a “preference for ingroup members.”⁵¹ Ingroup favoritism can be evidenced in overall attitudes, reward distribution, assessment of products, and semantic priming.⁵² Prosocial behavior—such as empathy—is also “offered more readily to ingroup...members.”⁵³ David A. Schroeder et al. observed that, when it comes to sharing scarce resources, individuals often show more restraint and cooperation with insiders than with outsiders.⁵⁴ An experiment by Miles Hewstone demonstrates additional expressions of ingroup favoritism: while positive descriptors, explanations, and outcomes are usually used to describe ingroup members, the personalities of outgroup members are inversely oriented around negative impressions.⁵⁵ Due to different levels of cognitive encoding when it comes to actions of outgroup and ingroup members, suggests A. Maas and associates, stereotypes can be difficult to adjust or overcome.⁵⁶ All of this confirms earlier meta-analysis of intergroup literature by

⁵⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁵¹ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 40, cf. Marilynn B. Brewer, “Ingroup Bias in the Minimal Intergroup Situation: A Cognitive-Motivational Analysis,” *Psychological Bulletin* 86 (1979): 307-24.

⁵² See note 32 above.

⁵³ Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 50.

⁵⁴ D. A. Schroeder et al., *Psychology of Helping and Altruism: Problems and Puzzles* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995).

⁵⁵ Miles Hewstone, “The ‘ultimate attribution error?’ A Review of the Literature on Intergroup Attributions,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 20 (1990): 311-35.

⁵⁶ A. Maas, R. Ceccarelli, and S. Rudin, “Linguistic Intergroup Bias: Evidence for In-group-protective motivation,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71 (1996): 512-26, referenced in Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 75.

Brewer, which proposed that bias from categorization was primarily rooted in ingroup affirmation over outgroup eschewal.⁵⁷ “Nevertheless,” Gaertner and Dovidio importantly note, “disadvantaged status due to preferential treatment over another can be as pernicious as discrimination based on anti-outgroup orientations.”⁵⁸ Likewise, what categorization may initially birth as ingroup bias and preference can, depending on the environment, effortlessly evolve into explicit intergroup animosity and conflict.⁵⁹

Given their necessary, inevitable nature and central role in producing ingroup preference, social categorization processes are often seen as an origin point for ameliorating group relations. Recognizing the unavoidable reality of intergroup distinctions, social identity theorists have recommended certain strategies either to reduce or redirect the resulting bias, or to redraw the very boundaries perceived and established between different groups. Three broad approaches have received “substantial empirical attention”: decategorization, recategorization, and mutual intergroup differentiation.⁶⁰ All three independent but complementary concepts are contingent on the central assumption that “it may not be feasible to short-circuit the social categorization process altogether.”⁶¹ Whereas the first two, in the words of Gaertner and Dovidio, count on influencing the

⁵⁷ Brewer, “Ingroup Bias.”

⁵⁸ Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 75. See also Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 20: “The consequences of bias due to pro-ingroup intentions are not necessarily more benign than bias driven by anti-outgroup intentions.”

⁵⁹ For example, in speaking of racial discrimination, Gaertner and Dovidio write, “Although other factors beyond mere social categorization are important in shaping racial attitudes, initial levels of ingroup favoritism may chart the course for the more ready acceptance of negative feelings and beliefs.” See Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 19-20.

⁶⁰ Gaertner, “Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” 101.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

levels of “category inclusiveness people use when categorizing other people, including themselves,”⁶² mutual intergroup differentiation seeks to transform initially threatening intergroup relationships into partnerships of cooperative and appreciative interdependence.⁶³ The micro-scale nature of decategorization, dependent on “personalized interactions”⁶⁴ or appreciating group members as “separate individuals,”⁶⁵ makes the model fairly unworkable for surveying a large social group. This study will accordingly rely on recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation as lenses for analyzing the UCC’s relationships with various outgroups.

Recategorization and Mutual Intergroup Differentiation

Whereas decategorization aims at eliminating social categories, theorists such as Gaertner and Dovidio have advocated for an alternative approach, commonly called recategorization: to redraw the boundaries between two groups so as to encompass both within a single superordinate identity.⁶⁶ One of the first to suggest this method—even if not under its currently accepted nomenclature—was R. D. Minard in 1952, who demonstrated how black and white coal miners, usually at odds above ground, united as a

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 40.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 42-44. See Marilyn B. Brewer and N. Miller, “Beyond the Contact Hypothesis: Theoretical Perspectives on Desegregation,” in *Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation*, eds. N. Miller and Marilyn B. Brewer, 281-302 (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984). An overview of decategorization’s development can be found in N. Miller, “Personalization and the Promise of Contact Theory,” *Journal of Social Issues* 58 (2002): 387-410.

⁶⁵ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 42-44. See D. A. Wilder, “Perceiving Persons as a Group: Categorization and Intergroup Relations,” in *Cognitive Processes in Stereotyping and Intergroup Behavior*, ed. D. L. Hamilton, 213-57 (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1981). Cf. Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 496-7 and Brown, *Group Processes*, 347-49.

⁶⁶ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 42, 46-49; Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 497.

single ingroup while working together in a perilous environment.⁶⁷ Allport, in a 1954 study, implied similar ideas through a diagram depicting “circles of inclusion.”⁶⁸ Raising awareness of an individual’s potential and increasingly expansive ingroups, he paved the way for others like Doise,⁶⁹ Brown and Turner,⁷⁰ and Gaertner et al., and the recognition that, in structuring higher levels of category inclusiveness, previous outgroups can be incorporated into a superordinate category. Once outsiders, newly included members now receive the benefits of ingroup bias, such as “more empathetic, ...cooperative,” and positive behaviors.⁷¹ In this way, intergroup conflict is reduced without ignoring the inevitability of categorization.⁷²

One prominent development within the recategorization approach is Gaertner and Dovidio’s Common Ingroup Identity Model. Extensively and consistently supported through complex lab experiments,⁷³ business mergers,⁷⁴ high school environments,⁷⁵ and

⁶⁷ R. D. Minard, “Race Relationships in the Pocahontas Coal Field,” *Journal of Social Issues* 8 (1952): 29-44, summarized in Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 29.

⁶⁸ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 43-46. The explicit association of Allport with the future development of recategorization is in—among others—Gaertner et al., “Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” 102 and Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 77-79.

⁶⁹ E.g. W. Doise, *Groups and Individuals: Explanations in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

⁷⁰ E.g. R. J. Brown and John C. Turner, “Interpersonal and Intergroup Behavior,” in *Intergroup Behavior*, eds. John C. Turner and H. Giles, 33-64 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

⁷¹ Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 77; John F. Dovidio et al., “Extending the Benefits of Recategorization: Evaluations, Self-Disclosure and Helping,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 33 (1997): 401-20. See also Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 48.

⁷² Gaertner et al., “Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” 102.

⁷³ E.g. Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “Reduction of Intergroup Bias: The Benefits of Recategorization,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57 (1989): 239-49 and John F. Dovidio et al., “Group Representations and Intergroup Bias: Positive Affect, Similarity and Group Size,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21 (1995): 856-65.

blended family scenarios,⁷⁶ the Common Ingroup Identity Model operates on the hypothesis that

...as a consequence of recategorization, the cognitive and motivational processes that initially produced ingroup favoritism can be harnessed to reduce intergroup bias and prejudice toward former outgroup members who now share the common, superordinate group identity.⁷⁷

Two groups can attain this recategorized state by either creating new superordinate identities (introducing elements that unite multiple groups, such as “common goals or fate”) or emphasizing pre-existing common memberships (such as a “school, a company, a nation,” etc).⁷⁸ In this way, what begins as an “us” and “them” scenario ideally culminates in an inclusive “we”: a relationship that can result in “more open communication and self-

⁷⁴ E.g. G. R. Mottola et al., “How Groups Merge: The Effects of Merger Integration Patterns on Anticipated Commitment to the Merged Organization,” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 27 (1997): 1335-58, which examined this scenario in a laboratory experiment; Samuel L. Gaertner, John F. Dovidio, and B. Bachman, “Revisiting the Contact Hypothesis: The Induction of a Common Ingroup Identity,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 20 (1996): 271-90; and B. A. Bachman and Samuel L. Gaertner, “The Intergroup Merger Model: Mergers in the Banking Industry,” Unpublished Manuscript, Sienna College, 1999, recapitulated in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 87-93 but cited as 1998 in Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “The Common Ingroup Identity Model For Reducing Intergroup Bias: Progress and Challenges,” in *Social Identity Processes: Trends in Theory and Research*, eds. Dora Capozza and Rupert Brown, 133-48 (London: Sage, 2000).

⁷⁵ Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “The Contact Hypothesis: The Role of a Common Ingroup Identity On Reducing Intergroup Bias,” *Small Groups Research* 25 no. 2 (1994): 224-49 and Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “The Contact Hypothesis: The Role of a Common Ingroup Identity On Reducing Intergroup Bias Among Majority and Minority Group Members,” in *What’s Social About Social Cognition*, eds. J. L. Nye and A. M. Brower, 230-360 (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1996). For an overview of this study, see Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 83-87.

⁷⁶ B. S. Banker and Samuel L. Gaertner, “Achieving Stepfamily Harmony: An Intergroup Relations Approach,” *Journal of Family Psychology* 12 (1998): 310-25; see overview in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 93-96.

⁷⁷ Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 79.

⁷⁸ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 48.

disclosing interaction”⁷⁹ which, over time, should temper former hostilities and develop mutually amicable connections.⁸⁰

Recategorization does not necessarily require members to completely abandon previous identities; on the contrary, multiple studies support and endorse a dual identity model, where subgroup and superordinate categories are simultaneously salient, functional, and reinforced.⁸¹ Rather than forcing individuals to renounce former self-affiliations—which, as J. W. Schofield notes, would only serve to estrange intergroup relations⁸²—a dual identity model would sustain and value the positive distinctiveness of prior identities within the context of recategorization.⁸³ This nuanced approach is especially promising for vicariously extending the benefits of ingroup bias to other members not immediately present.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, recategorization, encapsulated by the Common Ingroup Identity

⁷⁹ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 30. For a diagram depicting these shifts, refer to the chart in Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “Across Cultural Divides: The Value of a Superordinate Identity,” in *Cultural Divides: Understanding and Overcoming Group Conflict*, eds. D. A. Prentice and D. T. Miller, 173-212 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), reprinted in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 47. For language of “us,” “them,” and “we,” see Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 48.

⁸⁰ E.g. Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “The Common Ingroup Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Intergroup Bias,” *European Review of Social Psychology* 4 (1993): 1-26, especially 21; Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 42, 48-49.

⁸¹ See those listed in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 166.

⁸² E.g. the findings of J. W. Schofield, “Causes and Consequences of the Colorblind Perspective,” in *Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism*, eds. John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, 231-53 (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986).

⁸³ Gaertner et al., “The Common Ingroup Identity Model,” 143: “...establishing a common superordinate identity while simultaneously maintaining the salience of subgroup identities (i.e. developing a dual identity as two subgroups within one group...) would be particularly effective because it permits the benefits of a common ingroup identity to operate without arousing countervailing motivations to achieve positive distinctiveness.” Cf. the overview of dual identity in Miles Hewstone et al., “Majority-Minority Relations in Organizations: Challenges and Opportunities,” in *Social Identity Processes in Organizational Contexts*, eds. Michael A. Hogg and Deborah J. Terry, 67-86 (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2001), 79.

⁸⁴ As Gaertner et al. write, “A dual identity may also be a critical factor in the generalization of the benefits of intergroup contact beyond the immediate ingroup and outgroup members present...” Gaertner et al., “The Common Ingroup Identity Model,” 145.

Model, comes with some significant caveats and concerns: in 2000, Matthew J. Hornsey and Michael A. Hogg, for example, highlighted the risk of assimilation in recategorization by pointing out the potential harm to marginal group members.⁸⁵ Later, in 2002, the same team revisited the impact of a common identity on low-status subgroups, and the various “threats to distinctiveness” that could emerge from the model.⁸⁶ Like Hornsey and Hogg, concurrent scholarship by D. O. Sears et al. and A. Mummendey and M. Wenzel explores similar considerations in contexts of ethnicity and majority-to-minority impositions.⁸⁷ Hornsey and Hogg also draw attention to the danger of overly inclusive superordinate identities:

The strategy [of recategorization] may be effective only if the superordinate category is well-defined and affords adequate distinctiveness. If the superordinate category is too inclusive, however, categorization at a superordinate level may simply encourage more aggressive attempts to reinforce subgroup distinctiveness.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Among other publications by the same authors that year, see specifically Matthew J. Hornsey and Michael A. Hogg, “Assimilation and Diversity: An Integrative Model of Subgroup Relations,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 4 (2000): 143-56. The question of whether (or when) a dual identity is preferable to a “one-group representation” is explored in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 163-68. Brown also raises the concern of potential assimilation within recategorization, referring to research by Berry that highlighted contexts where “members of minority groups are expected to conform to the norms and values of the dominant group.” J. W. Berry, “Cultural Relations in Plural Societies: Alternatives to Segregation and Their Sociopsychological Implications,” in *Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation*, eds. N. Miller and Marilyn B. Brewer, 11-27 (New York: Academic Press, 1984).

⁸⁶ Matthew J. Hornsey and Michael A. Hogg, “The Effects of Status on Subgroup Relations,” *British Journal of Social Psychology* 41 (2002): 203-18.

⁸⁷ D. O. Sears et al., “Cultural Diversity and Multicultural Politics: Is Ethnic Balkanization Psychologically Inevitable,” in *Cultural Divides: Understanding and Overcoming Group Conflict*, eds. D. A. Prentice and D. T. Miller, 35-79 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999). Mummendey and Wenzel’s work offers a counter-argument to the common encouragement of recategorization and dual identity, proposing that, under specific circumstances, a superordinate identity may simply intensify conflict between two otherwise-separate groups. See A. Mummendey and M. Wenzel, “Social Discrimination and Tolerance in Intergroup Relations: Reactions to Intergroup Difference,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 3 (1999): 158-74, cf. Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 168.

⁸⁸ Matthew J. Hornsey and Michael A. Hogg, “Subgroup Differentiation as a Response to an Overly-Inclusive Group: A Test of Optimal Distinctiveness Theory,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 29 (1999): 543-50.

In addition, though optimistic about the Common Ingroup Identity Model, Gaertner and Dovidio question whether a shared superordinate identity could persist for extended periods of time. Although “residual effects” have been recorded from short-term recategorization experiments, they suspect “unless supported and sustained by group norms and the leadership structure...an ephemeral superordinate connection between groups is unlikely to remain stable over time.”⁸⁹

As mentioned, a second major strategy for reducing ingroup bias is mutual intergroup differentiation. Advanced by Hewstone and Brown, this categorical approach “encourages groups to emphasize their mutual distinctiveness, but in the context of cooperative interdependence.”⁹⁰ Building on earlier work by Brown and Wade, as well as Deschamps and Brown,⁹¹ in which separate teams were paired to complete a common task, Hewstone and Brown propose that positive intergroup relationships are possible when groups work together to achieve mutual goals.⁹² In “highlighting the different and potentially complementary skills and resources,”⁹³ and strategically dividing labor, respect may be

⁸⁹ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 162.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁹¹ Rupert Brown and G. Wade, “Superordinate Goals and Intergroup Behavior: The Effect of Role Ambiguity and Status on Intergroup Attitudes and Task Performance,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 17 (1987): 131-42, and J. C. Deschamps and Rupert Brown, “Superordinate Goals and Intergroup Conflict,” *British Journal of Social Psychology* 22 (1983): 189-95, whose influence is noted in Gaertner et al., “Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” 103-04.

⁹² E.g. Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown, “Contact is Not Enough: An Intergroup Perspective on the ‘Contact Hypothesis,’” in *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*, eds. Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown, 1-44 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986). Cf. Gaertner and Dovidio’s overview of Mutual Intergroup Differentiation in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 40-42 and Gaertner et al., “Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” 103-04.

⁹³ Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 76.

mutually extended across categorical divisions.⁹⁴ Since the salience of original identities is sustained, effects of mutual intergroup differentiation are more likely to generalize to other outgroup members than those of any other model above.⁹⁵

Moving from theory and laboratories to real-life applications, what are a few concrete signs of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation? Gaertner and Dovidio, analyzing the Robbers Cave study of Sherif et al., outline characteristics—far from an exhaustive list—that “mark the occurrence of each of these category-based processes”:

...*Recategorization* can involve: (a) Use of pronouns “us” and “we,” whose meaning is inclusive of the memberships of both groups;...and (c) Activities that celebrate common superordinate groups to which the members actually belong (e.g., singing songs symbolic of superordinate group memberships).

...*Mutual Intergroup Differentiation* can include: (a) Maintenance of original boundaries in the use of space; (b) More respectful appreciation of differences between the groups; and (c) Solutions to collective problems that respectfully recognize the group boundaries.⁹⁶

The following survey of the UCC’s relationships with outgroups will imply many of these possible indications of social identity strategies for reducing intergroup conflict; the third section’s interdisciplinary synthesis and evaluation will note specific parallels and examples. Social psychological models and theories outlined above will also provide points of critique and concern in respect to the following specific case studies. Overall, a normative pattern will be evident throughout all of the UCC’s intergroup interactions, in which the UCC moves from initial positions of categorical ingroup preference—implicit or hostile and competitive—to recategorized and mutually differentiated partnerships.

⁹⁴ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 40-41.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 41, and Gaertner and Dovidio, “Categorization,” 77.

⁹⁶ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 171-72.

Chapter II: The United Church of Canada's Interaction with Outgroups

Introduction

Since its official—and relatively recent—inauguration in 1925, fulfilling a discussion and dream initiated decades earlier, the UCC has formed a fascinating and multi-faceted history: from same-sex affirmations to First Nation apologies, pacifist proclamations to apartheid protest, female ordination to efforts at further union, progressive curriculum to provocative ad campaigns, ecumenical bonds to controversial boycotts, and, among countless other milestones, a multiplicity of positive, prophetic, or even—depending on the context—polarizing projects and policies.⁹⁷ Under the surface of national stances and statements exists a far-from-unanimous membership: while the decision-making structure is largely democratic, due to an adapted Presbyterian approach of elected representation, political “asymmetry” between laity and clergy is apparent.⁹⁸ Coupled with the considerable autonomy of local congregations, this encourages an extensive array of opinions and practices across individual, regional, and intra-denominational lines.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Recent examples include the 2012 “categorical” rejection of the Northern Gateway Pipeline and the report on Israel/Palestine conflicts and subsequent boycott of settlement products. See Christine Johnson, “Council Categorically Rejects Northern Gateway Pipeline,” United Church of Canada 41st General Council, last modified August 14, 2012, <http://www.gc41.ca/news/council-categorically-rejects-northern-gateway-pipeline> and The United Church of Canada, “Unsettling Goods: Choose Peace in Palestine and Israel: About the Campaign,” last modified May 28, 2014, <http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved-/unsettling-goods/about>, respectively. Though published before the 41st General Council, helpful historical background material regarding the UCC’s complex relationship with the geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East can be found in Alan Davies, “Jews and Palestinians: An Unresolved Conflict in the United Church Mind,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer, 239-57 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012).

⁹⁸ Flatt, *After Evangelicalism*, 259.

⁹⁹ Roger O’Toole et al., “The United Church in Crisis: A Sociological Perspective on the Dilemmas of a Mainstream Denomination,” *Studies in Religion* 20 no. 2 (1991): 151-63, especially 162-3. John Webster Grant argues otherwise in “Blending Traditions: The United Church of Canada,” in *The Churches and the Canadian Experience: A Faith and Order Study of the Christian Tradition*, ed. John Webster Grant, 133-44 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), 140, stating “It could be argued that the United Church has become one of

Furthermore, from the 1960s onward, the UCC experienced a shift in its self-understanding: whereas once, the denomination collectively considered itself in the same fashion as its founders, as an all-encompassing Canadian church and privileged, exclusive “engine of social progress,”¹⁰⁰ it now sees itself as a fallible ecclesial body, “national” due only to its nationwide existence.¹⁰¹ This disconcerting, decades-long realization, brought about by a variety of factors,¹⁰² has resulted in a discourse of overall loss and an unsettling “liminal state.” As Schweitzer notes, “a key element of [the UCC’s] social imaginary is gone, and nothing has yet arisen to take its place.”¹⁰³ Yet, in this same period of disestablishment, disappointment, and identity crisis, progressively positive relationships with outgroups began to develop: as the UCC adjusted to a different cultural milieu, it “shed aspects of a colonial and patriarchal mentality” and opened itself up to greater appreciation of difference within and outside denominational walls.¹⁰⁴

Many such movements in this area will be the subjects of following sections: respectful dialogue and shared ministries with other Canadian churches, especially Roman Catholics

Canada’s most homogenous denominations...” Given the extensive developments since this article was published, one could easily argue otherwise.

¹⁰⁰ Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 286.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 286-88.

¹⁰² Including, but not limited to, religious disestablishment, declining memberships, the viewing of other religions as valid, and the overall diversification of Canada; see Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 280-94. Phyllis Airhart gives four “quick” examples: “decentralization,” “fading significance attached to denominational belonging,” “demographic shifts” and overall Protestant membership decline, and a “greater appreciation of ‘difference,’” in “A ‘Review’ of the United Church of Canada’s 75 Years,” *Touchstone* 18 no. 3 (2000): 19-31.

¹⁰³ Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 293. Airhart labels this as a “sense of loss of place,” with the UCC being one denomination among many others experiencing this development; see Airhart, “Review,” 25.

¹⁰⁴ Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 292-93. Regarding the attitude of disappointment, Airhart similarly notes a “mood of pessimism” permeating UCC discourse in “Review,” 20.

and Anglicans; openness and admiration towards other world religions, like Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam; new models of mutual partnership with overseas mission organizations; and the movement away from assimilationist attitudes and activities concerning First Nations communities.¹⁰⁵ Naturally, these case studies only represent excerpts from the UCC's considerable and complex history; similarly, despite containing fruitful avenues for future analysis, aforementioned intra-denominational diversity and dynamics of the UCC will not be explored in this thesis. While other developments and interactions may have contributed insight, the examples chosen should provide a novel, general-but-valuable snapshot of the UCC from a social psychology perspective. The following chapter will then draw specific-yet-tentative connections between social-psychological theories and historical developments, exploring how the UCC has demonstrated or contested models of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation in its dealings with various outgroups and external difference.

The United Church of Canada and Canadian Interdenominational Relations

In many ways, the UCC was a momentous ecumenical endeavor from the start. Even if not the first ecclesial body to blend denominations and confessions, the amalgamation of four Canadian churches—Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Local Union Churches—represented a unique and impressive interdenominational accomplishment in the North American context.¹⁰⁶ As Phyllis Airhart states, “The United Church began as a new venture in ecumenism committed to both Christian unity and the cultivation of a sense

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 292.

¹⁰⁶ McIntire brings attention to often-overlooked earlier unions: the “*Evangelische Kirche in Preussen* (Protestant Church in Prussia)...a blend of Lutheran, Calvinist, and local union churches,” the South India United Church, and the United Church of India, North in “Unity Among Many,” 14.

of national responsibility.”¹⁰⁷ With the motto “That All May Be One” (Jn. 17:21), union partners worked to become an organic body of Christ, fundamentally motivated by ambitious visions of “one Protestant Church in Canada.”¹⁰⁸ While common roots, doctrine, and mission agendas were a cornerstone of union conversations, differences were not altogether disregarded in the process: the Inauguration Service, for example, acknowledged and incorporated the distinct heritage and personalities of the uniting bodies.¹⁰⁹ Although pre-union relationships are outside the scope of this study, themes and patterns of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation can already be subtly perceived: respectively, the emphasis on a larger identity—faith and unity in Christ—and a common task (e.g. public, national witness) that recognized the unique gifts offered by each incoming party.¹¹⁰

Of course, even a cursory look at these early decades reveals intergroup tensions: immediately evident are those between the newly formed UCC and minority Presbyterian

¹⁰⁷ Airhart, “Review,” 20.

¹⁰⁸ “...the desire of those who initiated the movement [towards Union] is to see one Protestant Church in Canada.” Letter from the Chairman and Secretaries of the Joint Committee on Church Union to the Negotiating Churches, August 1, 1906 in Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Report of the General’s Committee on Union with Other Churches* (1907), 8-9, quoted in McIntire, “Unity Among Many,” 23.

¹⁰⁹ Hymns, for example, were intentionally chosen to be “representative of the united churches,” as the bulletin for the Inaugural Service of the UCC explains in a section on “Annotations, Sources,” accessible at The United Church of Canada, “The Inaugural Service of the United Church of Canada, June 10, 1925,” last updated April 29, 2015, <http://www.united-church.ca/history/overview/archival>. Airhart states, however, “For the founders of the United Church... Differences were to be acknowledged, even respected, but not necessarily preserved.” “Review,” 26. The emphasis on similarities within union discussions is detailed *ibid.*, 21-22.

¹¹⁰ In this case, “each incoming party” is used in the context of the founding denominations, not necessarily in the voices that were ignored, misrepresented, or unappreciated at the time, including—detailed below—First Nations congregations.

dissenters, a subject best left to an abundance of other sources and scholarly analyses.¹¹¹ In short, from a standpoint of social identity theory, a plausible explanation for some—not all—of this conflict is that the proposed ‘recategorization’ of the UCC did not uphold sufficient positive distinctiveness for non-concurring Presbyterian congregations: those who felt union posed too great a threat towards their categorical identity and certain traditional polity and doctrinal boundaries therein.¹¹² Estrangement eventually dwindled over the decades, mainly due to time, turning attention elsewhere, an intentional “recovery of fellowship,” and shared ties to residential school apologies; by 1975, the relationship between the UCC and Presbyterian Church was cordial enough to recognize each other’s baptisms as valid.¹¹³ However, other specific efforts, nationally speaking, in the areas of recategorization or mutual differentiation are not evident.

More broadly, the motivation for union and a national Protestant denomination was partially formed out of a firm, competitive ingroup bias against the Roman Catholic Church in Canada. Suspicious and antagonistic under-the-surface—if not obvious—attitudes towards Roman Catholicism were not rare or unprecedented in Canadian Protestantism; in fact, such prejudice had “deep roots” in the UCC’s own predecessors,

¹¹¹ E.g. N. Keith Clifford, *The Resistance to Church Union in Canada, 1904-1939* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985); Ephraim Scott, *Church Union and the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Montreal: J. Lovell, 1928); Claris Edwin Silcox, *Church Union in Canada: Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1933); and McIntire, “Unity Among Many.”

¹¹² E.g. those mentioned in McIntire, “Unity Among Many,” 16-17.

¹¹³ John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (1972, rev. ed., Vancouver: Regent College, 1998), 155. For the Presbyterian confession and apology to First Nations, see its reprint in The Presbyterian Church of Canada, “The Confession of the Presbyterian Church (As Adopted by the General Assembly, June 9th, 1994),” *Ecumenism* 39 no. 155 (2004): 14-15. In 1975, “Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and United Churches [agreed] to recognize the validity of Christian baptism in all of these traditions.” The United Church of Canada, “Historical Timeline,” last modified January 26, 2015, www.united-church.ca/history/overview/timeline.

especially Methodism and Presbyterianism.¹¹⁴ John H. Young explains their push for union was prompted in some measure by a “perceived need to help ‘Canadianize’ and ‘Christianize’” incoming immigrant populations on the prairies—ideal results naturally characterized from a perspective of “White Anglo-Saxon Protestantism.”¹¹⁵ Given the similar goal of Roman Catholics regarding the region and emerging demographics, one result was a wide “chasm” of fear and competition that carried over to UCC-Catholic relations.¹¹⁶ Well-established cultural, political, and linguistic divides between French and English Canada often complicatedly fueled antagonism, blurring lines between religious affiliations and other factors, and consequently “reinforcing centuries-old hostilities between Protestant and Catholics.”¹¹⁷ Union, in Airhart’s words, was thus partly an attempt to form an English-speaking, Protestant, patriotic counterpart to the “presumed political influence of the Catholic Church in Quebec.”¹¹⁸

With this in mind, early post-Union examples of ingroup preference are hardly surprising: whether passive-aggressive asides in the doctrinal section of the UCC’s Basis of Union,¹¹⁹ the fierce opposition to a French radio station license in Saskatchewan,¹²⁰ or

¹¹⁴ John H. Young, “Reaction to Vatican II in The United Church of Canada,” in *Vatican II: Experiences Canadiennes/Canadian Experiences*, eds. Michael Attridge, Catherine E. Clifford, and Gilles Routhier, 106-23 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2011), 108.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 109; cf. Phyllis D. Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking the United Church of Canada*, McGill-Queen’s Studies in the History of Religion (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), xviii, 9, 135.

¹¹⁷ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 135.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁹ Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 107-08.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

alarm over the “authoritarianism [Protestants] associated with Catholicism” in the context of Quebec politics.¹²¹ Making note of exceptions—such as cooperation among military chaplains—Young declares that the “*modus operandi* of many United Church clergy, and... leadership was to view the Roman Catholic Church as a rival to be feared and to be challenged on the Canadian scene.”¹²² One consequence of this suspicious outlook was the creation of the Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic Relations in 1945. With a membership of seven Protestant denominations, and former Moderator George Pidgeon as chairman, the Committee was formed to “discern the trend of Protestant-Roman Catholic tensions, to accumulate authentic information on points at issue and to assist the Churches in combating any threatened encroachment on Protestant liberty and rights.”¹²³ No Roman Catholics were included, but “occasionally,” a 1964 General Council Report continues, “Roman Catholic representatives [were] invited to present their viewpoints.”¹²⁴

Another example of anti-Roman—or assertive pro-UCC—attitudes in the 1940s and 1950s is the UCC’s plethora of books and pamphlets regarding Protestantism and Catholicism. An impetus for this wave of materials was the contentious topic of “mixed marriage,” complicated by the effects and requirements of the papal declaration *Ne Terrene* in 1908.¹²⁵ The most popular work was *What’s the Difference? Protestant and*

¹²¹ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 136; cf. *ibid.*, 211.

¹²² Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 107.

¹²³ The United Church of Canada, Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic Relations, “Report of the Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic Relations,” in *Record of Proceedings (1964)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1964), 458. By 1964, however, the mandate shifted “to discover ways and means of improving Protestant-Roman Catholic relations.” *Ibid.* See also Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 109-10.

¹²⁴ The United Church of Canada, “Report of the Committee on Protestant-Roman Catholic Relations [1964],” 458.

¹²⁵ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 9 and Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 110.

Roman Catholic Beliefs Compared, which purported to offer an unbiased, “fair and just” evaluation of the two mainline traditions.¹²⁶ Rhetoric within, however, betrays an unmistakable bias: no matter how accurate or positive the exposition of Roman Catholic positions, the book ultimately portrays Protestantism as a superior option.¹²⁷ More explicitly so was the pseudonymous *Chats with a Prospective Convert to Roman Catholicism*, designed to counter the “trap of accepting untenable teaching” in Catholic pre-marital instruction.¹²⁸ Roman Catholic priests and apologetics are portrayed outright as manipulative and misleading, reliant on “deceit,” human weakness and “plausible”-yet-“highly specious” arguments.¹²⁹ In the end, the author “Daniel” decides to remain within Protestantism, having been thoroughly convinced that Roman Catholicism is “not the gospel Jesus taught.”¹³⁰ While not reflective of all UCC-Roman Catholic relationships, especially between individuals and certain local congregations, the literature mentioned above demonstrates the UCC’s general regard for Roman Catholicism.¹³¹

Over the course of Vatican II (1962-65), the UCC’s relations with Roman Catholicism shifted. Tracing this gradual transformation is difficult, for, as Young notes, despite the

¹²⁶ Arthur G. Reynolds, *What’s the Difference? Protestant and Roman Catholic Beliefs Compared* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1954), 3: “...every attempt has been made to avoid an adverse and prejudiced attitude and to be fair and just in every judgment expressed.”

¹²⁷ As Young points out, a “document with a section or chapter entitled ‘What is wrong with the Roman Catholic teaching about salvation?’ was hardly going to enhance United Church-Roman Catholic relationships.” Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 110, referring to Reynolds, *What’s the Difference*, 20. Cf. Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 138.

¹²⁸ Daniel [pseud.], *Chats With a Prospective Convert to Roman Catholicism* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1954), iv.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, iii-ix.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³¹ Though *Chats With a Prospective* is not specifically mentioned, see Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 111.

extraordinary nature of Vatican II, no initial, formal commentary appears in General Council committee reports.¹³² However, the editorially independent-but-UCC associated magazine, *The United Church Observer*, contains a plethora of insightful responses: from public outcry regarding a cover picture of Pope XXIII (and, the next month, equally passionate letters of support), to stereotype-laden editorials, to reprinted articles from the Roman Catholic *Information Magazine*, to positive articles by Al Forrest, which Young says “helped to foster a supportive atmosphere among the United Church’s membership for a closer relationship” with the Roman Catholic Church.¹³³ By the early 1960s, the “earlier suspicion that had often seemed to accompany even a positive piece about Roman Catholicism” had all but vanished from the magazine’s editorial viewpoint.¹³⁴ As the *Observer* reported on Vatican II, usually with more enthusiasm than disappointment, awareness, interest, and openness towards Roman Catholicism expanded to other UCC spheres: the 1964 General Council sent greetings overseas, reports by the Board of Evangelism and Social Service mentioned Vatican II developments, and a 1968 study of “Ministry in the Twentieth Century” included Fr. Gregory Baum, a Catholic priest and professor, as a resource person.¹³⁵

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 114-15.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 113.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 115-16, 119. For the greetings sent overseas, see The United Church of Canada, “Sixth Day—Thirteenth Session: Committee on Ecumenical Affairs,” in *Record of Proceedings (1964)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1964), 54-55. For Gregory Baum’s involvement, see The United Church of Canada, Commission on the Church’s Ministry in the Twentieth Century, “The Ministry in the Twentieth Century,” in *Record of Proceedings (1968)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1968), 221.

After 1960, positive attitudes towards Roman Catholicism quickly overcame previous prejudice.¹³⁶ Three interconnected contributions and outcomes are particularly pertinent: one was a pronounced increase in contact and cooperation between the two ecclesial institutions, through ecumenical worship services, joint community events, UCC Conference meetings, and, starting in Toronto and Halifax, consolidated, collaborative theological educational centers.¹³⁷ Another was the establishment of the Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in 1974, initiated by the UCC General Council to the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops.¹³⁸ Comprised of six delegates from both traditions, along with an Anglican observer, the group continues to meet twice a year to discuss a single doctrinal and pastoral topic related to contemporary concerns. Past issues—usually addressed over a five-year period—have included the Trinitarian baptismal formula, evangelization, sin, reconciliation and ecclesial identity, and most recently, marriage.¹³⁹ The goal, as summarized in one group report, is to “foster mutual

¹³⁶ Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 118.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 115, 116, 118, 121. See examples throughout The United Church of Canada, Committee on Ecumenical Affairs, “Ecumenical Affairs,” in *Record of Proceedings (1966)*, 530-39 (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1966).

¹³⁸ Douglas E. Bradford, “These Three Years: A Progress Report on the Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group 1975-1978,” *Bulletin Ecumenism* no. 54 (1979), quoted by Bertrand Blanchet, a Roman Catholic member of the Dialogue from 1996 to 2002 in “The Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue in Canada,” *Ecumenism* 38 no. 152 (2003): 14-17. See also The United Church of Canada, “Reunion With Church of Rome,” in *Record of Proceedings (1974)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1974), 73: “It was moved... that this General Council authorize the Church to begin the long journey towards reunion with the Church of Rome.”

¹³⁹ The Dialogue Group’s most recent report is Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “Marriage: Report of the Roman Catholic/United Church Dialogue, October 2004-April 2012,” 2012, http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/relations/ecumenical/report_roman-catholic-united-church-dialogue.pdf.

understanding and Christian unity”¹⁴⁰ through acts of fellowship, prayer, “frank and open dialogue,”¹⁴¹ and “careful study.”¹⁴²

Both Roman Catholic and UCC members emphasize the dialogue’s symbolic and practical value: in a small way, it microcosmically manifests a “desire for unity” between denominations, making the shared wish to “transcend historical antecedents” and “respond to Jesus’ call” a visible, encouraging reality.¹⁴³ This sense of common, expanded identity is reflected in the group’s reports, usually written with one collective voice (evidenced in frequent first-person plural language like “we”) while honoring the membership’s diversity (e.g. a page of personal opinions that anonymously distinguishes UCC comments from those of Roman Catholics, or occasional parallel penultimate conclusions from both participating parties).¹⁴⁴ On a pragmatic level, the group also provides a safe place to explore differences and similarities, especially concerning collaborative mission in the wider “social arena”;¹⁴⁵ after the divisive marriage debate in 2004, for example, members, “while remaining honest about real differences, ... wanted to discover ways to celebrate

¹⁴⁰ Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “In Whose Name? The Baptismal Formula in Contemporary Culture,” 2000, http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/relations/ecumenical/report_rc_01.pdf.

¹⁴¹ As expressed in Blanchet, “Dialogue in Canada,” 14-17.

¹⁴² “Careful study” is an aspect noted in Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “In Whose Name?” Abstract. As well, elements of fellowship, prayer, dialogue and study are both explicitly stated and implied in Blanchet, “Dialogue in Canada,” e.g. 14-15 and in Angelika Piche, “The Roman Catholic and United Church Dialogue in Canada,” Presentation to the North American Academy of Ecumenists, September 2003, https://ecumenism.net/2003/09/rcc_ucc_dialogue_canada.htm.

¹⁴³ Blanchet, “Dialogue in Canada,” 16. Cf. Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “Marriage,” 3 (“...[This report] is a call for all Christians in Canada to continue to strive for the full and visible unity of the Church in spite of the real or apparent challenges that arise in everyday life”) and 19-20.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 and Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “In Whose Name?” 28-34, respectively.

¹⁴⁵ Blanchet, “Dialogue in Canada,” 16.

and to build upon [their] important commonalities, where [they] and others could work together in service to God's kingdom."¹⁴⁶ An important part of this agenda is the commitment, engrained in the group's self-given mandate, to "countering misinformation, stereotypes and prejudices that may influence the members of our churches."¹⁴⁷ This openness towards authentic, accurate understanding of each other's ecclesial traditions is related to a third element of the post-1960s transformation: a "more nuanced awareness," Young writes, "of the tensions and differences that existed among Roman Catholics, both in Canada and abroad."¹⁴⁸ Numerous *Observer* articles, the Dialogue Group, and interactions between Roman Catholic and UCC members, helped dismantle exaggerated portrayals and one-size-fits-all assumptions.¹⁴⁹ As denominational distinctiveness continued to be discussed with curiosity and appreciation, awareness was raised of the "range of view existing among Canada's Roman Catholic laity."¹⁵⁰ Consequently, in many

¹⁴⁶ Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, "Marriage," 2. This echoes an earlier shift from the 1960's onward in the UCC's encouragement of inter-church work "organized," as Airhart writes, "around issues of common concern. This approach shifted the emphasis from beliefs held in common...to working together despite confessional fault lines." Airhart, *A Church With the Soul of a Nation*, 245-46, esp. 246.

¹⁴⁷ Recorded without further citation in Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, "Marriage," 2 and Piche, "The Roman Catholic and United Church Dialogue in Canada." A remark from Dialogue Group member Richard Bott in a *National Catholic Reporter* article specifically mentions the intent to counter stereotypes: "This is exactly what the dialogue is for.... We both believe we're disciples of Jesus Christ. How is it that we were sitting in different places [regarding the issue of same-sex marriage]? ...What we wanted to do was get past the stereotypes." Michael Swan, "Catholic, United churches find common ground on marriage," *National Catholic Reporter*, February 13, 2013, last accessed May 29, 2015, <http://ncronline.org/print/news/global/catholic-united-churches-find-common-ground-marriage>.

¹⁴⁸ Young, "Reaction to Vatican II," 119.

¹⁴⁹ These were major, but certainly not the only factors playing a role in this development. In addition, as Airhart brings to attention, a report on "Inter-church and Interfaith Relations" to the 1972 General Council recommended that the UCC "at every level...no longer use any literature on Protestant-Roman Catholic relations which is pre-Vatican II." The United Church of Canada, Committee on Inter-Church Inter-Faith Relations, "Inter-church and Inter-faith Relations," in *Records of Proceedings (1972)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1972), 267, in Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 245.

¹⁵⁰ Young, "Reaction to Vatican II," 119.

ways, the Roman Catholic Church in Canada, as reflected in UCC work and literature, moved from being regarded with hostility as a homogenous outgroup, to being valued both as an ally in the God's mission and a fellow member of the broader ecumenical family.

A final instance of interdenominational discord is the relationship between the UCC and the Anglican Church of Canada. Far from the categorically opposed competitiveness that characterized its attitude towards Roman Catholicism, the UCC's interactions with the Anglican Church were, from the start, more hopeful than fearful, and more collegial than antagonistic.¹⁵¹ However, in 1975, when—from the perspective of the UCC—the Anglican Church abruptly ended almost a decade of formal discussions and initiatives towards organic union,¹⁵² things took a tension-filled turn: even if the overall response was “subdued,” as Joan Wyatt describes, some UCC members still felt disappointed and abandoned “at the altar.”¹⁵³ Others, albeit frustrated at the futile efforts, felt relieved: the process had certainly accentuated key—ultimately, uncompromisable—differences between the denominations, such as female ordination and apostolic succession.¹⁵⁴ In any

¹⁵¹ E.g. extensive, excited dialogue and publications surrounding a proposed union between the two churches from around 1943 onwards; see Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 105-06. However, interactions were not always rosy and without tension: see The United Church Observer, “The Anglicans ARE Interested in Reunion,” *The United Church Observer*, March 1, 1959, 11, 24 for a sense of strained relations between the two churches.

¹⁵² Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 105-06.

¹⁵³ Joan Wyatt, “The 1970's: Voices From the Margins,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer, 119-38 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 127. Cf. The United Church of Canada, Anglican-United Church Dialogue, “Report of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue,” in *Record of Proceedings (2006)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2006), 547 (“That path [of organic union] was not chosen, causing a great disappointment for many”) and 549 (“We acknowledge the pain caused by the failure of attempts at organic union which were manifested in *The Plan of Union*. We recognize especially the hurt felt by many in the UCC as a result of the perceived rejection by the Anglican Church).” This interim report is also published in Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well: The St. Brigid Report: A Report of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue 2003-2009* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2009), as Appendix C, 54-61.

¹⁵⁴ Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 276-80.

case, the unsuccessful negotiations were a nail in the coffin of a Canadian united church, and arguably cast a shadow on UCC-Anglican relations for decades.¹⁵⁵

Almost thirty years later, in 2002, the national governing bodies of both the UCC and Anglican Church approved an Anglican-United Church Dialogue Group.¹⁵⁶ Much like the Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue initiated earlier, members from both denominations—along with a Lutheran observer—began to meet twice a year, mandated to mutually deepen understanding, explore “perceptions, stereotypes and history,”¹⁵⁷ inspire and support assorted cooperative ministries, and nurture other “circles of dialogue.”¹⁵⁸ Among other comparable aims and outcomes, the Anglican-UCC group also emphasized the notion of shared mission and ministry, echoing the aspiration for “more effective participation in God’s mission both in Canada and throughout the world” from the former *Plan of Union*.¹⁵⁹ One conclusion of Dialogue members, stated in the report *Drawing From the Same Well*, was that “the mission of God in the world is the key to our common lives,” and that each denomination—Anglican and UCC—offers unique and

¹⁵⁵ As Airhart writes, the failure landed “a serious blow to the United Church’s claim to be a ‘uniting’ church.... The dream of re-uniting Christendom in Canada died.” Ibid., 280. Strained relationships in the aftermath of this decision are noted throughout Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, e.g. 7 (“We meet... in the shadow of failed attempts”), and 48 (“...organic union.... was not chosen, and there are unresolved feelings and issues from that time”).

¹⁵⁶ Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 49.

¹⁵⁷ Nicholas Jessen, ed., “Anglican and United Churches Renew Formal Dialogue Between Denominations,” *Ecumenism in Canada*, February 18, 2003, <https://ecumenism.net/?p=53>.

¹⁵⁸ Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 49.

¹⁵⁹ Anglican-United Church Dialogue, “Interim Report of the Anglican Church of Canada-United Church of Canada Dialogue: Vancouver, January 2014,” last accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.united-church.ca/-files/partners/-relations/ecumenical/report_-anglican-united.pdf. As well, “From the review of our common history has come recognition of the centrality of unity-in-mission to the life of the Christian church, and, therefore, the ecumenical endeavor...” The United Church of Canada, “Report of the Anglican-United Church Dialogue [2006],” 549.

complementary gifts to the cause: the former, a historically-grounded, global “catholicity of perspective”; the latter, a “vigorous contextualism and pragmatism” perfect for the “particularities of this culture.”¹⁶⁰ Alluding to both former frustrations and future possibilities, the report declares “the door is open for becoming partners in advancing into God’s future.”¹⁶¹

A unique aspect of Anglican-UCC relations—and a significant area of interest in the dialogue’s work¹⁶²—is the reality of Ecumenical Shared Ministries (ESM), defined as “people worshipping and serving God in a unified way while still maintaining their denominational identity and connections.”¹⁶³ Usually a combination of Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian or UCC traditions, ESM can include everything from sharing ministry personnel, rotating denominational-oriented services, or working around a common worship space.¹⁶⁴ While providing possibilities for small, especially rural, faith communities, ESM can be an intricate balancing act between distinct and newly-created common identities:

Denominational traditions, loyalties, responsibilities and concerns can be in tension with the possibilities and requirements of participation in ecumenical shared

¹⁶⁰ Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 8.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² “The ACC-UCC National Dialogue was given as a high priority the task of addressing shared ministry issues,” including Ecumenical Shared Ministries. Ibid., 11.

¹⁶³ Ecumenical Shared Ministries Task Force, *Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook*, 2011, last accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.united-church.ca/files/handbooks/shared-ministries.pdf>, 6. Even more pertinent to the purposes of this thesis is a similar definition in Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 59, emphasis added, where committee members observed many communities that were “able to establish a common identity while still maintaining denominational connections and denominational identities.”

¹⁶⁴ Ecumenical Shared Ministries Task Force, *Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook*, 6-7.

ministries and require adaptation and flexibility. Such diversity can also...enhance our participation in and appreciation for the universal Body of Christ.¹⁶⁵

Amalgamation or assimilative merger is not the ultimate objective, emphasizes a jointly written *Handbook*; rather, ESM ought to acknowledge, nurture, and, when suitable, mutually integrate separate traditions in the context of a “wider ecumenical experience.”¹⁶⁶ In this way, denominational differences are maintained alongside superordinate unity and shared mission. Feedback from specific Anglican-UCC sites in Slave Lake and Ottawa is positive and promising, presenting ESM as one effective way of reducing residual tension between the UCC and Anglican Church, where, as in the case of one ESM congregation, the two parties can “celebrate their sameness and appreciate their differences, learning to see the face of God in each other.”¹⁶⁷

The UCC and Interfaith Relations

From considering examples within the context of Christianity, this next section examines the UCC’s relationships with outgroups of other faith traditions, specifically Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. For the sake of simplicity, the current and subsequent case studies impose a superficial distinction between the UCC’s interfaith affiliations and its approach to international mission; in actuality, the two—impacted by the same developments and discourse—are quite inseparable. The same can be said for the fourth and final section concerning relations with First Nations, a particular coalescence of ecumenical, interfaith, and missional attitudes and activity in Canada. Therefore, though

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁶⁷ Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 9.

certain elements in one case study may only be implied, not explicitly repeated, in others, this study assumes layers of mutual influence instead of isolation.

In the beginning, shaped by the approach of its predecessors, the UCC's regard for other religions was an ambivalent combination of indubitable bias and selective appreciation. On the one hand, numerous early statements echo the exclusionary presuppositions and approach that prevailed in contemporaneous Western Christianity: acceptance of Jesus Christ was the sole signifier of salvation, and evangelism efforts were often—at least implicitly—focused on future conversion.¹⁶⁸ Without question, Christianity—along with its Western customs—was the superior religion; others were, at best, incomplete reflections of the complete divine revelation found in Christ.¹⁶⁹ Thus, within an optimistic agenda of 'winning souls for Christ' and working for a Christian world, other faith traditions were typically regarded with fear or reluctant toleration.¹⁷⁰ In this fashion, a Foreign Missions report from 1925 refers to the "long and tragic struggle" in India against the "formidable foe" of Hinduism and its "idols"; likewise, it also points to the importance of mission activity in Africa, given the growing "menace of

¹⁶⁸ The United Church of Canada, Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, *Honoring the Divine in Each Other: United Church-Hindu Relations Today* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2014), 41.

¹⁶⁹ See "Article II: Of Revelation," in Joint Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Methodist Church, and the Congregational Churches of Canada, *The Basis of Union*, 1925, last accessed April 17, 2015, <http://united-church.ca/beliefs/statements/union>: e.g. "[God] has perfectly revealed Himself in Jesus Christ..."

¹⁷⁰ For language of 'winning' souls and the world for Christ, see The United Church of Canada, Board of Foreign Missions and the Women's Missionary Society, "Foreign Mission Policy," in The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings (1936)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1936), 246, 256.

Mohammedianism.”¹⁷¹ Regarding Buddhists and Sikhs within British Columbia, a 1936

Home Missions summary reads:

One wonders at the religious loyalties of these people, especially when their old faiths contain so little that is really adapted to the necessities of human life. Our workers continue with the assumption that with even greater zeal we must prove by precept and example that ours [Christianity] is a religion which meets every need.¹⁷²

At the same time, ideas ingrained in *The Basis of Union*, the UCC’s founding document, reflected a liberal outlook that in hindsight, even if not the intention at the time, left the door open for future developments. Expansive language of God’s self-disclosure “in nature, history, and in the heart of man,” particularly through sincere “men of God” guided by the Spirit, insinuated that non-Christian ideas and individuals could contain—in a limited manner—divine revelation.¹⁷³ Sections of the 1936 Foreign Mission Policy, significantly influenced by a 1928 meeting of the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem,¹⁷⁴ would advance these ideas, advocating that

¹⁷¹ The United Church of Canada, “Foreign Missions,” in *Record of Proceedings (1925)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1925), 108 and 105, respectively.

¹⁷² The United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions, “Board of Home Missions,” in *Record of Proceedings (1936)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1936), 413. Cf. a sermon by E. M. Howse, quoted by Airhart, that claims “Christianity was the only religion that could rationally claim to be universal since it was ‘unthinkable that all mankind will ever become Sikhs or Mohammedans or Buddhists.’” E. M. Howse, *The Field is the World* (Toronto: Board of Overseas Missions, The United Church of Canada, [1949?]), 10-14, in Airhart, *A Church With the Soul of a Nation*, 146.

¹⁷³ *The Basis of Union*, Article II.

¹⁷⁴ Highlighting the Jerusalem Conference’s long-lasting influence is The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine*, 4, though explicit references to the Conference can be found in The United Church of Canada, Board of Foreign Missions, “Foreign Mission Policy,” in *Record of Proceedings (1936)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1936), 250 and 260. The following selected excerpts from the International Missionary Council’s final Statement show how the Conference encouraged a new approach and trajectory for evangelism and interfaith relations: suggesting that Christianity had not “sufficiently sought out the good and noble elements in the non-Christian beliefs, [and] that it might learn that deeper personal fellowship with adherents of those beliefs wherein they may be more powerfully drawn to the living Christ...merely to give illustration...we recognize as part of the one Truth that sense of the Majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship, which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world’s sorrow and

While maintaining the supremacy of Christ, the Christian should exhibit toleration, a genuine desire to understand and appreciate and a willingness to cooperate, where cooperation is possible, with sincere men and women of other faiths.¹⁷⁵

Noteworthy, however, is the fact that such respectful acknowledgment and cooperation encouraged towards non-Christian religions did not take so-called “primitive,” animistic indigenous cultures and beliefs into account; rituals and worldviews of the African Bantu, Chinese folk devotees, and North American Aboriginals were regarded as “pagan superstition that needed to be destroyed” and replaced with the ‘civilized,’ Western Christian system.¹⁷⁶

Written in the aftermath of World War II, formal colonialism, and Canada’s country-of-origin immigration policy, the *Report of the Commission on World Mission* marked a fundamental shift in the UCC’s approach to interfaith relations.¹⁷⁷ Published in 1966, it

unselfish search for the way of escape, which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate reality conceived as spiritual, which is prominent in Hinduism...” International Missionary Council, *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life*, vol. 1 of the *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council March 24th-April 8th, 1928* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 487-91. “Among the clashes of industrial strife the Gospel summons men to work together as brothers in providing for the human family the economic basis of the good life.” *Ibid.*, 493.

¹⁷⁵ The United Church of Canada, “Foreign Mission Policy [1936],” 288.

¹⁷⁶ Loraine MacKenzie Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations: The Evolution of United Church of Canada Missions Within Aboriginal Communities,” *International Review of Mission* 104 no. 1 (2014): 153-71 and The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine*, 41. E.g. The United Church of Canada, “Foreign Mission Policy,” 290: “...the religion of the Africans in Angola is animism, the most primitive of all religions.... The missionaries believe that vast changes in social standards and customs should result from the development of the indigenous Church. Among them are the following...Decline in the belief in evil spirits and other superstitious, and in such customs as ancestor worship...” For descriptions of the African Bantu (who “practice fetishism and...are in subjection to the witch doctors, who play upon their superstitions), see The United Church of Canada, “Foreign Missions [1925],” 105.

¹⁷⁷ The broad developments in the background are mentioned in The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine*, 42, along with others in Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 97-113, and Schweitzer “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 281-87. As for the immense nature and influence of *World Mission*, see Hyuk Cho, ““To Share in God’s Concern for All’: The Effect of the 1966 Report on World Mission,” *Touchstone* 27 no. 2 (2009): 39-46: “[*World Mission*] was the most extensive mission consultation in the history of the UCC, and became a foundation for its mission practice and ecumenical relations.”

made the public, precedent setting proclamation of God as “creatively and redemptively present in the religion of others,”¹⁷⁸ an affirmation echoed in the 1968 statement of faith, *A New Creed*: “We believe in God.... Who works in us and others by the Spirit.”¹⁷⁹

Encouraging the UCC to “cleanse itself with God’s help from all arrogance, whether racial, cultural, or ecclesiastical,” *World Mission* advocated humility, penitence, education, and cooperation in ways that respected each tradition’s integrity.¹⁸⁰ This meant assuming, for example, that “Hindus will be Hindus, not in any past sense, but in some future one,” instead of encountering others with an ulterior motive of eventual conversion.¹⁸¹

“Christians have much to learn, as well as to contribute, through dialogue,”¹⁸² the report

¹⁷⁸ This statement is framed as a recommendation, that the “church *should* recognize that God is creatively and redemptively at work in the religious life of all mankind.” The United Church of Canada, Commission on World Mission, “Report of the Commission on World Mission, in *Record of Proceedings (1966)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1966), 435, emphasis added. This document is subsequently cited in italics as *World Mission*. A similar attitude had been stated earlier in L. J. Newcombe, “Christianity and World Leadership,” *The United Church Observer*, April 15, 1955, 11, 27: “No religion could be the sole custodian of the truth, nor would the revelation of God be exclusively the possession of one race or Church.... [It] may be that other revelations of God and other expressions of the brotherhood of man will disclose a fuller understanding of life and truth.... It is only on such common ground of service and brotherhood that Christianity can survive in our fast changing social order and narrowing world.”

¹⁷⁹ The United Church of Canada, “A New Creed,” 1968, The United Church of Canada, last modified June 21, 2010, <http://www.united-church.ca/beliefs/creed>.

¹⁸⁰ The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 434: “We recommend that the United Church of Canada acknowledge its share of guilt, determine to cleanse itself with God’s help from all arrogance, whether racial, cultural or ecclesiastical; and continue by every means open to it to oppose racial intolerance and other forms of national or social prejudice.”

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 324. Comparing the admonition *ibid.*, 323 to “move toward a deeper understanding of the universality of the church and its outreach within the context of the total history of a religiously plural world,” with earlier comments like those of Howse in note 173 shows a shift in inter-faith attitudes. Cf. The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine*, 42.

¹⁸² The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 436: “Christians have much to learn, as well as to contribute, through dialogue with people of other faiths. Their special responsibility is to present the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus in humble and sincere dialogue in ways which will respect each other’s integrity.”

declares, and people of other faiths “are being called upon to collaborate in building a common world.”¹⁸³

While not specifically cited in UCC discourse for over four decades, *World Mission* was a foundational document for subsequent publications and overall interfaith attitude and practice. “*World Mission*,” as Hyuk Cho writes, “introduced a mutuality model of shared concern for justice as the basis for working together with different faith communities,”¹⁸⁴ a model reflected and refined in the next major articulation of the UCC’s interfaith relationships: *Toward a Renewed Understanding of Ecumenism*, in 1992, later revised as *Mending the World* in 1997.¹⁸⁵ For the purposes of this study, the most relevant—and controversial—aspect of the report was its re-conceptualization of ecumenism. From the Greek *oikoumene*, or “the whole inhabited world,” the term “ecumenical” traditionally signified unity between different Christian denominations,¹⁸⁶ in *Mending the World*, however, the word was used in the context of “making cause with all people of good will...for the creation of a world that is just, participatory and

¹⁸³ Ibid., 326. See also *ibid.*, 325: “A key issue in contemporary history is whether man’s various civilizations can learn the quite novel attainment of relating themselves to each other in terms not of open conflict or isolation but of mutual understanding and active collaboration.... All cultures and all religious communities today are challenged to generate a new element: compatibility.”

¹⁸⁴ Cho, ““To Share in God’s Concern for All,”” 40.

¹⁸⁵ The document’s history is summarized in Ross Bartlett, “1990-2003: The Church into the New Millennium,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer, 161-84 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 172-73.

¹⁸⁶ See the term’s historical definition in The United Church of Canada, Interchurch Interfaith Committee, *Mending the World: An Ecumenical Vision for Healing and Reconciliation*, 1997, <http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/-relations/mending.pdf>, 5. Or, as defined in The United Church of Canada, Division of World Outreach, *Gender Justice and Partnership Guidelines*, 1998, <http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/genderjustice.pdf>, 9, “the household of God.” Cf. “For more than seventeen centuries the Christian church had used this term [“ecumenical”] to refer to relationships among churches and congregations of different *Christian* traditions.” Bartlett, “1990-2003,” 172.

sustainable.”¹⁸⁷ What was once a strictly Christian categorization now—in theory— included others; inter-faith relationships could be formed and furthered from inside, not across, the cognitive confines of ecumenism. While reactions to the original proposal, *Towards a Renewed Understanding*, were “largely positive” from within the UCC, many inter-denominational partners were concerned at the appropriation of established Christian vocabulary and the perceived depreciation—even abandonment— of dialogue and unity between different churches.¹⁸⁸ *Mending the World* addressed this controversy by clarifying the motivation for “whole-world ecumenism”—to more effectively advance God’s ongoing redemptive work in the world—and stressing the continued commitment to “foster faithful relationships with others in the Christian family.”¹⁸⁹

Framing ecumenical activity in this fashion inspired intentional studies of specific interfaith relations, starting with *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today*. The document, officially adopted by the 2003 General Council, admitted instances of anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic bias throughout the history of the UCC and its broader Christian heritage including: supersessionist theology, insensitive *New Outlook* and *Observer* articles, controversial coverage and criticisms regarding Middle East conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians, and other instances, to this day, of tension

¹⁸⁷ The United Church of Canada, *Mending the World*, 7, emphasis added. Compare with an earlier understanding of “ecumenism” in The United Church of Canada, The Commission on Church, Nation and World Order, *Church, Nation and World Order* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, Board of Evangelism and Social Service, 1944), 36 (e.g. “‘Ecumenical’ starts from the fact of unity—a unity which exists among Christians in spite of their denominational differences and their racial and national origins because of their common loyalty to Christ”).

¹⁸⁸ Bartlett, “1990-2003,” 172-73, no further source or citation provided; Peter Wyatt, “On the Ecumenical Identity of the United Church of Canada,” *Ecumenism* 33 no. 129 (1998): 26-29, especially 27-28.

¹⁸⁹ The United Church of Canada, *Mending the World*, 7, 14, 20.

between the UCC and Canadian Jewish communities.¹⁹⁰ Even if such attitudes and expressions were “largely aberrations” in the context of outcries against fascism, pro-refugee action, and opposition to anti-Semitism,¹⁹¹ *Bearing Faithful Witness* acknowledges the continuing “danger of anti-Judaic teaching and preaching in our church.”¹⁹² As part of preventing this possibility, the statement prompts all members and courts of the UCC to “seek out opportunities to meet with Jews and to learn about modern Judaism without prejudice or predetermination,” and, affirming Christian-Jewish roots and relationships, organize worship services around Jewish occasions. It also underlines, among other items, the common origins of Judaism and Christianity, the significant differences between the two traditions, and the possibilities for respectful, cooperative partnership in pursuit of shared visions and causes.¹⁹³

Following in the footsteps of *Bearing Faithful Witness*, the 2003 General Council approved a second interfaith statement titled *That We May Know Each Other: United Church-Muslim Relations Today*.¹⁹⁴ Written specifically for a Canadian context, with keen

¹⁹⁰ This “long history of animosity” is mentioned in United Church of Canada, The Committee on Inter-Church Inter-Faith Relations, *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today*, 2003, <http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/relations/witness.pdf>, 53, and explored specifically in regards to the UCC’s relations with Judaism, *ibid.*, 58-59. Ultimately, the Appendix concludes, “United Church-Jewish relations have not been fully restored to this day.” *Ibid.*, 59. In addition to the numerous publications on this topic listed *ibid.*, Davies, “Jews and Palestinians” is another useful resource for further information. For a distinction between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, see The United Church of Canada, *Bearing Faithful Witness*, 50. In short, “Anti-Judaism” is the “negative stereotyping of Jews and Jewish beliefs,” attitudes which this document directly addresses and seeks to correct.

¹⁹¹ The United Church of Canada, *Bearing Faithful Witness*, 58.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁹⁴ The United Church of Canada, Committee on Inter-Church Inter-Faith Relations, *That We May Know Each Other: United Church-Muslim Relations Today: Toward a United Church of Canada Understanding of the Relationship Between Christianity and Islam in the Canadian Context*, 2004, <http://www.united-church.ca/-files/partners/relations/twmkeo.pdf>.

awareness of heightened tensions in the wake of 9/11, it explores areas of discrimination, correspondence, and potential cooperation between Islam and the UCC.¹⁹⁵ Concerning the former, *That We May Know Each Other* confesses a Christian legacy of “hostility and misunderstanding toward Muslims and Islam”: Islamophobia, racism, inaccurate portrayals, and “old patterns of theological exclusiveness” that disregarded points of continuity between the religious ‘cousins.’¹⁹⁶ In addition to outlining similarities between Islam and Christianity—assuming the same deity, for one¹⁹⁷—the statement spends considerable space discussing distinctions, since ultimately,

... the purpose is not to collapse the differences between traditions but rather to affirm and cherish the differences because ultimately they are each gifts of God, which can be life-giving and transformative... not something to be feared but welcomed.¹⁹⁸

Moreover, *That We May Know Each Other* makes two further points regarding religious diversity, reinforcing previous statements like *Mending the World*: first, individuals must honor their own tradition with integrity;¹⁹⁹ and second, the salience of such groups ought to be tempered in order to work in tandem, united in vision and enterprise.²⁰⁰ Reproduced

¹⁹⁵ Awareness of September 11, 2001, the “war on terrorism,” and the impact of such events on Muslim-Christian relationships is explicitly noted *ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹⁶ For quotations, see *ibid.*, 1, 4, v, respectively. Interestingly, in a bold comment, the report also recognizes that “assumptions of superiority exist in *both* traditions, and *both* need to be challenged to find new theological understandings through which to build relationships of equality and respect.” *Ibid.*, 8, emphasis added.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹⁹ Part of this involves making a sincere effort to ensure that overviews of “Islam and Islamic practices,” like this report, “are accurate and faithful to Muslim self-understanding.” *Ibid.*, vii.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7

here due to its direct relevance to the models mentioned in the prior chapter, the statement's authors assert:

It should be understood...that categories of religious perspective are, in the end, made secondary to the call for common action for the sake of a suffering world.... We believe that it is possible for the church to continue to affirm its own distinctive self-identity while affirming that other faiths and traditions will have their own self-understanding.²⁰¹

Responses to the statement's draft copy encouraged and supported these claims: for many UCC participants, among other positive consequences, *That We May Know Each Other* was a "catalyst" for initiating meaningful connections with local Muslim communities, including opportunities to explore together the statement's proposed ideas, critiques and invitations.²⁰² As expressed in a 2006 General Council report, before the statement's final approval, such effects are hopefully only the first fruits of deeper reconciliation, understanding, and collaboration.²⁰³

Finally, saving a summary of the 2006 study on Indigenous spirituality for another section, the most recent interfaith document is *Honoring the Divine in Each Other: United Church-Hindu Relations Today*.²⁰⁴ Mandated in 2009, a draft copy is currently under review by UCC members and ministries, with the aim of receiving approval at the future

²⁰¹ Ibid., 7. Cf. The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 352, regarding religious plurality: "...shared concern is of more fundamental importance than the existence of common elements of thought or belief...."

²⁰² The United Church of Canada, That We May Know Each Other Task Group, "That We May Know Each Other: Statement on Christian Muslim Relations," in *Record of Proceedings (2006)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2006), 555.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Some material from this section is adapted from an earlier unpublished paper, Matthew Heesing, "Approaching the Other: Orientalism, Hinduism, and Proposed United Church of Canada-Hindu Relations" (unpublished manuscript, Saint Mary's University, 2014).

43rd General Council.²⁰⁵ Setting this statement apart from its predecessors is the inherent and historic separation of its two subject matters: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—all Abrahamic religions—share common sources and terminology, intuitively creating natural entry points for interfaith dialogue; Hinduism, *au contraire*, not only emerged from a distinctively different ‘Eastern’ worldview and value system, but, in its development, became intertwined with Orientalist and colonial discourse.²⁰⁶

Orientalism, as explored in Edward Said’s seminal work of the same name, is a multifaceted phenomenon that has informed and sustained Western understandings of the Orient as a fundamentally foreign, inferior ‘Other’ for centuries.²⁰⁷ A particular form of ingroup bias and prejudice, it essentializes, silences, differentiates and devalues ‘Others’ of all kinds, extending far beyond Said’s central dichotomy of Western imperialism and created ‘Oriental’ identity. Later scholars, like Richard King and Brian K. Pennington, have specifically raised awareness of Orientalist overtones in the formal establishment of

²⁰⁵ The United Church of Canada, Theology and Inter-Church Inter-Faith Committee, *Honoring the Divine In Each Other: United Church-Hindu Relations Today*, 2014, <http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/-relations/honouring-divine.pdf>, 4.

²⁰⁶ E.g. *ibid.*, 46: “In standing respectfully together with our Hindu friends, the challenges are a bit different [than those of Christian-Muslim or Jewish relations]. Because we come from different world views and sometimes still hear the mocking voice of the colonial missionary in our ears, we need to listen carefully to the voice of our Hindu friends...” See also *ibid.*, 44. *World Mission* also acknowledges “Orientalist” discourse, even while perpetuating certain aspects and terminology, as in The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 324-25.

²⁰⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1979; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1994). A broader definition of ‘Orientalism,’ inspired by postcolonialism, is “colonialist constructions of knowledge...[that] were used to justify and maintain the subordination of colonized groups.” Nicole Goulet, “Postcolonialism and the Study of Religion: Dissecting Orientalism, Nationalism, and Gender Using Postcolonial Theory,” *Religion Compass* 5 no 10 (2011): 631. One should note that Said was not the first to analyze Orientalist descriptions of India in relationship to European contexts; he did, however, compile previous arguments in an unprecedented way, with the result being increased awareness and work in the area. Mariane Keppens and Esther Bloch bring attention to earlier studies by “Raymond Schwab, David Kopf, Bernard Cohn and P. J. Marshall” in “Introduction: Rethinking Religion in India” in *Rethinking Religion in India: The Colonial Construction of Hinduism*, edited by Esther Bloch, Marianne Keppens, and Rajaram Hegde, 1-22 (New York: Routledge, 2010), 3-4.

Hinduism as an abstract cultural artifact and modern product of complex colonial encounters between elite Hindu groups, and Western administrative, Orientalist, and missionary influences.²⁰⁸ What began as diverse rituals, beliefs, and traditions across a certain geographical region were soon wrapped up in a “Western explanatory construct” that operated from the textual and hierarchical paradigm of Christianity.²⁰⁹

Honoring the Divine in Each Other not only addresses this legacy—expressing regret at racist attitudes, the church’s involvement in colonial endeavors, and condemnation of Hindu practice and beliefs by many missionaries—but also makes an effort to move past its reality.²¹⁰ For example, imposed, inaccurate, one-size-fits-all essentialism is replaced with heterogeneous depictions: across pages of background information, Hinduism is presented as an actively evolving set of faith traditions influenced by regional context, personal preference, and political-social changes.²¹¹ Diversity is accounted for and appreciated, not dismissed in favor of unified simplicity.²¹² Statements are often carefully

²⁰⁸ E.g. Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and ‘The Mystic East’* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented? Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁰⁹ King, *Orientalism and Religion*, 100. Any pre-colonial development of a ‘Hindu’ self-identity in India is not being denied here; as David N. Lorenzen argues, in agreement with many others, “the claim that Hinduism was invented or constructed by European colonizers...sometime after 1800 is false.” “Who Invented Hinduism?,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41 no. 4 (Oct 1999): 632. See *ibid.*, 631 for his list of scholars in agreement with his opinion, as well as earlier counter-arguments challenging the existence of any indigenous sense of ‘Hinduism’ before the arrival of the British. The focus of the current study is the later “construction of a distinctly modern Hinduism” in which Orientalism played an indispensable role. *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ E.g. The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine in Each Other*, 5.

²¹¹ This appreciation of diversity especially pertains to the Canadian context. “Hindu temples in Canada are each different,” asserts the report, “and people take great pride in the local traditions they had a hand in developing.” *Ibid.*, 17. Specific characteristics of certain communities are even highlighted, including those of Guyanese Hindus, Arya Samaj followers, North Indians, Tamil Hindu refugees, and Sri Lankans, to list a few; see *ibid.*, 20. Shifting priorities, fears, and comfort levels of immigrant generations are also mentioned throughout the report; see *ibid.*, 15-17.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 7-14.

qualified to represent only a majority opinion,²¹³ and a variety of sacred texts are acknowledged, noting varying levels of influence and adherence.²¹⁴ Attempting to avoid a presentation of prejudiced presuppositions, the document states a sincere desire to perceive “Hindus as they would wish to be understood”;²¹⁵ “every attempt has been made,” concludes the sixty-three page statement and study guide, “to ensure that the contents of this document...are accurate and faithful to Hindu self-understanding.”²¹⁶

Along with recognizing differences among Hindu devotees, *Honoring the Divine in Each Other* carefully contemplates possible points of intersection between Christianity and Hinduism. In general, “the variety of expressions of divinity in Hinduism” is viewed as “not inconsistent with the church’s understanding of the nature of God.”²¹⁷ Though the exact extent of commonalities is intentionally left ambiguous—respecting complexity, multiple approaches, and the spectrum of theological comfort levels throughout the UCC²¹⁸—similarities between the two traditions are brought to the surface: the monotheistic idea of God as “both one and many,” for example, is seen as an “affirmation that Christians and Hindus can find ways to share.”²¹⁹ These potential superordinate parallels are pointed out, not for the sake of superior-inferior comparison, but as openings

²¹³ E.g. *ibid.*, 10, 13.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

²¹⁸ E.g. *ibid.*, 29.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

for “dialogue,” “mutual transformation,” and “healing of the world.”²²⁰ All three motivations permeate the statement, but the latter functions as a culmination of sorts: through the openness and understanding of dialogue, transformation may hopefully extend from within the two parties to positively affect their shared, global environment. Instead of seeking power over one another, as Orientalism does, *Honoring the Divine In Each Other* promotes a power with one another in pursuit of healing and wider-spanning reconciliation; aiming to replace forces of domination and self-affirmation, it envisions and advocates for an egalitarian enterprise of appreciative partnership. In the opening proposal alone, this objective is stressed three times.²²¹ Even if these attitudes and ambitions are arguably idealistic, they are still far from the ingroup bias of Orientalism.

The UCC and Overseas Mission Relations

In addition to the ecumenical and interfaith relationships outlined above, the UCC’s evolving approach to global mission also offers a case study regarding ingroup preference and bias reduction. Initially—and quite naturally—the UCC inherited the overseas mission approach of western, colonial-connected Christianity, particularly its pre-Union Protestant predecessors.²²² Theologically motivated by the commission of Mt. 23:19 (...“make

²²⁰ Ibid., 5. Even in its differences from Christianity—differences neither ignored nor condemned—Hinduism is seen as a vessel for “God’s saving and liberating grace” and a source of divine revelation. Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., 4-5.

²²² David Hallman and Jim Hodgson, “A Short History of the Division of World Outreach and the Division of Mission in Canada, Department of Church in Society, United Church of Canada,” a draft compiled on behalf of the History, Mission, and Vision subgroup of the Collective Witness Implementation Group, October 4, 2001. See also The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership in the Context of Empire* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2009), 8, 26, and Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 104-05.

disciples of all nations”),²²³ with an emphasis on the ‘social gospel’ and holistically-oriented service,²²⁴ foreign missions were nonetheless often carried out in conjunction with political and national interests; while much overseas mission activity may have been animated out of loving concern and desire to serve, it was still unidirectionally imposed and generally driven by Western agendas and ideals.²²⁵ A statement addressed to King George V from the 1925 General Council demonstrates some underlying Eurocentric, expansionist assumptions guiding global mission:

We rejoice in the peace that is enjoyed by your subjects in all parts of the Empire, and we pray that this may long endure, and that the Empire may continue to be the divinely chosen instrument in mediating the blessings of peace to the Nations of the world...²²⁶

Given this close cooperation—if not confusion—between Christianization and colonization, evangelism and imperialism, or Christian values and Western views, other cultures, faiths, and philosophies were fundamentally regarded as inferior.²²⁷ Raising awareness of mission work in Africa, for example, a 1925 Foreign Mission report describes Angolans as a “backward, yet deserving people.” The same report, summarizing

²²³ In the “Hallowing of Church Union” section of the Inaugural Service, each of the founding denominations affirmed their service, inheritance and commitment with the words “According to the grace given to our fathers, as witnesses to the Apostolic Gospel and standard bearers of the Church commissioned to make disciples of all nations.” The United Church of Canada, “The Inaugural Service,” 21-22.

²²⁴ Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations,” 154 and The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 8.

²²⁵ Hallman and Hodgson, “A Short History”; Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations,” e.g. 154-55; The United Church of Canada, “Statement and Affirmations on Global Partnership (2008),” in *Reviewing Partnership*, 30; William Steadman, “The Evolving Concept of Mission Within Congregations of the United Church of Canada,” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1999), 37-38; cf. The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 312-13.

²²⁶ The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings (1925)*, 43.

²²⁷ Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations,” 154-55; cf. The United Church of Canada, “Statement and Affirmations.”

the state of affairs in central India, mentions the “great ignorance” of local farming methods.²²⁸ Lorraine MacKenzie Shepherd recounts how in the field of medicine, Western techniques replaced traditional practice; likewise, educational programs were derived from democratic, individualistic, “linear,” ideologies that disregarded the “communal, cyclical philosophies and practices of the East or of indigenous peoples.”²²⁹ One would be amiss not to mention admirable aspects of overseas mission projects—among them, goals of “indigenizing” the Gospel and developing autonomous, local leadership²³⁰—but in any case, the examples above illustrate a perceived categorical inequality of foreign mission sites from the perspective of the UCC, who brought God and civilization from ‘the West to the rest.’

A number of developments over the next few decades necessitated a shift in the UCC’s purpose and approach of foreign mission activity: internally, mission boards amalgamated, ecumenical networks emerged, and financial cutbacks recalled immense numbers of missionaries from abroad.²³¹ By 1965, the number of individuals serving overseas

²²⁸ The United Church of Canada, “Foreign Missions [1925],” 105 and 108, respectively.

²²⁹ Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations,” 154-55.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 155.

²³¹ In 1962, the brand-new Board of World Mission combined the Board of Overseas Missions and the Overseas Missions Committee of the Women’s Missionary Society; a decade later, in 1973, it became the Division of World Outreach, adding under its administrative structure the former committees of World Development and Relief, and Overseas Relief and Inter-Church Aid; see Hallman and Hodgson, “A Short History,” 1-2. Two prominent ecumenical networks that emerged in the 1940’s are the Canadian Council of Churches (1944), and the World Council of Churches (1948), with the UCC being a member of both organizations. As for the financial context, between 1928 and 1935, the UCC’s Board of Foreign Ministers suffered what Robert A. Wright calls the “largest cutback” among any other mainline denomination at the time, with the Board’s funding cut approximately in half. Robert A. Wright, “The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945,” in *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990*, ed. George A. Rawlyk, 139-97 (Burlington, Ont.: Welch, 1990), 172.

dramatically decreased from almost 600, in 1927, to around 270.²³² This reduction was also due to the changing nature of overseas personnel: with increasing independence and self-direction, receiving institutions requested not just ordained ministers, but individuals whose “skills could help build sustainable communities”: teachers, engineers, doctors, agriculturalists, and social workers, among others.²³³

Missionaries also no longer arrived as managers, with “administrative responsibilities and authorities,” but as coworkers working alongside and under local leadership.²³⁴

These and other changing circumstances were reflected in the recommendations of the 1966 *Report of the Commission on World Mission*. Admitting previous complacent connections with colonial powers, and affirming emerging missiology, the report held up the notion of *missio dei* (God’s mission) as a shared duty among churches around the world: rather than “bringing God to a Godless world,”²³⁵ mission actively involved all people across all continents.²³⁶ As Steadman states, *World Mission* encouraged the UCC to see “mission as a God-centered operation, and not a means by which western culture could be exported and established in other countries”²³⁷ An exhortation of “mission with,” rather

²³² These numbers also include spouses, in Steadman, “The Evolving Concept of Mission,” Appendix C.

²³³ Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 105 and The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 392-93.

²³⁴ The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 392-93. Cf. Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 104-05.

²³⁵ The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 8, presumably quoting *World Mission*.

²³⁶ E.g. “The mission in which the church is engaged is a mission from God to man—to man in all continents—and not a mission from men in the west to men in the east.” The United Church of Canada, *World Mission*, 426. “God’s mission... is mission to six continents.” *Ibid.*, 433. Cf. Katherine Hockin, “My Pilgrimage in Mission,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January 12, 1988, 28, and Beardsall, ““And Whether Pigs Have Wings,”” 105.

²³⁷ Steadman, “The Evolving Concept of Mission,” 53.

than the well-established assumption of “mission to,” challenged former feelings of superiority and fundamentally changed foreign mission motives.²³⁸

An alternative vision and vocabulary of “partnership” attempted to capture this new appreciative, less-ostentatious outlook towards overseas churches and organizations.²³⁹ Distancing itself from attitudes of patronage and proselytization, “partnership” instead promoted equality across global boundaries in common commitment and service to God’s mission in the world. “We and our partners are called to work together in God’s mission,” declares a statement approved by the 1988 General Council, because “...not all the gifts needed for the fulfillment of mission are necessarily to be found in [one] place.”²⁴⁰ Approaching mission from this perspective meant respecting the diversity, expertise, engagements, and perspectives of partner organizations; it also implied that the UCC was only one piece of a much larger picture, incapable of fully realizing the work of God without the “human, financial, [and] material” resources of others.²⁴¹ The former was a fairly easy adjustment for the UCC, who had already redirected many overseas efforts into areas of accompaniment, supportive advocacy, and long-term commitment in place of condescending problem solving and paternalism. Instead of “extensive auditing requirements” or imposed expectations, core values such as “mutuality, reciprocity, trust,

²³⁸ The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 8.

²³⁹ Ibid. Cho shares extensive insight into the emergence of ‘partnership’ as a model for foreign missions, including the influence and subsequent endorsement by the UCC of both the International Missionary Council’s proposal of “partners in obedience” at a 1947 meeting in Whitby, and the World Council of Church’s document *Joint Action for Mission* in 1961. Cho, “‘To Share in God’s Concern for All,’” 41-43.

²⁴⁰ The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand ‘Partnership’ for God’s Mission Today,” 1988, <http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/appendixa.pdf>, 1.

²⁴¹ Hallman and Hodgson, “A Short History,” 4. These resources, or “gifts,” according to The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand,” 2, include “spiritual and theological insight...faithfulness of witness, [and] the experience of costly discipleship.”

and transparency” were stressed, along with dialogue, empowerment, and intentional listening to the needs of overseas organizations.²⁴² In many ways, this represented substantial progress from previous missiological models: over the course of a consultation with partners in 2008, the UCC’s “distinctive” missional style, “characterized by its capacity to listen and learn from the experiences of others,” was celebrated and affirmed by partner groups from around the globe. One responder even viewed it as a “glimpse of the reign of God in the midst of empire.”²⁴³

Accompanying the praise, however, was criticism of disproportionate power sharing, elitist preferences, and prevailing unidirectional attitudes within the UCC’s partnership approach.²⁴⁴ If the partnership model truly entails “mutual empowerment,”²⁴⁵ then walking alongside others with humility and service is only one side of the partnership equation; articulating, accepting, or outright creating opportunities for reciprocity—overseas partners playing a role in the UCC’s own home-mission work—has proven more difficult over the decades. Directly stated in the 2008 review, “The [UCC] could better articulate

²⁴² The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 9-10, 26; see also The United Church of Canada, “Statement and Affirmations on Global Partnerships”; The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand.”

²⁴³ The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 17, citing a 2008 Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit Consultation with Partners.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-18. Cf. a quotation from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches highlighted *ibid.*, 17: “The majority of bilateral international mission relationships today do not qualify for the label ‘partnership,’ regardless of what vocabulary is used... unequal north south mission relations still hinder local ecumene and reinforce distorted mission identities at both ends.” This recognition is nothing new: The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand,” 1, for example, speaks of a tendency among UCC members at the time to still see the Division of World Outreach “as the Division with responsibility to carry out the United Church’s mission to the rest of the world.”

²⁴⁵ The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand,” 2.

what it wants to receive from partners.”²⁴⁶ This issue was already identified in earlier reports: the 1988 report, for one, posed the problematic question:

If we have some role in God’s mission with our partners overseas, then is it not a natural corollary that they must have some role in partnership with us in God’s mission in this country? [Has] this awareness permeated the thinking of United Church people?²⁴⁷

One initiative to offset asymmetrical resource sharing arose in the 1970s: the Mutuality in Mission program, approved in 1974, welcomed missionaries from around the world to Canada by intentionally making opportunities across all levels of the church for UCC members to encounter and appreciate the insights, stories, and lived experiences of global partners.²⁴⁸ Today, under the umbrella of “People in Partnership,” a variety of programs invite individuals to involve themselves with global mission: hosting a global partner, attending an exposure trip abroad, working as an overseas mission personnel, participating in a specific “Extra Measures” project, or nurturing a long-term relationship with one particular partner organization.²⁴⁹ Such activities are structured in ways that emphasize mutual engagement, personal contact, and resource sharing between UCC and overseas partners, with the aim of fostering more reciprocal relationships and minimizing pervasive—even if unintentional—attitudes of ingroup preference in the process.

²⁴⁶ The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 17, a sentiment also reflected in The United Church of Canada, “Statement and Affirmations on Global Partnerships”: “Learning to receive from partners is a particularly challenging skill for the church to adopt as it seeks to work in partnership.”

²⁴⁷ The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand,” 1.

²⁴⁸ The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings (1974)*, 137, recognizing Mutuality in Mission as “an urgent matter.”

²⁴⁹ These opportunities, and more, can be found at The United Church of Canada, “Get Involved: Connect Globally,” The United Church of Canada, last modified November 3, 2014, <http://www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/global>.

The UCC and First Nations Relations

A fourth and final case study concerning the UCC's interactions with outgroups examines the denomination's evolving relationship with Canadian First Nations communities and cultures. Compressing decades—or centuries, taking European and Protestant legacies into account—of complex and intensely personal history, intentions, and consequences over the course of several pages risks the production of an undenuanced, simplistic presentation. Needless to say, due to both space constraints and an abundance of in-depth material elsewhere, not every major issue or counter-argument will be mentioned;²⁵⁰ neither will certain items discussed in sections above—the 1966 *World Mission*, for example—be repetitively detailed. In this survey, amidst a well-established outline of significant events, key attitudes and transitions relating to the topics of categorization and intergroup tension will be the center of attention.

In a shared essay with Alf Dumont, Roger Hutchinson outlines the “evolutionary progression” of the UCC's relations and mission goals regarding First Nations peoples: from “cultural dominance or hegemony” and “triumphalism,” to “repentance” and

²⁵⁰ A sample of resources on the subjects of UCC-First Nations Relations and Canadian residential schools includes Alf Dumont and Roger Hutchinson, “United Church Mission Goals and First Nations Peoples,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer, 221-38 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012); Joan Wyatt, “The 1970's,” 133-34; Shepherd, “From Colonization to Right Relations”; Greer Anne Wenh-In Ng, “The United Church of Canada: A Church Fittingly National,” in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, eds. Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, 204-46 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 233-37; Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Constance Deiter, *From Our Mothers' Arms: The Intergenerational Impact of Residential Schools in Saskatchewan* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1999); The United Church of Canada, Division of Mission in Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation: The Legacy of Indian Residential Schools and the Journey Towards Reconciliation: A Resource for Congregations* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2001); Brian Thorpe, “A Loss of Innocence: The United Church Coming to Terms With the Legacy of the Residential Schools,” *Ecumenism* 39 no. 155 (2004): 20-22, and the recently-published final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/-File/2015/Exec_-Summary_2015_06_25_web_o.pdf.

“shame,” to “dialogue about future hopes for right relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal church members.”²⁵¹ In many ways, this overall transition occurred concurrently with other case studies above, and reflected earlier or contemporaneous developments in interfaith and overseas mission attitudes.²⁵² At the same time, aspects of the UCC-First Nations story sets it apart from others: on the broader denominational level, at least, it includes a profound sense of intentional, collective responsibility and apology for past action,²⁵³ substantial financial cost and commitment,²⁵⁴ and initiatives within and outside the UCC regarding recognition, reconciliation, and integration.²⁵⁵

Within the post-1925 scope of this study, the UCC’s interactions with First Nations began in the act of inauguration: as a result of Church Union, on the basis of their

²⁵¹ Dumont and Hutchinson, “United Church Mission Goals,” 228.

²⁵² Shepherd, in her juxtaposition of overseas and Aboriginal missions, raises the point that “Home mission policies...lagged behind” the progressive policies and programs of foreign mission work and partnerships. “From Colonization to Right Relations,” 153.

²⁵³ The UCC has issued two formal apologies to First Nations peoples: one in 1986, and a second in 1998 specifically surrounding the issue of residential schools; see The United Church of Canada, “Apology to First Nations Peoples (1986),” last modified November 29, 2007, <http://www.united-church.ca/beliefs/-policies/1986/a651> and The United Church of Canada, “Apology to Former Students of United Church Indian Residential Schools, and to Their Families and Communities (1998),” last modified September 19, 2008, <http://www.united-church.ca/beliefs/policies/-1998/a623>. An explanation of collective responsibility, as a denomination, for the residential schools system can be found in The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 75.

²⁵⁴ Whereas financial cost can be seen in the sense of legal obligations, litigation and other court expenses, ongoing financial commitment is best represented in The Healing Fund, which supported “First Nations-initiated community based projects... well before the first involvement of the United Church in litigation related to residential schools.” “As such,” a congregational resource guide continues, “it represents a faith-based commitment of the church to support those who are engaged in healing work in response to the legacy of residential schools.” The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 72-74.

²⁵⁵ “The Task Group on the Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality... recognized that Aboriginal spiritual traditions were not separate from or outside of the church but integral to the lives of many First Nations people within the church. The relationship was therefore *both interfaith and intrafaith*.” The United Church of Canada, Task Group on the Relationship of The United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality, “Circle And Cross: The Relationship of the United Church of Canada to Aboriginal Spirituality,” in *Record of Proceedings (2006)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2006), 571, emphasis added.

Presbyterian and Methodist ties, more than sixty Indigenous congregations became associated with the UCC.²⁵⁶ As well, the UCC inherited a number of residential and day schools from its predecessors, assuming direction for thirteen of the former and forty-two of the latter in 1927. These numbers would decrease over time to four remaining residential schools in 1966.²⁵⁷ From the mid-nineteenth century onward, residential schools—regulated and funded by the Canadian government and operated by various churches²⁵⁸—were established with the aim of assimilation. Isolating, educating, and immersing First Nations children in Euro-Canadian customs was seen as the most effective method to fully and forcefully “‘incorporate’ the Native population into society,” the unambiguous objective of government policy.²⁵⁹ Such an approach stemmed from the perspective that First Nations cultures and customs were categorically primitive and inferior to progressive, ‘civilized’ Christian European ways; correspondingly, First Nations peoples and communities were considered unfit for autonomous government,

²⁵⁶ The United Church of Canada, Task Group on the Basis of Union and United Church Crest, “Report From the Task Group on the Basis of Union and United Church Crest,” in *Complete Workbook For the 41st General Council*, 75: “By the time of Church Union there were Methodist and Presbyterian Indigenous congregations from Quebec to Vancouver Island, all under the denominational Boards of Home Missions. Some of these congregations were informed and even consulted before 1925, but none were given any role in the actual decision making. Nonetheless, at least sixty Indigenous congregations, predominantly Methodist, entered the United Church of Canada in 1925 on the decision of Home Mission.”

²⁵⁷ For a list of specific residential school sites, along with other statistics like enrollment numbers, see The United Church of Canada, “Frequently Asked Questions: The History of Indian Residential Schools and the Church’s Apologies,” last modified April 5, 2012, <http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/-schools/faq/-history#1>, and The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 15. See also The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund? The United Church Response* (Toronto: The Healing Fund, The United Church of Canada, 1994), 9.

²⁵⁸ Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and the UCC were all involved, in varying degrees, with the residential schools system, working with and for the federal government. See The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 10-11; The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund*, 6-7.

²⁵⁹ The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 8; The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund*, 6 contains a “not atypical” quote from the federal government level by Duncan Campbell Scott: “Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic.”

affirming the conclusion that “colonial and Canadian authorities knew best how to protect their interests and well-being.”²⁶⁰

UCC discourse and practice, especially its operation of residential schools, reflected these attitudes of ingroup preference and prejudice, even if intermingled with well-meaning intentions of evangelism, education, social concern, “compassion and commitment to justice” at the time.²⁶¹ Given the UCC’s quest to “Christianize” the Canadian social order, residential schools were regarded as an ideal platform to accomplish mission mandates of many kinds: caring for deprived individuals, providing access to education, and converting people to the Christian faith.²⁶² The latter required the complete forsaking of First Nations identity and spirituality, as the social categories of Native and Christian were understood to be opposed, mutually exclusive and irreconcilable.²⁶³ For a small percentage of residential school students, these motives produced positive results: some survivors, according to one UCC document, “cite, with gratitude, benefits like reading, writing, worship, and Bible knowledge,” and “leadership skills” that empowered later work for First Nations rights and self-governance.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 8; cf. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *People to People, Nation to Nation* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1996), <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637>.

²⁶¹ The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund*, 3-4.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ “It is not an exaggeration to say that the church required Native peoples to repent of being Native peoples if they wished to follow the Christian way.” Report of the Moderator’s Task Group on Residential Schools, 1991, quoted in The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 14.

²⁶⁴ The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund*, 9; The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 11.

Predominantly, however, the schools have been deemed deplorable and destructive for First Nations people and communities.²⁶⁵

In retrospect, the tragic nature and consequences of the residential schools—and other assimilative strategies—is quite self-evident. Yet, while a “prophetic minority” within the UCC expressed concern and discomfort throughout the decades, recognition and response in regards to the program took considerable time.²⁶⁶ Eventually, partly due to both growing pressure from grassroots Aboriginal groups in Canada and other interfaith and overseas mission developments, the UCC became the first denomination to formally apologize to First Nations peoples.²⁶⁷ Referenced afterwards as simply “The Apology,” then-Moderator Robert Smith issued a statement at the 1986 General Council expressing regret, repentance, and a desire for reconciliation (to “walk together...in the spirit of Christ so that our people may be blessed and God’s creation healed.”)²⁶⁸ The apology admitted that the UCC had been “blind to the value of [First Nations] spirituality,” had “imposed our civilization as a condition for accepting the Gospel,” and, consequently, ignored and damaged the identity of both parties: “...you and we are poorer...and we [UCC and First

²⁶⁵ E.g. The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund*, 9-11.

²⁶⁶ The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 16-17; The United Church of Canada, *Why the Healing Fund*, 7 (“Not much early *official* evidence exists that the United Church disagreed with or lobbied against [certain] policies...); see also Wyatt, “The 1970’s,” 133-34. Of note is a 1958 Commission on Indian Work, which—while still in favor of continuing residential school programs—calls for integration of “the Indian” over full assimilation: “Such a definition [of integration] does not imply the complete *disintegration* of any one culture or its complete assimilation by a more dominant culture.” The United Church of Canada, Commission on Indian Work, “Indian Work,” *Record of Proceedings (1958)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1958), 185. See also John H. Young, “The Golden Age: 1946-1960,” in *The United Church of Canada: A History*, ed. Don Schweitzer, 77-96 (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 90-91.

²⁶⁷ Wyatt, “The 1970’s,” 133-34; Dumont and Hutchinson, “Church Mission Goals,” 223.

²⁶⁸ The United Church of Canada, “Apology to First Nations Peoples (1986).”

Nations] are not what we were meant by the Creator to be.”²⁶⁹ The 1986 Apology had a number of significant effects, including, as Dumont explains, the fact

Aboriginals now felt free to explore, to the fullest, the two ways of walking spiritually, and some began to practice these ways again within their communities, in concert with their participation in church services.²⁷⁰

At the next General Council, in 1988, the All Native Circle Conference was created, a unique recognition of Aboriginal needs, priorities, and identity within the already-existing four-court governance structure of the UCC. While First Nations congregations remained members of their regional Presbyteries, many across Canada now formed their own new Conference body.²⁷¹ Seeds for this decision—one that emphasized distinction within superordinate unity—had been planted in earlier policy positions, such as “Native Church Structures” in 1984. Among other items, that resolution acknowledged the inadequacy of current structures to address and empower the distinctiveness and decision-making processes of First Nation churches. As a result, the General Council approved the “continued development of Native Presbyteries,” and the formation of what would later be known as the nation-wide All Native Circle Conference.²⁷²

In addition to a statement of repentance in 1997, the UCC offered a second apology in 1998, this time in specific reference to the residential schools. “Truly and most humbly sorry” for the UCC’s complicity in the school program, the church sought forgiveness for

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Dumont and Hutchinson, “Church Mission Goals,” 223.

²⁷¹ As The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 52, explains, “Native churches in British Columbia” were an exception, due to their decision to “remain part of their existing Presbyteries.” See The United Church of Canada, “Formation of the All Native Circle Conference (1987),” General Council Executive, last modified May 6, 2007, <http://www.united-church.ca/beliefs/policies/1987/f514>.

²⁷² The United Church of Canada, “Native Church Structures,” in *Record of Proceedings (1984)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1984), 416-17.

the abuse and disregard of the “depths of the struggles of First Nations peoples and the richness of [their] gifts.” Vowing to “never again...hurt others with attitudes of racial and spiritual superiority,” the apology also envisioned future relationships of compassion, respect, and love with First Nations peoples.²⁷³ The UCC has striven to live out this promise and objective in a variety of means: a regional Justice and Reconciliation fund for relationship-building initiatives between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals;²⁷⁴ a Healing Fund to help survivors of residential schools and their descendants; training programs for Native ministry;²⁷⁵ solidarity for specific First Nations struggles;²⁷⁶ advocacy for the recently-completed Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada; and resources intended for liturgy, personal use, or small-groups to help foster mutual understanding and partnership. One particular resource titled *Circle and Cross*, a dialogue-planning tool published in 2008, transitioned into the Living into Right Relations task force and five-year campaign focused on reconciliation and “working towards justice in our life together in Canada.”²⁷⁷ *Circle and Cross* and other initiatives named above reflect the UCC’s intent to “transcend earlier hegemonic tendencies” and walk alongside First Nations peoples in

²⁷³ The United Church of Canada, “Apology to Former Students.”

²⁷⁴ Information available at The United Church of Canada, “Justice and Reconciliation Fund,” last modified December 22, 2014, <http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/relationships/fund>.

²⁷⁵ This includes the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, an amalgamation of two previous training sites, the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre (established in 1983) and the Francis Sandy Centre (1987); see Dumont and Hutchinson, “Church Mission Goals,” 224.

²⁷⁶ See examples in The United Church of Canada, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 65-66, including Project North and specific land claims like those of the Lubicon of Alberta, and Johnson, “Council Categorically Rejects Northern Gateway Pipeline.” Hutchinson unpacks the UCC’s role in the MacKenzie Valley controversy in Dumont and Hutchinson, “Church Mission Goals,” 230-33.

²⁷⁷ The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine*, 44. See also The United Church of Canada, *Circle and Cross: Dialogue Planning Tool* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2008).

ways that value one another's diversity and recognize common identity in pursuit of wholeness and reconciliation.²⁷⁸

Momentous decisions at the most recent General Council in 2012 marked a new stage in UCC-First Nations relations. Following motions from the 2009 General Council to acknowledge the historical role, "presence and spirituality of Aboriginal people in the United Church," a Task Group proposed a number of amendments to the UCC Basis of Union and Crest.²⁷⁹ Insertions in the former—published in future editions of *The Manual*—sought to "include the Indigenous church within the story of the Formation of the United Church of Canada,"²⁸⁰ not only by recognizing First Nations congregations that were automatically incorporated in the act of Union, but also the fact that the UCC "was founded and continues to [exist] on Indigenous land."²⁸¹ This awareness was also reflected through revisions to the Crest, which incorporated four sacred First Nations colors and the Mohawk phrase "Akwe Nia-Tetewa:neren," meaning "All My Relations." Echoing the Latin motto from John 17:21, the saying expresses "Aboriginal peoples understanding of Christ's vision which encompasses all."²⁸² From the denomination's formation, to the present-day, to the aim of a more unified future, the additions affirm distinctive First Nations identities within the broader categorical unity of the UCC.

²⁷⁸ Dumont and Hutchinson, "Church Mission Goals," 230.

²⁷⁹ The United Church of Canada, "Report From the Task Group [2012]," 69.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 78.

Chapter III: Analysis of The UCC and Social Psychological Models

Parallels

Having surveyed certain aspects of the UCC's development over its nine decades, especially its relationships with outgroups in four key areas, this chapter synthesizes and interprets the foregoing material in light of previously-outlined social-psychological models and understandings. If recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation are meant to reduce intergroup bias, then an instinctive opening for this analysis is to note preliminary points of ingroup preference in the UCC's interactions with outsiders. Since, according to social-psychology theorists, categorization—and proceeding ingroup preference—is an inevitable process, opportunities and desires to reduce intergroup tension do not naturally arise. While causes and effects cannot be clearly determined when dealing with complex movements, the subsequent section will unpack possible impetuses for pursuing recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation. Consequently, how has the UCC encouraged, demonstrated, or contested these models for reducing bias and tension in its relationships with outgroups? Finally, what are some observable results and possible implications of the denomination's efforts?

In each of the four broad case studies under consideration, overlapping, interdependent, and arguably progressive consequences of social categorization are conspicuously evident: from the clear establishment of categorical difference, to attitudes of ingroup preference and superiority, to competitive and explicitly antagonistic positions, to—at its most hostile—aims of assimilation. In regards to the first aforementioned aspect, the establishment of indisputable boundaries between social categories can be seen in two major ways: exclusivity and use of stereotypes. Exclusive boundaries between the UCC

and outgroups can be observed, at least initially, in all of the case studies—for, as Tajfel et al. note, distinctions are naturally drawn between two categorical groups—but barriers were especially established between the UCC and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the UCC and First Nations spirituality. An insurmountable and definitive Protestant-Roman Catholic divide is evident in early UCC discourse, whether in literature that emphasized the irreconcilable differences between the two groups; English-French Canadian political campaigns; social issues, like the controversial matter and limitations of “mixed marriages”; or the striking incapability—still today—for Protestants to participate fully in Roman Catholic rites, despite common Christian heritage and association. As for the UCC and First Nations, colonialist efforts to “Christianize” and “Canadianize” Aboriginal communities made it clear that one could not be Christian and continue to practice First Nations spiritual traditions; the categories of Native and Christian identity were, in other words, promulgated as mutually exclusive and opposed, and associating with the latter necessitated forsaking the former. Failed attempts to form a union with the Anglican Church of Canada also brought attention to uncompromisable, exclusive differences between denominations: incompatibilities that hindered hopes and visions for ever creating a greater organically united Canadian church. Stereotypes—or exaggerated, generalized homogenous depictions of an outgroup’s characteristics and collective differences from ingroups—can, in one way or another, be also seen in the UCC’s portrayals of outgroups. Sweeping statements associate Roman Catholics with political and religious authoritarianism; early Orientalist-tinged descriptions of Hinduism essentialized a vast array of rituals and beliefs; and all First Nations people were seen as incapable of autonomous governance. Other sources—like the Roman Catholic-UCC or

Anglican-UCC dialogue groups—specifically mention an intention to counter stereotypes, insinuating that such representations were common and familiar to UCC members.²⁸³

Thus, clearly demarcated boundaries and stereotypical depictions have historically asserted categorical differences between UCC and outgroups.

Yet, as Tajfel, Turner et al. note, the sheer act of categorization is almost never neutral. Simply differentiating between two groups, and self-identifying with one or the other, inherently fosters feelings of ingroup preference due to the desire for optimal, positive distinctiveness. As a result, it is neither arduous nor surprising to spot attitudes of ingroup preference and superiority in the UCC's portrayals and interactions with various outgroups. To point out a few examples, the comparison of Catholic and Protestant teaching in *What's the Difference* or *Chats with a Prospective Convert* leaves no question which of the two traditions is more reflective of the "gospel Jesus taught"; other faiths, if not dismissed outright as superstition, were portrayed as incomplete reflections of the perfect revelation found in Christ; overseas culture, practice, and knowledge were fundamentally regarded as inferior to Western norms and methods; and First Nations customs were considered uncivilized and primitive compared to European 'progress.' Occasionally, these feelings of ingroup preference would manifest themselves further in competitive, antagonistic forms: Roman Catholics, for instance, were seen as a "rival to be feared and challenged," and, in the case of 'mixed marriages,' as manipulative, deceitful opponents. Outcries concerning specific political issues also show early hostile sensitivities towards Roman Catholics. Hinduism and Islam, in the context of overseas

²⁸³ Of course, the intention to counter stereotypes could encompass not only stereotypical depictions and understandings within denominational discourse, but also those from other, outside sources.

evangelism, were not just fellow faith traditions: respectively, one was once regarded as a “formidable foe” and the other as a growing “menace.” While not necessarily common, anti-Semitic and anti-Judaic sentiments have been expressed through theology, curriculum, articles and controversial coverage of Middle Eastern conflicts, and the same can be said for prejudicial and racist representations of Muslim and First Nations peoples. The most inimical relationships with outgroups involved aims of assimilation and eradication: in partnership with the Canadian government, the UCC operated various residential schools designed to convert, ‘civilize,’ and “incorporate” Aboriginal populations into wider society. Aspects of First Nations heritage—spirituality, customs, language, etc.—were forcefully suppressed through isolating and immersing school children in the residential school system. Other indigenous cultures around the world were approached with the same ambition, perceived as “pagan superstition that needed to be destroyed” and replaced with Western Christianity.

As seen above, starting points of ingroup preference can be identified in all four case studies. Some instances of ingroup bias were certainly exceptions to the norm, or were critiqued quite early on in the UCC’s history; others, primarily those concerning First Nations relations, represent the denomination’s predominant discourse and action for decades. It ought to be noted that many—if not all—of these outgroup attitudes were, in a sense, inherited from the UCC’s predecessors: whether directly from Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist traditions, or in correspondence with historical Christian precedents. Given the fairly autonomous governing structure of the UCC, it can also be assumed that the denomination’s national stances were not always an accurate or

concurrent reflection of relationships and activities ‘on the ground.’²⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in varying degrees and duration, ingroup bias is evident in each broad example. What then, engendered a change in attitude and an emphasis on reconciliation and cooperation?

In the case of the UCC, clearly determining the impetus and inspiration for reducing intergroup tension is near impossible: no neat-and-tidy Newtonian lines of cause-and-effect can be drawn from the intricately-layered interactions of complex organizations operating within a web of ‘glocalized’ movements.²⁸⁵ Of prime interest here, however, is whether—overall—the UCC was proactive or reactive in its transitions towards models of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation. In the case of Roman Catholic relations, many view Vatican II as a positive tipping point that promoted awareness and interest in respect to Catholicism. Articles in the *Observer* at the time, particularly those written by Al Forrest, also helped “foster a supportive atmosphere...for a closer relationship” between the UCC and Roman Catholics.²⁸⁶ A notable increase in contact, conversation, and support among local UCC and Catholic clergy, laity, and institutional leaders illustrated this post-1960 shift. In some ways, then, initiatives like the Roman Catholic—UCC Dialogue Group were a result of already-reduced tensions and perceived reciprocal openness between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Yet, for the 1974 General

²⁸⁴ See John Webster Grant, “‘They Don’t Speak For Me’: The United Church’s Crisis of Confidence,” *Touchstone* 6 no. 3 (1988): 9-17; O’Toole, “The United Church,” 161. Young mentions this slight divide in regards to UCC-Roman Catholic relations in “Reaction to Vatican II,” e.g. 107, 111. Cf. Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “Marriage,” 4: “At many points in our dialogue, participants observed that *on the ground* the differences between what Roman Catholic and United Church members think, feel and do are not so great (and certainly not so clear) as they are at the official, doctrinal level of our two churches...”

²⁸⁵ Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, eds. M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson, 25-44 (London: Sage, 1995).

²⁸⁶ Young, “Reaction to Vatican II,” 112.

Council, the Dialogue Group officially marked the start of a new posture and approach, as they moved “to begin the long journey towards reunion with the Church of Rome.”²⁸⁷

Regarding the Anglican Church of Canada, the UCC was on the receiving end of an invitation to improve relations, accepting a request to explore the possibility of an Anglican-United dialogue.²⁸⁸

Several developments on a denominational, national, and international scale softened intergroup tensions and humbled ingroup preference in respect to the UCC’s relationships with interfaith and overseas mission outgroups: the consequences of World Wars and formal colonialism, more open immigration policies and accompanying demographical changes, shifts in theology, such as liberal and liberation stances, societal secularization, and consequential disestablishment. While influenced by these and innumerable other circumstances, the UCC still appears proactive—even radically so, at times—in its policies and approaches to outgroups. To declare that God is “creatively and redemptively present in the religion of others,” as in *World Mission*, or to expand the definition of “ecumenical” to encompass other faiths, represented major, perhaps unmatched actions for a mainline denomination at the time. Despite the UCC’s ground-up governance, one senses that, in some ways, such statements and proposals still pushed many members out of their comfort zones; what was approved and encouraged by General Council may have been more

²⁸⁷ The United Church of Canada, *Record of Proceedings (1974)*, 73.

²⁸⁸ “At the request of the Anglican Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee, a small group of United Church and Anglican people met in April of 1999 in Saskatchewan to explore the possibility of an Anglican-United bilateral dialogue.” The United Church of Canada, Interchurch Interfaith Relations Committee, “‘Bearing Faithful Witness’: Interchurch Interfaith Relations Committee,” *Record of Proceedings (2000)* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 2000), 309.

hopeful and prophetic than actually reflective of reality.²⁸⁹ Interactions between the UCC and First Nations also demonstrate this interplay of initiative and outside influence: though partly driven to action by increasing pressure from First Nations peoples, along with other external developments, the UCC was still the first Canadian denomination to publically apologize for its role in the residential schools. This was a preliminary step in other precedent-setting acts of reconciliation and cooperation, such as the creation of the All Native Circle Conference, controversial advocacy, and changes to the crest and Basis of Union. Altogether, while external events may have encouraged and facilitated certain programs, the UCC's efforts were often a driving force—not purely a product—of improved outgroup relations.

From a social psychological perspective, these efforts to reduce ingroup bias evince and align with models of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation in various ways. Depending on the context or outgroup in question, the UCC has emphasized or expanded pre-existing common memberships with outgroups, introduced new superordinate identities, or developed distinct subgroups within a larger unit. It has also accentuated common issues that require cooperating with others and appreciating the unique yet complementary resources of each group. Employing examples from the previous chapter's case studies, the following section will show each of these overlapping approaches in the UCC's interactions with outgroups. Afterwards, along with a cumulative evaluation, a few effects, pitfalls, and possibilities will also be proposed.

²⁸⁹ See note 286 above. According to Young's analysis, the opposite may have been the case concerning UCC-Roman Catholic relations, where the national-level discourse 'caught up,' in a sense, to positive local relationships; see Young, "Reaction to Vatican II," e.g. 107, 111.

Many of the UCC's initiatives towards outgroups involve elements of recategorization. One straightforward application of recategorization involves emphasizing pre-established superordinate identities. For the UCC, such superordinate identities have included the wider Christian tradition and Canadian context, in the case of Roman Catholic and Anglican relations, or, in regards to previously overlooked contributions from First Nations, the UCC itself as an institution. A key strategy for reducing intergroup tension between the UCC and Roman Catholic or Anglican Churches was stressing common membership in the more-expansive body of Christ, usually by reminding one another of shared heritage and historical creeds,²⁹⁰ areas of theological consensus,²⁹¹ and of Christ's overarching call for unity among Christians.²⁹² Focusing on this larger historical, theological, and ecclesial identity, especially through the gatherings and reports of Dialogue Groups, encourages each denomination to view one another as distinct-but-united institutional subgroups, and as indispensable brothers and sisters of a broader faith tradition.²⁹³ To a lesser extent, the idea of a broader faith tradition also applies to relations

²⁹⁰ E.g. Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue, *In Whose Name*, 8-15; Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 21, 54-55; Anglican-United Church Dialogue, "Interim Report."

²⁹¹ E.g. Roman Catholic-United Church of Canada Dialogue, *Sin, Reconciliation, and Ecclesial Identity*, 2005, http://www.united-church.ca/files/partners/relations/ecumenical/report_rc_02.pdf, 3-5; Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue, *In Whose Name*, 5-6; Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, "Marriage," 8-9.

²⁹² Among many examples, see Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue, *In Whose Name*, 1, emphasis added ("Initiated in 1974 to foster mutual understanding and *Christian unity*"); Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 8, emphasis added ("...the sense of living with acceptable differences suggest helpful roads to pursue together in our *quest for the greater unity of Christ's body*"); and Ecumenical Shared Ministries Task Force, *Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook*, 8, emphasis added ("Such diversity [within Ecumenical Shared Ministry sites] can also enrich and expand our experiences and can enhance our participation in and appreciation for the *universal Body of Christ*."

²⁹³ E.g. Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, "Marriage," 3: "We hope to inspire the thousands of members who may think of our respective churches as deadlocked in a no win situation, to show that even our differences are not sufficient to destroy the love we have for one another as sisters and brothers in Christ."

between the UCC and other Abrahamic religions. *Bearing Faithful Witness* and *That We May Know Each Other* call attention to common origins and points of convergence between the religious ‘cousins’ of Judaism and Islam.

Canadian geography, culture and society also serve as a natural superordinate identity, a broad setting that UCC, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and other Canadian churches collectively share. Documents from Dialogue Groups, for example, frequently mention the uniquely Canadian environment, challenges, and opportunities held in common by its members’ churches, and consequently, stress an expansive identity distinct from other national or international contexts.²⁹⁴ Focusing on this nation-state spanning superordinate identity brings certain similarities to the fore, respectfully demarcates different approaches, ministries, and emphases within the shared social sphere, and reminds the UCC that they are one denomination among many in Canada. Further, in the fourth case study, it was shown that subgroups within an already-existing superordinate identity could be retrospectively acknowledged to help reduce intergroup tensions. Part of the UCC’s reconciliatory efforts with First Nations peoples involved acknowledging the historical existence and contribution of a previously-ignored subgroup within the superordinate identity of the UCC itself, recognizing, in other words, that the ‘outgroup’ had a role and presence in the denomination from the time of its inauguration. Including the Indigenous church within the Basis of Union background material, along with making changes to the

²⁹⁴ E.g. Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “Marriage,” 2-5, 7; Roman Catholic-United Church of Canada Dialogue, *Sin, Reconciliation*, 2 (“As involvement in the Indian Residential Schools in Canada was a common historic point for both of our churches we chose this as a case study for our broader question...”); Anglican-United Church Dialogue, “Interim Report,” emphasis added (“...the members of the dialogue have rediscovered the degree to which our two churches share a common faith, context, history, geography, and commitment...”)

historical crest, meant appreciating First Nations—even in hindsight—from within the established category of the UCC.

Occasionally, as seen in the interfaith case study, a pre-existing superordinate identity could be expanded to encompass certain outgroups. This is evident in the UCC's report *Toward A Renewed Understanding of Ecumenism* and its later revised version, *Mending the World* in 1997. There, the term “ecumenical,” traditionally used in the solely-Christian categorical context of inter-church unity and cooperation, was re-conceptualized and extended to include “all people of good will,” including those of other faiths. Instead of cognitively crossing social categories, reframing “ecumenism” meant—in theory—interfaith relationships could be more easily formed, differences appreciated, and intergroup tensions reduced from within a superordinate identity.

On a smaller scale, the UCC has also helped create or support new superordinate identities: inter-denominational dialogue groups and shared ecumenical ministry sites are two examples. Inter-denominational dialogue groups—specifically Roman Catholic-UCC and Anglican-UCC—operate as a form of microcosmic superordinate identity, bringing in members from two denominations to dialogue, worship, and form meaningful, personal connections as one overarching community. As noted above, these groups (referencing the Roman Catholic-UCC one but applicable to others) make manifest the wish to “transcend historical antecedents” and “respond to Jesus’ call.”²⁹⁵ Reports reflect a deep sense of dual identity: inclusive first-person plural pronouns, demonstrating a sense of common recategorized membership, are found alongside sections acknowledging distinctions between committee members’ denominations. The UCC has also supported new

²⁹⁵ Blanchet, “Dialogue in Canada,” 16.

superordinate identities in the form of Ecumenical Shared Ministries, which integrate and unify distinct categorical groups in various ways. Like the Dialogues, Ecumenical Shared Ministries strive to maintain dual identities by balancing congregational unity with careful attention to specific denominational concerns and customs.²⁹⁶

Finally, the UCC has also developed distinct subgroups within its own superordinate identity. Due to its specific scope, this study has not explored intra-denominational dynamics of the UCC, an area in which many other examples of this specific recategorization approach surely exist.²⁹⁷ However, the First Nations case study offered an insightful exception to this gap, due to the UCC's shifting regard—in general—for First Nations from excluded outgroup to valued ingroup. Approving an All Native Circle Conference in 1988, for example, formally affirmed and provided for First Nations identities within the shared superordinate identity of the wider UCC. Recognizing First Nations communal and congregational autonomy in decision-making and priority setting lessens the inherent risk of assimilation in majority-minority group relations (as noted by Hornsey and Hogg) and respectfully underlines their categorical distinctiveness, all while considering them a valued and vital voice from inside the denomination. All of these interwoven efforts can be viewed as significant examples of recategorization by the UCC.

Additionally, each case study contains areas of mutual intergroup differentiation, in which the UCC fosters appreciative and cooperative interdependence in pursuit of common causes. Just as Hewstone and Brown brought two groups together to work

²⁹⁶ Ecumenical Shared Ministries Task Force, *Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook*, 8.

²⁹⁷ See the following section for this and other areas for further research.

towards a mutual goal,²⁹⁸ many of the UCC's relations with outgroups are currently oriented around a shared objective. In the case of interdenominational relationships, this task is characterized by overtly Christian vocabulary, such as "the mission of God in the world" (the Anglican-UCC Dialogue Group), "service to God's kingdom" (the Roman Catholic-UCC Dialogue Group) and other variations.²⁹⁹ *Bearing Faithful Witness*, on Jewish-UCC relations, speaks of sharing hope "for a better world under the rule of God," and working together "for justice, peace, and the preservation of creation."³⁰⁰ In different contexts, more abstract, inclusive language is used to describe this common labor, like the "creation of a world that is just, participatory, and sustainable" in *Mending the World*.³⁰¹ The transition towards "partnership" with overseas churches and organizations most clearly illustrates a mutual intergroup differentiation approach: influenced by the call for cooperation by the Jerusalem Conference, and the understanding of *missio dei* put forth in the 1966 *World Mission* report, the UCC strives to work alongside organizations around the world in mutual, egalitarian service and common commitment to God's global mission.

As noted by Cho, *World Mission* was a major stimulus for this collaborative approach with people of other faiths and cultures, introducing a "mutuality model of shared concern for justice as the basis for working together."³⁰² Decades later, with the publication of *That*

²⁹⁸ E.g. Hewstone and Rupert Brown, "Contact is Not Enough."

²⁹⁹ E.g. "When old resentments are replaced by respect and gratitude for the complementarity of these gifts, the door is open for becoming partners in advancing into God's future..." Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 8. "Our two churches are called still to be effective partners in God's mission in this land and beyond." Anglican-United Church Dialogue, "Interim Report."

³⁰⁰ The United Church of Canada, *Bearing Faithful Witness*, 53.

³⁰¹ The United Church of Canada, *Mending the World*, 7.

³⁰² Cho, "To Share in God's Concern for All," 40.

We May Know Each Other, the “call for common action for the sake of a suffering world” would explicitly take precedence over “categories of religious perspective.” Yet that same report, as with similar statements, is careful not to disregard or depreciate the “distinctive [self-identities]” of the UCC and its fellow faith traditions.³⁰³ Once again, this mirrors the mutual intergroup differentiation model: in addition to making two groups cooperate on a common task, this approach “encourages groups to emphasize their mutual distinctiveness” in order to effectively alleviate intergroup tensions.³⁰⁴ Reciprocal respect for the different abilities and contributions of each categorical group must accompany the common vision and goal. Such appreciation for the unique-yet-complementary resources of others can be seen in multiple UCC reports. More often than not, it is only a general recognition that everyone must work together for the good of God’s mission and the world, and that no single perspective, tradition, or institution contains all the essential skills or insights.³⁰⁵ “[Not] all the gifts needed for the fulfillment of mission are necessarily to be found in [one] place,” asserts one statement³⁰⁶; likewise, “No one religious community or group can accomplish the task alone,” declares *Mending the World*.³⁰⁷ Periodically, specific contributions of different parties are directly noted: the

³⁰³ The United Church of Canada, *That We May Know Each Other*, 7.

³⁰⁴ Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 40.

³⁰⁵ “This imperative proceeds out of the conviction that solutions to the challenges posed by ongoing political conflict, racism, poverty, and environmental degradation, require *the assembled resources of a broad partnership* among religious communities and secular organizations.” The United Church of Canada, *Mending the World*, 14-15, emphasis added.

³⁰⁶ The United Church of Canada, “Seeking to Understand,” 1.

³⁰⁷ The United Church of Canada, *Mending the World*, 20.

Anglican Church's "catholicity of perspective,"³⁰⁸ Muslim ethics and call to "compete in goodness,"³⁰⁹ the theological notion of "respect" from First Nations spirituality;³¹⁰ or "gifts of spiritual and theological insight, of faithfulness of witness, [and] the experience of costly discipleship" from overseas partners, to pinpoint a few key examples.³¹¹

Part of emphasizing mutual distinctiveness also means admitting certain impediments to partnership: for example, Muslim stances on issues of sexuality, significantly disparate from UCC positions, are indicated as an area of tension and limitation for united engagement,³¹² just as different theological and biblical principles between the Roman Catholic Church and UCC have resulted in diametrically opposed positions regarding same-sex marriage.³¹³ Irreconcilable categorical divergences and boundaries are not ignored, but acknowledged with authenticity and integrity. In this way, intergroup connections and cooperation can be formed without harmful compromise, inaccuracy, or ignorance concerning significant differences in each group's self-identity.³¹⁴ Thus, through intentional relationships of partnership and common purpose, mutual intergroup differentiation can be seen as one facet of the UCC's efforts to reduce ingroup preference.

³⁰⁸ Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 8.

³⁰⁹ The United Church of Canada, *That We May Know Each Other*, 47.

³¹⁰ The United Church of Canada, *Honoring the Divine*, 46.

³¹¹ The United Church of Canada, "Seeking to Understand," 2.

³¹² The United Church of Canada, *That We May Know Each Other*, 51.

³¹³ Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, "Marriage," 2.

³¹⁴ This stands in line with Gaertner and Dovidio's evidence of Mutual Intergroup Differentiation, such as finding "solutions to collective problems that respectfully recognize the group boundaries." Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 172.

All in all, though determining precise causes and effects is impossible, the consistent appearance of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation models throughout the UCC's statements and initiatives attests to their prominent role in altering intergroup attitudes. As far as national-level discourse demonstrates, a clear trend can be traced throughout all four case studies from initial positions of ingroup bias to outgroup respect and appreciation, and from intergroup tension and prejudice to recategorized and mutually differentiated partnerships. Numerous positive results include a heightened awareness of past prejudice; less homogenous, stereotypical or essentialized portrayals of outgroups; attitudes of cooperation instead of competition, esteem over suspicion, openness—in some cases, even inclusion—over categorical exclusion; and affirmation and acceptance instead of proselytization. In spite of this success at reconciliation and reducing intergroup tensions, however, recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation models within the context of the UCC are not without critique or caution from ingroup and outgroup members and, indirectly, social psychology theorists.

Critiques and Cautions

Starting with examples of recategorization, the previous chapter indicated criticism from other denominations over the UCC's unconventional expansion of 'ecumenism' to encompass additional faith traditions. Many churches expressed concern and trepidation at the perceived appropriation of Christian vocabulary for interfaith and other non-Christian outgroups and consequential devaluation of interdenominational identity. This reaction from within the ingroup fits with Hornsey and Hogg's research on the danger of overly inclusive superordinate identities, where, unless the "superordinate category is well-defined and affords adequate distinctiveness," recategorization may simple result in "more

aggressive attempts to reinforce subgroup distinctiveness.”³¹⁵ Another context where this well-attested warning could be kept in mind is the UCC itself: given its increased appreciation of difference inside and outside the denomination, as well as the institution’s current identity crisis and “liminal state,” the extensive inclusivity of the UCC may prove to be, in part, a curse, encouraging the formation of distinct, consolidated subgroups. When it comes to recategorized common identity, social psychological research also highlights the risk of assimilation or imposition upon a minority subgroup. While much is to be admired in the UCC’s incorporation of First Nations within pre-established structures, pressure could arise—in the spirit of consensus, efficiency, or practicality—for the All Native Circle Conference to adhere more to the governance, policies, and decision-making models of the vast majority. The same awareness could be raised for smaller examples of recategorization, such as Ecumenical Shared Ministry sites: as a new superordinate identity is created, dominant congregations or traditions may find it easier—even if unintentionally—to crowd out marginal group members. Gaertner and Dovidio also stress the necessity for “group norms and the leadership structure” to sustain and stabilize recategorized identities over time. On the one hand, the UCC’s initiatives and discourse in this area demonstrate the possibility of maintaining recategorized structures and associations; on the other, the conclusions of Gaertner and Dovidio point to the continued need of national-level activity and support for familiar and newly formed relationships with outgroups.

³¹⁵ Hornsey and Hogg, “Subgroup Differentiation,” 549. As well, The United Church of Canada, *Mending the World*, 19 mentions, along with the aforementioned hesitation surrounding the vocabulary of ‘ecumenism,’ a concern that “distinctive Christian identity may be undermined or watered down by an emphasis on seeking the common good.”

As for mutual intergroup differentiation, overseas partners have criticized a disparity between the UCC's policies and present realities of asymmetrical resource recognition and sharing. Articulating common tasks between the UCC and partners happens often and easily, but "highlighting the different and potentially complementary skills," in the words of Gaertner and Dovidio,³¹⁶ poses an ongoing, difficult problem. Making relationships with outgroups more reciprocal, and recognizing the gifts each group can interdependently offer to each other, deepens the mutually extended respect across differentiated categorical boundaries. Otherwise, the UCC's overseas relations may only reinforce attitudes of patronage and ingroup preference.

Further, while the UCC's established relationships with various outgroups may be positive, there are significant 'outsiders' that continue to be excluded in formal discourse and initiatives. The broad body of non-mainline evangelical 'conservative' Christianity in Canada represents a demographic with opinions on social issues often considerably distanced from those of the UCC. For this reason, or perhaps the loosely associated nature of such churches, finding ways to cooperate, recategorize around common ground, or even dialogue has—in the absence of any formal developments—proven difficult. Future statements and study guides might also examine relations with other faith or belief systems. Given the likely, controversial review of self-declared atheist-yet-UCC-clergy Gretta Vosper and tensions surrounding post-theistic congregations,³¹⁷ for example,

³¹⁶ Gaertner and Dovidio, "Categorization," 76.

³¹⁷ E.g. See the following articles, including their array of online comments from readers: David Wilson, "Considering Post-theistic Churches," *United Church Observer*, February 2011, last accessed July 9, 2015, <http://www.ucobserver.org/columns/observations/2011/02/>; Sarah Boesveld, "Sacred, yes. But is it Church?" *United Church Observer*, February 2011, last accessed July 9, 2015, http://www.ucobserver.org/-faith/2011/02/sacred_church/; Mike Milne, "Confronting the Unbelievers," *United Church Observer*, May 2015, last accessed July 9, 2015, <http://ucobserver.org/faith/2015/05/unbelievers/index.php>; United Church

atheism could be a pertinent area to explore recategorization or mutual intergroup differentiation. As a 2009 internal document pointed out, the UCC also needs to be aware of “elitist” picking-and-choosing regarding work with overseas partners and be “careful to develop partnerships with an appropriate cross section of organizations and movements in the developing world.”³¹⁸

A final area of improvement is semi-related to the social-psychological notion of generalization, or—in this context—how the benefits of intergroup reduction models are vicariously extended to ingroup and outgroup members beyond those immediately present.³¹⁹ Those directly involved in committees like the Roman Catholic-UCC or Anglican-UCC Dialogue Group, or communities like ESM, consistently describe them as positive, educative, and transformative,³²⁰ yet only represent a miniscule percentage of their respective wider groups. Though social-psychological experiments are often interested in the extent to which participants transfer positive feelings from directly-contacted to indirectly connected outgroup members, this is not necessarily the case with the UCC’s initiatives: for those taking part in the programs, attitudes toward outgroup members both inside and outside the area of intergroup contact are altered and enhanced.

Observer, “Beyond Belief,” *United Church Observer*, October 2013, last accessed July 9, 2015, http://www.ucobserver.org/features/2013/10/beyond_belief/; Douglas Todd, “Atheist Rev. Gretta Vosper to be ‘Reviewed,’” *The Vancouver Sun*, May 26, 2015, last accessed July 9, 2015, <http://blogs.vancouver-sun.com/2015/05/26/atheist-rev-gretta-vosper-to-be-reviewed/>.

³¹⁸ The United Church of Canada, *Reviewing Partnership*, 17.

³¹⁹ Gaertner and Dovidio address multiple forms of generalization in Gaertner and Dovidio, *Reducing Intergroup Bias*, 168-70.

³²⁰ These include Blanchet, “Dialogue in Canada,” e.g. 16 (“climate of friendship”) and 15 (“It is no exaggeration to state that the doctrinal discussions have been fruitful”); Piche, “The Roman Catholic and United Church Dialogue in Canada” (particularly under “Achievements”); Roman Catholic Church/United Church of Canada Dialogue, “Marriage,” e.g. 2-3, 19-20; Anglican-United Church Dialogue, *Drawing From the Same Well*, 9-10.

However, some, like Piche, have raised the question, “How to make the fruits of the dialogue available to everybody in the churches?”³²¹ Sharing the considerably limited, contained experience and extending its positive consequences with individuals in the wider denomination has proven to be a challenge, with efforts in this area often restricted to statements, study guides, and reports.³²²

Areas for Future Research

This admittedly broad historical and social-psychological examination, representing an emerging interdisciplinary application of social psychological theory to the field of religious studies, functions as a springboard for further analysis. The UCC’s evolving interactions with various outgroups have provided multiple points of parallelism with Recategorization and Mutual Intergroup Differentiation, two well-attested models for reducing intergroup conflict from within the wider framework of Social Identity Theory and Social Categorization. These same strategies have also been tested in contexts of intragroup tension, where, as Esler explains, “two *subgroups* of one group or movement have become sufficiently estranged as to require reconciliation.”³²³ With the UCC’s far-from-unanimous membership in mind, the next natural area for analysis would be its intra-denominational dynamics, including varying levels of discord between congregational and national identities, blurred ministerial roles and responsibilities, conservative and ultra-progressive minorities, and emerging intercultural communities, among other examples. Are the models of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation present—or even

³²¹ Piche, “The Roman Catholic and United Church Dialogue in Canada.”

³²² This fact (and, for Piche, frustration) is mentioned *ibid.*, and demonstrated throughout this thesis.

³²³ Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 29, emphasis added.

plausible—in these circumstances? If at all, how have the realities of social categorization and subsequent bias been recognized or addressed? Since such scenarios do not exist in isolation from interactions with outsiders, what is the mutual influence between the UCC’s internal relations and engagement with ‘outsiders,’ especially in regards to the main outgroups examined in this thesis? Tracing the impact of national intergroup-related discourse on regional and congregational levels would also be a fruitful avenue for further research: how have national policies, statements, and initiatives affected or reflected intergroup attitudes on the ground? All of these questions relate to larger issues of categorical identity: given this complex group’s increasing inclusivity, whether in direct incorporation, recategorization, or differentiated partnership, does—or can—a common, prototypical identity still exist? Without a well defined, adequately distinct shared superordinate identity, as certain individuals claim the UCC has either already lost or is struggling to articulate,³²⁴ will the UCC reflect the consequences predicted by Hornsey and Hogg of “aggressive” reinforcement of subgroup distinctiveness—perhaps to the point of a fragmented, Congregationalist-like future?

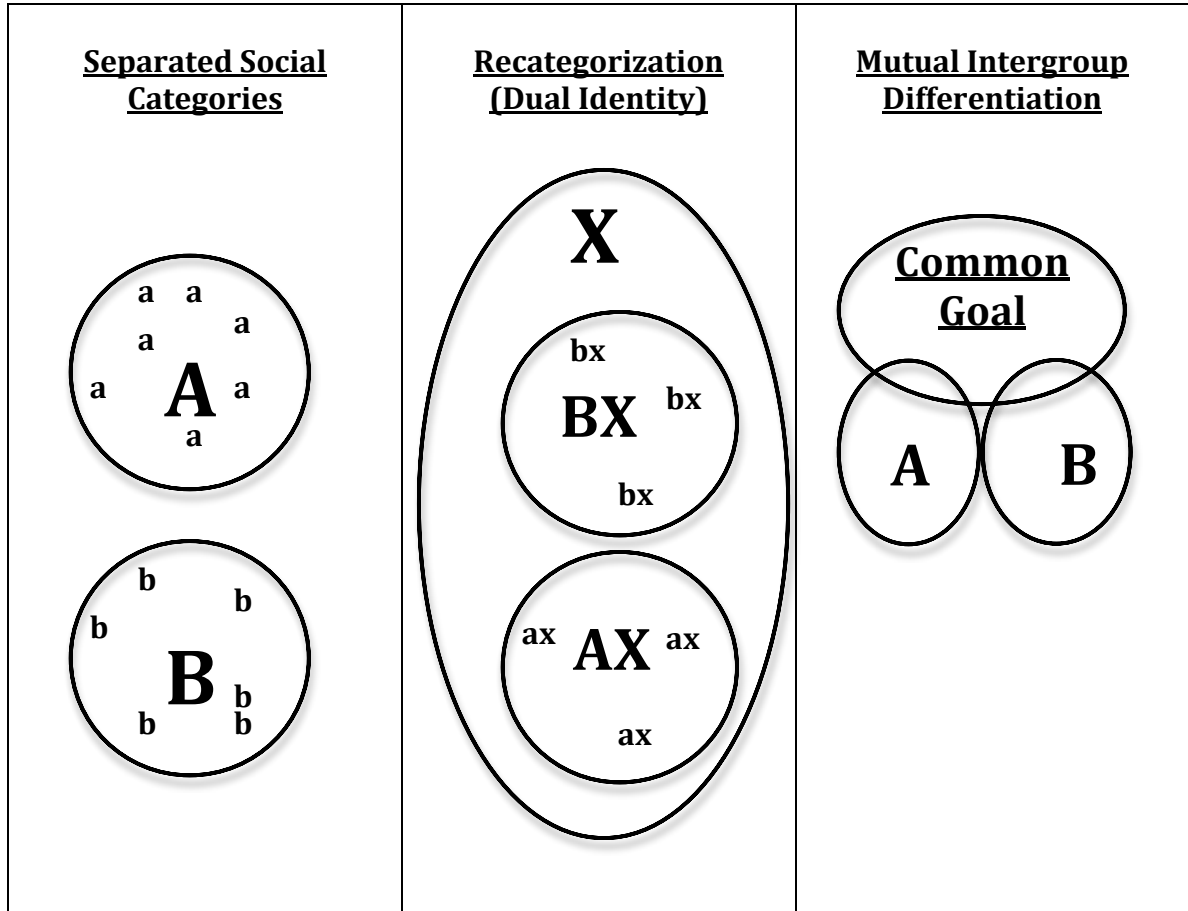
Holistic-oriented comparisons with other Canadian denominations could highlight how—at this point, hypothetically—the UCC is quite unique in its dealings with internal and external differences. This introduction would inform all of these potential avenues for additional research surrounding Canadian religious institutions, such as the UCC, and social psychological theories.

³²⁴ E.g. Charles Lewis, “The Split in the United Church,” *The National Post*, May 14, 2011, last accessed July 9, 2015, <http://news.nationalpost.com/holy-post/the-split-in-the-united-church>; Schweitzer, “The Changing Social Imaginary,” 293.

Conclusion

Recognizing The United Church of Canada as a shared categorical identity for thousands of individuals across Canada, this thesis has set out to analyze the denomination's national-level discourse and initiatives from the perspective of social psychology. Social Categorization and Social Identity Theory, along with well-supported strategies to reduce ingroup bias, provided insightful frameworks for understanding how the UCC's relationships with four intertwined outgroups—ecumenical, interfaith, overseas mission and First Nations—have developed over the decades. A broad historical survey explored these case studies through primary sources and secondary documents, and segued into a synthesized analysis of such interactions in accordance with social-psychological models of Recategorization and Mutual Intergroup Differentiation. In general, a consistent, normative pattern can be observed, in which the UCC's relations with outgroups move from initial positions of bias to recategorized and mutually differentiated partnerships. While definitive intentions, causes and effects are difficult to determine, the persistent appearance of recategorization and mutual intergroup differentiation models within the denomination's discourse signifies a prominent role in altering intergroup attitudes, and provides real-life applications of social psychological theories within a uniquely Canadian religious organization. Echoing comments from within and without the denomination, these same theories highlighted possible areas of concern and improvement for the UCC's interactions with various outgroups. In all, the aforementioned social-psychological theories and models provide a new analysis of how the UCC has engaged with outsiders and reduced ingroup preference, and offer a springboard for further dialogue about institutional identity and dealings with difference.

APPENDIX A: DIAGRAM OF INTERGROUP MODELS³²⁵



³²⁵ Adapted from Matthew J. Hornsey and Michael A. Hogg. "Assimilation and Diversity: An Integrative Model of Subgroup Relations." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 4 (2000): 143-56.

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