THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY OF THE LAGGAN, CO. DONEGAL 1880-1973.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the history of the minority Presbyterian community of the Laggan in Co. Donegal in the period 1880-1973, a period of intense political and cultural change. The shaping of a community by national politics is traced through the community's involvement in opposition to the Home Rule movement, and attempts to be included within the boundary of Northern Ireland. The provision of education for Presbyterian children, at primary and secondary level is described, and the communities opposition to the teaching of the Irish language is traced . Change in religious practise is also charted through official Visitations of Presbytery, and in decisions of Kirk Sessions in matters of discipline and congregational oversight. The evolving experience of Presbyterian women, from nurture of children to the organisation of local and regional meetings for teaching and social gatherings is also charted. The thesis challenges the received idea that the minority Protestant religious community was not involved in political life, and that they were largely isolated from contemporary cultural and social forces. The thesis is based on congregational records and Minutes of Presbytery, together with published contemporary accounts and secondary literature.

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Main abreviations used in the text:

MRP Minutes of the Raphoe Presbytery
MLP Minutes of the Letterkenny Presbytery
MDP Minutes of the Donegal Presbytery
DPBE Minutes of the Donegal Protestant Board of Education
MGA *Minutes of the General Assembly*
GA Reports *General Assmbly Reports*

BNL *Belfast News Letter*
DJ *Derry Journal*
LS *Londonderry Sentinel*
SWN *Strabane Weekly News*
DD *Donegal Democrat*
WW *Women's Work*

The Presbyterian Community of the Laggan, Co. Donegal, 1880-1973

THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMUNITY OF THE LAGGAN, CO. DONEGAL 1880-1973.

This book considers the community and religious life of the small Presbyterian population in the east of Co. Donegal, in a period of religious, social and political change. At large, this is a story of gradual change, but it is also a story defined by dramatic dislocation in terms of political loyalty and participation in the state. In the political turmoil that swept Ireland from the Home Rule movement in the 1880s, to the partition of the country in 1922, to the eventual entry of the Republic of Ireland, along with Great Britain, into the Common Market in 1973, political loyalties were strengthened and then swept away, territorial frontiers were established and then relaxed, a civil war was fought, and campaigns of political violence kept alive by a sense of political turmoil and social anguish. This narrative is one that is uneven, determined by forces and pressures outside the control of Laggan Presbyterians. In some aspects the community was defined by political aspirations; by its opposition to Home Rule, in its campaign to be included in the newly created state of Northern Ireland, and in its response to an unsuccessful effort to be included, a last ditch plea not to be excluded. This political identity also produced efforts to keep embers of social and cultural institutions alive in a hostile environment, the struggle to maintain schools and the creation of a social sphere suitable for the young of the community. The religious character of the community found its outworking in the maintenance of the church and accommodation of change, both within the Presbyterian Church, and in the community at large. The growing influence of the women of the church is part of the history of unsteady evolution.

The history of this community has not been told before. Indeed, aspects of this minority's political relationships have been considered controversial, and have not been in the public domain. Documents used in this study, deposited in the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, have been available to the public only since 1994. Studies in the history of the Church of Ireland in the last ten years have extended the understanding of that religious minority in Ireland [Gillespie & Crawford, 2003], but there has been no such growth in studies of the Presbyterian community. This can perhaps be explained by the rich archival resources available for the former established church, and their wider, more scattered representation throughout Ireland. In contrast, the Presbyterian community, with the great majority of its membership in Northern Ireland, has focused attention on the North East of Ireland, or on congregational histories, a project one historian has called an obsession [Holmes, 2006; p. 27] This study, then, aims to fill a gap in our knowledge of a minority community in Ireland, during a time of great change. It also aims to extend our understanding of a religious community in a period that has not received attention from historians of religion in Ireland. The scarcity of research on Protestants in the period after 1922 has been called 'notable' [Paseta, 2003; p. 195] This research will be a contribution to our understanding of modern Irish religious and cultural history.

The landscape of scholarship.

Historians of Ireland have not rushed to examine issues of a religious nature. Gibbon notes 'The Ulster religious revival of 1859 involved larger numbers of people in sustained common activity than any movement in rural Ulster between 1798 and 1913. Despite this,

little attention has been paid to it, at least by historians.' [Gibbon, 1975; p. 44]. Holmes also observed that ' it does not figure prominently in … the major works of historical synthesis.' [Holmes, 1994; p. ii]. The comment has also been rightly made that 'general histories of twentieth-century Ireland remain primarily accounts of the political development of the modern state.' [Paseta, 2003; p.194]

Historians of Ulster Presbyterianism have largely turned to intellectual or theological issues for examination and research. There have been studies of religious beliefs and practises that have contributed to developments in Ulster politics [McBride, 1999], although these are rare. Recent denominational historians have written about theological developments, church leaders and congregational histories. J. M. Barkley, however, has written about Presbyterian practice, including the eldership and public worship, and reformed liturgy. [Barkley, 1991] R.F.G. Holmes has written on nineteenth century evangelicalism, particularly Henry Cooke. [Patton, 2002] The most recent history of Irish Presbyterianism has focused on the development of Presbyteries, and congregational growth within these structures. [Kilpatrick, 2006]

The cultural historians and commentators have sought to elucidate the experience of Protestants in Ireland, but only with limited success, as the local and regional studies necessary to describe the varieties of their experience, have not been available. Terence Brown in his landmark study tracing the social and cultural history of Ireland from 1922- 79, [Brown, 1981] has described well the Protestants of the excluded Ulster counties as 'small and medium sized farmers, whose emotional centre of gravity often lay across the Irish border as bonds of blood and political instinct tied them to a more vigorous and Populist Unionism than had commonly been espoused by the Anglo-Irish gentry to the south.' [Brown, 1981; p. 108] He does not however go beyond describing 'a sense of isolation and of political impotence.' [Brown, 1981; p.109] Declan Kiberd has also made an outstanding

contribution to the charting of Ireland's cultural history [Kiberd, 1996] Writing about the experience of Protestants in the Irish state he states 'life for the Protestant minority in the twenty-six counties was comfortable', and, 'because they were such a small minority, they posed no threat to the new order and, provided that they remained reasonably quiet and contented with their lot, they were untroubled.' [Kiberd, 1996; p.416] Claire Wills, writing about Ireland in the period of the Second World War has described a context of religious tolerance in Ireland in the 1930s, and the ease with which people living in the border regions, particularly in Donegal participated in the Northern Ireland economy. [Wills, 2007]

A harder hitting and partial examination of the Presbyterian community in the Republic of Ireland has been made, notably from within the Irish Presbyterian community. Terence McCaughey has written a broad theological and political critique of the activity of the Churches in Ireland [McCaughey, 1993] His contribution is valuable for its depth of theological insight, and appreciation of the historical context of the conduct of the church authorities, particularly of the Protestant churches within Ireland. In examining the responses of the Protestant churches to political developments in early twentieth century Ireland, he suggests that 'what happened to Irish Protestantism in the first decade of this century was that it lost its nerve.' [McCaughey, 1993; p.90] This lack of confidence had many consequences, chief among which could be that ' Over the past eighty years the Protestant Churches have opted to become what may without offense be termed a 'mini-Catholic group, making the best deal they can for their sectional interests.' This he says ' is a pity: they could have chosen to use the freedom they might be though to have as a result of not owing allegiance to the See of Rome, to explore alternative forms of Christian presence.' [McCaughey, 1993; p.134]

McCaughey sets out to criticise the Churches for not being prophetic communities, and regards Church policy on education as integral to this failure. He argues that the Protestant

church allocation of government funds for support of aspects of secondary education in the Republic of Ireland has followed a policy of providing 'schools for Protestants' rather than 'Protestant schools'. [McCaughey, 1993; p.94] In following this policy, the churches are ' pressing …interests… largely without regard to the educational opportunities and conditions of the vast majority of children and teachers in the State' [McCaughey, 1993; p.93]. In other words, they are 'more committed to their own continued management of privileged middle class institutions than to the unbroken transmission and development of the insights of Luther and Calvin and the sixteenth-century Reformation.' [McCaughey, 1993;p. 94] All this has profound national and political consequences, as in Ireland ' confessional allegiance and the story of lost land…(are) inextricably linked…' [McCaughey, 1993; p.35] While McCaughey's critique of the Presbyterian Church is understood in historical context, his analysis is not completely appropriate because there is no understanding of difficulties that arise in particular areas, schools or local political issues. Are the issues for the rural community the same as those for Dublin; and is the Presbyterianism of border farmers the same as that of merchant city men? This lack of localised knowledge betrays a weakness in both the secondary material and his sometimes rather broad argument.

John Dunlop, a leading Presbyterian minister and commentator on political matters, has also analysed the history and political life of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the twentieth century. [Dunlop, 1995] Unusually, Dunlop notes the regional variations in the life of the church, particularly in the political attitudes displayed. [Dunlop, 1995; p.70] He recognises that Donegal Presbyterians are '…a cohesive and confident people…' and reflects feelings of being '…abandoned, some might say betrayed by the six counties at the time of Partition…' [Dunlop, 1995; p. 69] In the latter part of his book he reflects on the political views of Presbyterians, characterising these as a 'mentality rooted in the ideological construct of siege' noting that the temptation for the Presbyterian community is 'to collude with the

spirit of brooding over the past to survive it…' [Dunlop, 1995; p.135] The sensitivity shown earlier in the work is not reflected in these political judgements. His observation that 'there was neither sufficient grace nor political will to offer generosity across these divisions when it was required' [Dunlop, 1995; p.57] may strike a chord of truth in relation to the Presbyterian community in Northern Ireland, but does not reflect the experience of Presbyterians in the Republic, where they are in a situation of minority.

More recently an area of academic reflection has been created by the provision of funds by the European Community for the support of minority communities in the Border region. A number of studies have been carried out, sponsored by both government agencies and community groups, which have traced the experiences of minority groups in the counties neighbouring the Border. [Harvey, 2005] A significant study has been carried out describing 'Border Protestant Perspectives.' [Walsh, 2005] The policy agenda supporting these studies has been to view groups as those presenting for discussion and proposing future projects, mostly without a consideration of extended institutional networks or an examination of values or beliefs. So, for example, the 'protestant minority community' is described along with 'ex-prisoners, displaced persons, women' and specific local community groups. [Harvey, 2005; p.5] While valuable information has been gained for current social policy and a commitment to address the under-funding of public services in the Border region, these studies have added little to our understanding of the historical context of issues, opinions and experiences which have shaped current attitudes. A number of personal reflections from those with extensive experience of the Border have been collected. These have provided useful addition to material relating to this area. [Logue, 1999]

Presbyterians in Ireland.

Presbyterians came to Ireland from Scotland, at the nearest point only thirteen miles away. Scots had been coming and going from Ireland for centuries before the Plantation of Ulster become official Crown policy under James I. This was the most thorough and promising of the plantations carried out in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it resulted in ' a haphazard religious mosaic' [Stewart, 1981; p.31] in the province of Ulster. By 1640, Presbyterians outnumbered Anglicans, and many Presbyterian clergy served bishops in ministering to planters who had come to Ireland. The arrival of Major- General Robert Monro in Carrickfergus in April 1642 signalled the beginning of the end of the 1641 rebellion, and also the formation of the first Presbytery, formed in Carrickfergus by chaplains and elders in Monro's Scottish army. This Presbytery exercised oversight of the existing Presbyterian congregations, and directed the formation of new congregations, as settlers moved to new areas of the province. Presbyterian churches were not formed in Monaghan and Cavan until after the Williamite war. Many congregations in the south of the country resulted from the influence of Independent or Baptist ministers associated with Cromwellian forces that had been active in these areas.

The eighteenth century brought further expansion, but also the penal laws, which affected Presbyterians as well as Roman Catholics. In the 1720s the General Synod experienced controversy over subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which led to the formation of the non-subscribing Presbytery of Antrim. Those who formed this new Presbytery retained connection with those who, with moderate theological views, remained within the Synod, and who formed a New Light Party. From the 1790s the dominance of the New Light party was challenged by a reawakening conservative and evangelical Presbyterianism. Under the leadership of Henry Cooke, 'the most prominent Presbyterian of

the nineteenth century' [Holmes, 2006; p.4], the New Light ministers were forced out, and formed a separate Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. Two other parties also criticised the laxity of the Synod of Ulster. The Seceders and Covenanters both established their own presbyteries during the century. It was not until 1840 that the General Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod formed the General Assembly, a union made possible by compulsory subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith for all ministers, licentiates and elders. [Barkley, 1959; p. 48] The eighteenth century also saw the beginning of Presbyterian participation in the Orange Order, a relationship that been marked by controversy. [Holmes, 1985; p.85]

The nineteenth century has been termed 'a Century of Outreach at Home and Abroad' [Holmes, 1985; p. 95]. It was a period that saw the union of synods in the General Assembly, the growth of evangelicalism, and the consolidation of the conservative character of the church. The Home Mission was formed in 1826, and a number of foreign missions in the 1840s and 1850s. The Temperance movement also found solid support among Presbyterians, and the 1859 Revival, which took place against a background of industrial and agricultural revolution, made a profound impact on the character of Irish Presbyterianism. In the second half of the century two colleges, one in Belfast and the other in Derry, secured the traditional Presbyterian emphasis on academic training for the ministry of the church. Reforms outside the church, tenant right, a newly reformed and strengthened Roman Catholicism, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, and the introduction of Home Rule legislation, brought the century to an end in a dramatically different way than it began. The new century, with which this study is chiefly concerned, would see even more dramatic changes.

This study is substantially based on the Minutes of three neighbouring Presbyteries: Raphoe, Letterkenny and Donegal. These Minutes, together with Kirk Session records, Minutes of the Donegal Protestant Board of Education, and the records of women's groups, provide an archive that is of a structured nature, and is in many ways a naïve, simple, record of the life of an unselfaware and unselfcritical community. This source material offers an insight into the consciousness of the Presbyterian people, yielding a sense of the loyalties within this community. These Minutes and local materials have been supplemented by press reports in both local and national newspapers, and published material from within Church circles and the public realm. These offer points of reference to the wider denominational and social history. The story that is told is both intricate and immense in its variety. The study is firmly focused on the Presbyterian community, and does not include other denominations within its scope.

This study is structured around three eras that were defined by the chief political developments in the period: the Home Rule movement; the establishment of Partition and the Irish Free State; the post Second World war period, from the end of the war to entry into the Common Market. The life of the Presbyterian community could be characterised by four areas: politics, education, public religion and the life of women with the church. Within the chronological scope of these chapters, changes in the provision of education, the practise of religion, women's experience in the church, and the changing relationships between the church and politics are charted and analysed. The varied rate of change, and the shaping power of events will be seen in the shifting balance of involvement in political movements and in the different role women played in the church. The public face of the community at the beginning of the period was very much a male face, with women involved in the domestic realm of church teaching and supporting foreign mission. By the end of the period they had

moved to sharing the public concerns of the church, while remaining involved in the nurturing and teaching role of the church in family life. In addition, attitudes to the major concerns in the life of the community are discussed, which provides an understanding of the varied nature of change that Laggan Presbyterians encountered.

There is a need to locate the new political culture in Ireland in a historical context. The improved relationship between the British and Irish governments, and the resulting cross-border social and cultural links, have now made it possible to examine the history of the Border in a less contentious context [O'Dowd, 2006]. The growth of Cross Border studies has added to our knowledge of the working of the state, and of business and social economy sectors. But little has been added to our knowledge of faith- based grass- roots organisations. [Walsh, 2005; p. 1] It is hoped that the historical context provided in this study will enable future Cross Border studies to have a surer footing when making claims about the development of minority communities in the Republic of Ireland.

It should also be stated that the student of popular religion in Ireland will find little of interest in this study regarding the history of anti- Catholicism in Ireland. The complex interrelationship of political convictions and religious beliefs is of great importance and needs further research. [Holmes, 2006; p.231] What we do find in the history of the political and religious experience of Laggan Presbyterians is a concern for the integrity of their own denomination and culture, and at the same time, a deep desire to work in close and harmonious co-operation with their Roman Catholic neighbours. If battles were to be fought between the forces of the Reformation and the Counter Reformation, Laggan Presbyterians would not be in the vanguard. They were content to leave these battles to others, while ensuring the boundaries of their community were intact. Calvinist 'belief in predestination and justification by faith alone and its early identification of the Pope with Antichrist' may

well have caused Laggan Presbyterians to ‘view the Irish generally as already damned.’ [Elliott 2001; p.70] The record of their belief and behaviour does not betray such attitudes.

In short, this study presents a picture of what was achieved by Laggan Presbyterians in their terms during the period, based on the record of the members themselves, and on independent sources. It provides a sustained and distinctive narrative. Some of the episodes of this story do not reflect positively on the State of which the Laggan Presbyterians found themselves to be citizens; sometimes perhaps, the story does not reflect well on the Presbyterians themselves. The study provides an understanding of an aspect of Irish life not previously explored: the varied experience of a religious minority during times of political, social and cultural transformation. Judgments which state that the experience of Protestants in the Republic of Ireland has been ‘ …one of pain, despair, distain, withdrawal, uneasy belonging, and finally, a suppression of memory’ [Stevens, 1992; p.144] may be the truth, but not the whole truth. This study of Laggan Presbyterians shows that while many adopted a low profile, they were not, as has been judged of the Protestant population of the Free State, ‘docile’ [Stewart, 2001; p.172]

LAGGAN PRESBYTERIANS AND HOME RULE, 1880-1916.

Speaking in 1912, the industrialist William Herdman, whose textile factories were a source of employment for men and women in Sion Mills, Co. Tyrone, described his factory as being located 'at the edge of darkness.' [Rosenbaum, 1912] The opposition in Ulster to the Third Home Rule Bill in the second decade of the twentieth century was vehement, calling forth ghosts and fears that could only be laid to rest by the exclusion of Protestant Ulster from Ireland under rule from a Dublin parliament. What Herdman failed to note in his support for exclusion of the Protestant North from Home Rule, was that there was a Protestant population in Co. Donegal which had the same institutions and communities of loyalism and religion as those that he considered could only be defended by the Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

The 1870s marked a decade of controversy. The movement to secure fairer treatment of tenant farmers became popular under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt. Under the 'New Departure', Parnell secured the support of the IRB for the Irish Parliamentary Party by combining Home Rule with land agitation as a means of creating a militant, political mass movement, ultimately aiming to secure an independent Ireland. In 1881 a land act, part of the constructive approach of the Liberal prime minister, W. E. Gladstone, to land reform in Ireland, initiated a process that was ultimately to transfer the bulk of Irish land from the landlords to tenant proprietors. In 1885 the Irish Parliamentary Party secured eighty-five seats at the general election, and Gladstone was persuaded of the need to concede Home Rule. The following year his Home Rule Bill was heavily defeated in the Commons.

Home Rule was only restored to the British political agenda when John Redmond led the Irish Parliamentary Party to win eighty-four seats in the general election of 1910. Their

support now became crucial if the Liberal party were to remain in power. Asquith, the Liberal prime minister, introduced a Home Rule bill which passed the Commons, but was defeated by the Conservatives in the Lords, thereby giving a two-year period for a campaign of resistance. The Ulster unionist leaders, Edward Carson, and James Craig, now led an anti-Home Rule movement, which drew together unionists and Protestants in opposition. The Solemn League and Covenant, signed by almost 250,000 signatories, pledged to use all means to defeat it. In 1913 the Ulster Volunteer Force was founded to defend the Union by military means, if political opposition failed. The following year the Irish Volunteers were founded by nationalists in response to the UVF. The outbreak of the First World War led the British Government to suspend the Home Rule Bill for the duration of the war, and John Redmond urged the support of the war effort. A minority of Volunteer dissenters formed an alternative force, and, infiltrated by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, led an insurrection on Easter Monday, 1916. The Rising was almost entirely confined to Dublin, where P. H. Pearse read a proclamation form the steps of the GPO, declaring a new republic to be established. Pearse surrendered after five days, and fifteen rebels were executed under martial law. The reaction of the public, originally hostile, turned to sympathy following the executions.

This period also saw a renewed enthusiasm for Ireland's Celtic cultural, literary, archaeological and historical heritage. In 1884 the Gaelic Athletic Association was founded by Michael Cusak, with Archbishop Croke of Cashel as its first patron, to promote Gaelic games. 1892 saw the founding by Douglas Hyde, of the Gaelic League, to revive the Irish language as a national vernacular. These cultural forces found their fulfilment in the founding of the independent Irish state in 1922,and the resources of the state were directed to the reinstatement of Irish national culture.

The shifts in the course of the political fortunes of the nation can be traced in the history of Laggan Presbyterianism. In 1880 the minister of Letterkenny Presbyterian Church, Mr.

John Kinnear was elected MP on the basis of his activities to support land reform. He did not stand for re-election in 1885, but became part of the growing campaign against Home Rule, and was a leading voice in Presbytery and at local demonstrations. The Donegal Protestant Board of Education was formed in 1891 to provide Protestant education in Raphoe. In 1901 a new Roman Catholic cathedral, named after St. Eunan, was opened, in 1906 a school for boys was established. A.G. Lecky published The Laggan and Its Presbyterianism in 1905 and his In The Days of the Laggan Presbytery followed in 1908. In the same year the Letterkenny to Strabane railway opened. Opposition to Home Rule continued to mount, and church services and rallies were held to sign the Solemn League and Covenant in September 1912. Sir Edward Carson held an anti-Home Rule rally in Raphoe in October 1913. Many families in the Laggan were bereaved through losses in the First World War, particularly in the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

This section seeks to describe the Presbyterian community of the Laggan and the ways in which it sought to express its political and religious identity in response to Home Rule legislation. Political developments will be traced which show a move from concentration on tenant rights, to an almost total concern with opposition to Home Rule. The cultural and religious concerns of the Presbyterian community will be shown to be vital in the shaping of education and school provision, and the experience of Presbyterian women will be described, as women began to expand their role in the life and work of Laggan Presbyterian society.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE LAGGAN

Introduction

Meeting in the town of Raphoe in April 1861 the Presbytery of Raphoe listed the congregations, and number of families attending, under its jurisdiction: Alt, Ballindrait, Ballylennon, Carnone, Convoy, Donoughmore, Newtowncunningham, Raphoe and St.

Johnston. These congregations had a combined membership of 1370 families, or households, and paid a total of £472 to the ministers installed in these charges. [M R P, 9 April 1861] The boundaries of the neighbouring Letterkenny Presbytery meant that the congregations in Manorcunningham and Letterkenny, at the centre of the Laggan community, fell under the control of a Presbytery whose area of responsibility stretched to the west of the County.

Reviewing the state of religion among the Presbyterian people five years later the Presbytery were in a self -congratulatory mood: attendance at public services was good, attendance at prayer meetings continued to keep up. Sabbath schools were well attended, copies of the Word of God and religious periodicals circulated freely. Mission collections were on the increase. On the negative side it was noted that 'there was a good deal of carelessness and even apathy'. Concern was voiced that 'one half of the families of their respective congregations live in neglect' of the duty of family worship. There was comfort in the fact that 'immoralities connected with the vice of intemperance have largely decreased.' [M R P, 9 April 1867]. In conclusion to their report of the state of religion the Presbytery resolved to express their gratitude to 'Almighty God for the measure of success with which it has pleased him to crown their humble efforts', to desire to be 'humbled because of their short-comings in duty' and to 'lament that there are still those in each of their congregations who are careless and prayerless'. Finally, the Presbytery resolved to 'enjoin it on ministers to bring the subject of Revivals on the of growth of grace' frequently and prominently before their congregations, and on Elders to 'exercise diligence in visiting those who absent themselves from ordinances, and in bringing the discipline of the church to bear on transgressors'.

While the Presbytery of Raphoe had responsibility for affairs in local congregations, it was also part of a larger system of church courts and structures, which had been shaped and moulded by political and social events in Ireland. The previous fifty years had seen the

formation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, bringing together the 292 congregations of the Synod of Ulster and the 141 of the Secession Synod. This newly united church contained approximately 650,000 Presbyterian people [Barkley, 1959; p.51]. The Presbyterians of the Laggan were affected by the controversies which swept the church concerning higher education, the financial support of ministry and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the growing spirit of evangelicalism which climaxed in the revival of 1859, participation in the Temperance movement, all of which brought about what one historian of Irish Presbyterianism has called 'the triumph of Evangelicalism ', which 'gave a fresh impetus to Protestant and Presbyterian self-understanding as a people apart'. This, it can be claimed, 'underpinned Ulster Presbyterian opposition to Irish Home Rule and gave Unionism a quasi-divine legitimacy.' [Holmes, 2002; p.19]

Through regular reports from ministers, Visitations of congregations, and the hearing of complaints against elders and members, the Presbytery of Raphoe maintained a rigorous supervision of the life of the Presbyterian community. The Kirk Session of each congregation maintained a watchfulness for moral orthodoxy, ensuring that Reformed behaviour was the standard to which ordinary Presbyterians were held accountable.

Stephen Gwynn, author and Nationalist MP for Galway, commented on life in Donegal in the 1870s: ' The Presbyterians were strongly middle-class farmers and shop keepers, the gentry were without exception of the Irish Church; and the gentry rules the county absolutely with the assistance of the rectors.' [Gwynn, 1926; p.19]. It was in the 1870s that change in Irish society began to occur which resulted in political forces being drawn up which 'have remained basically unaltered ever since' [Walker, 1989; p.xi] During the decades of the 1870s and 1880s changes in the franchise and party structures, as well as the 'rise of popular and rousing issues, the population at large became involved in electoral politics to an extent not witnessed previously.' [Walker; 1989; p.xii]

POLITICS

Kinnear, and the new politics in Donegal

The 1871 Presbyterians accounted for 10.6% of the population of Donegal. Roman Catholics comprised 75.7%, the Church of Ireland 12.1% and Methodists 0.8%. In the years between 1832 and 1868 the parliamentary representation for the country had been controlled by the conservative Conolly and Abercorn families. In these years there were only two electoral challenges, both unsuccessful. Thomas Conolly and the marquis of Hamilton had succeeded family members in their parliamentary seats, and both had their main homes out of the county. They were regarded as Donegal landlords.

In the 1870s the Liberal party sought to overthrow the comfortable control of the Tories. In the 1874 election Conolly had only forty votes to spare over the Liberal candidate Tristram Kennedy. Conolly's death in 1876 caused a by-election, when a local solicitor and Presbyterian elder, William Wilson of Raphoe stood and had over one hundred votes more than his Liberal opponent. Soon, though, another Donegal by-election was to bring about further change. The general election called by Gladstone in April 1880 gave the opportunity for Liberal candidate Thomas Lea to build on his successes in the 1879 election. In 1880 when he stood for re-election his fellow candidate was Mr. John Kinnear, minister of Letterkenny Presbyterian Church. The recent agricultural depression and long running concern about the tenure of land, had brought about a rearrangement of power in the County. With the victory of the two Liberal candidates 'no aristocrat and no major land –holder was ever again to contest a parliamentary election in the county.' Lea and Kinnear had 'fractured the old political mould' [Tunney; 1995; p.677].

John Kinnear had been installed as the minister of First Letterkenny congregation on 27 December 1848, at the age of 25. His path to the Presbyterian ministry had been moulded by the pastorate of his father in the congregation of Lower Clonanees in Co. Tyrone. The young Kinnear had shown promise at primary school, but was refused admission to the local grammar school, Dungannon Royal School, because of his dissenter background. He was eventually admitted to the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and completed his course for ordination there, under the supervision of his local Presbytery. He was licensed to preach in Dungannon in November 1847 and, after a year, preceded to his life-long oversight of the Presbyterian congregation in Letterkenny. In 1874 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Washington and Lee University in the United States, having toured some of the famous churches and spoken from influential pulpits, gaining 'commendation for his learning, eloquence, and interest in human affairs'. [Bewglass, 1972; p.184]

From the early years of his pastorate Kinnear showed himself to be a pastor of great energy, raising £2,000 for the purchase of a manse and the renovation of the church building, which was over 200 years old. His energies were also engaged in local movements to improve the system of tenant rights, and to ensure a legal basis for the 'Ulster Custom', which permitted a more secure holding for tenant farmers, but which had no basis in law. Gladstone's First Land Act (1870) had not addressed the issues of arbitrary eviction and rent increases, and had been opposed by the landlords. Unrest and agitation had increased, the Land League had been formed in 1879, and in Donegal the combination of poor weather in 1879 and the failure of traditional seasonal labour markets in Scotland, led to 'a crisis… of general social dislocation in the county.' [Murphy, 1981; p.139]

During his Parliamentary career Kinnear spoke on matters of temperance and education, but his main interest, and his main speech, concerned the Land Law (Ireland) Bill of 1881.

The Biograph and Review of March 1881 remarked that Dr. Kinnear 'appears in the House of Commons in his ministerial garb, and generally occupies a seat just below the Treasury Bench…when he addresses the House his remarks always receive attention and consideration.' [Biograph, March 1881; p.257] Kinnear's speech of 16 May 1881 on the Land Law (Ireland) Bill was received with acclaim and was published as a pamphlet and widely circulated. The speech itself was simply structured and addressed the need for legislation, the provisions of the Bill, and the defects he detected, which he urged the government to remedy. Throughout he demonstrated that he spoke with an intimate knowledge of Ireland, especially the province of Ulster: 'I can testify to the universal desire for a full and fair settlement of the question that pervades the entire province of Ulster…' His knowledge was up-to-date and personal, and he claimed insights regarding the desire for reform of land- holding that included all sections of the population and which 'pervades the thoughtful of all classes and of every denomination.' [Kinnear, 1881;p. 8] Turning his attention to the provisions of the legislation, Kinnear supported the extent to which the Ulster Custom of free sale, fair rent, and security of tenure were provided for. He peppered his comments on the Bill with information on rents and numbers of tenant farmers from 'our own county of Donegal'. His support for tenant farmers was not separated from his religious convictions: ' In the gloomy past, humanity could only stand aghast and weep, but now, and thanks to Him to whom vengeance belongeth, philanthropic power is risen, and is marching on, carrying justice and mercy in its train.' He advised the introduction of a tribunal, 'independent of land lord control, to fix the fair and equitable rent'. He also argued that the legislation should make provision for the purchase of land by even the smallest tenant farmers, as 'it is a sound principle that to increase the number of proprietors is to increase the security and the value of property'. This proposed land purchase provision would be for the benefit of both the government and the farmer: 'Encouragement will be thereby given to a

class, poor but industrious and frugal, and the value of the tenant's interest in the soil should be considered a full and adequate security to the Government.' The emigration provision of the Bill was criticised in favour of a 'comprehensive scheme of migration', so providing for 'reclaiming the vast uncultivated wastes of Ireland.'

The defects of the Bill to which Kinnear pointed included a lack of protection for leaseholders, again based on his knowledge of Donegal farming, where 'multitudes of this class are to be found'. He objected to the 'London Companies and their abnormal presence in Ireland'. These, he argued should be removed, their land sold, together with all encumbered estates, as these landlords 'cannot even approximately discharge the primary duty of all property'. Kinnear also remarked that there was no reference to absentee landlords, 'who are annually draining to foreign lands millions of hard earned rents from Ireland'. Kinnear remarked on the conduct of the opposition, who 'fail to come up to the gravity and the importance of the occasion.' He warned,' If they refuse now to aid in settling this question, I cannot but stand amazed at the political blindness of landlords and tremble for the consequences.' [Kinnear: 1881; p.16] The reform of land- holding 'constitutes the very basis of Ireland's loyalty and peace.' It was too important a cause to let vested interests dominate:

> In Ireland now the old landmarks of sectarian discord are unavailing to keep the people disunited on this land question, and I would respectfully urge the House to follow the path opened up by this Bill, for diffusing righteousness and humanity, and for appeasing the discontent of the hundreds of thousands of oppressed Irish families. [Kinnear: 1881; p.15]

Although Kinnear's speech on the Land Bill was made during his second year as an M. P., his further three years in the House were marked by few contributions to debate. In 1882 and 1883 he made one speech each year, one on railways and the Arrears of Rent Act, and in 1884 he spoke on Poor Law matters once, National Education once, and concerning a promotion in the Royal Irish Constabulary. In 1885 he spoke on the operation of Letterkenny Quarter

Sessions, and the treatment of farmers in Venezuela. Kinnear's contribution to debate may not have been voluminous, but the Presbyterian newspaper The Witness remarked that he was ' an earnest advocate of temperance, tenant right and everything that tended to advance the cause of religion, and civil and religious liberty.' [Witness, 16 July, 1909]

While Kinnear's contribution to the life of Parliament may have been modest, the rate of political change at large was not. By 1885 electoral reforms made re-election almost impossible for Kinnear. One study of Ulster politics remarks, 'the number of voters increased by nearly 180% between 1884 and 1885; the percentage of labourers and Catholics among the electors grew considerably.' [Walker, 1989; p.177] In Belfast The Witness remarked, 'It seems to us that the great question before Irish, and especially Ulster constituencies in the present electioneering contest is the maintenance of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland.'[Witness, 13 November 1885]. In east Donegal, Kinnear's constituency, the Liberal candidate Arthur Lea was defeated by the Nationalist Arthur O'Connor by 4089 votes to 2992. In Ulster the election produced 16 Conservative and 17 Nationalist MPs, nationally 18 Conservative and 85 Nationalists were returned for Ireland. [Walker, 1989: p.219].

In Donegal prior to 1885 the National League had made little impact. During 1885 the organisation grew considerably, with Roman Catholic clergy setting up and leading local branches. A selection convention was held in the National League Hall in Letterkenny, with 53 clergy and 176 lay representatives from 48 branches present. Public support had been raised by a series of meetings held through out the county. Speaking at a rally in Glenties William O' Brien, MP and founder of the United Irish League, remarked: ' For centuries the enemies of Ireland have had it all their own way. Here in Donegal, you and your fathers before you lived in perpetual terror of your lives, terror of eviction, terror or starvation…You had no body to speak for you…Well, these days are gone—thank God for it, and the day of

the people's power has come.' [D J, 21 September 1885] The outcome of the election was that 'unionism and nationalism had become very largely identified with religious division and all the social sectarian and sectional interests associated with the two religious groups'. [Walker, 1989; p.225] Despite the active support of conservatives for the Liberal candidate, and the efforts of the Duke of Abercorn to encourage a liberal-conservative union, poor organisation and inactivity led to the defeat of Lea and the beginning of a new era of representation for east Donegal. In the General Election which took place in the following year O'Connor again secured victory over the retired army officer Capt. T. B. Stoney from Raphoe, with 3972 votes against Stoney's 2551. After the election O'Connor claimed in the Derry Journal he had the support of 250 Presbyterian voters, although he produced no evidence to support his claim [D J, 9 July 1886]

Presbyterians and Home Rule.

Presbyterians in the Laggan observed political developments keenly. In Raphoe the Presbytery met on 9 February 1886 and Mr. W. Russell, and elder from Raphoe, called the attention of the Presbytery to the fact that 'almost all the Presbyteries of the church had passed resolutions condemning any change in the law that would tend to weaken the union consisting between this country and Great Britain'. He also asked if the Presbytery would take any action, but after discussion and debate, 'it was resolved not to take any action at present' [MRP, 9 February 1886]. In Letterkenny, the Presbytery had taken a very different attitude. Meeting six days earlier, the Presbytery with Dr. Kinnear among their number, passed a series of resolutions regarding forthcoming Home Rule legislation. They were unanimous in defending their ' civil and religious liberties, rights and privileges' which they believed would be compromised by this proposed legislation. The Presbytery feared that

‘supremacy in all matters pertaining to religious education and civil administration ’ would be in the hands of people of ‘one class and creed’, that no guarantee could be given for the ‘very large and loyal Protestant minority’ in the country, and that the policies of the Land League and the National League, which the Presbytery considered responsible for the ‘lawless intimidation, disaffection and disloyalty’ evident in the country, would be continued in government. The concern was expressed that home rule would detract from the ‘exceptional treatment’ which Ireland received, and that the new arrangements for government would leave them on the ‘same footing as the other portions of the United Kingdom.’ As well as expressing concern, the Presbytery reaffirmed their loyalty to the Crown and the Union, and prayed that ‘God would guide our statesmen with His unerring wisdom for the promotion of the ‘ best interests--social, civil and sacred-- of our beloved land, and the furtherance of His cause of truth and righteousness through its borders.’ Faith and politics, church and government, became one cause to be pursued with all devotion. The Presbytery resolved to send their resolutions to leading statesmen, and that they be read in ‘all our congregations on an early Sabbath.’ [M LP, 3 February 1886]

The Letterkenny Presbytery also took to the national stage, resolving with three other Ulster Presbyteries that the Moderator of the General Assembly be requested to convene a special meeting of the Assembly to consider the present state of the country. [MLP, 1 March 1886] Dr. Kinnear was, again, present at this meeting. The special Assembly, meeting on 9 March in May Street Presbyterian Church in Belfast, the largest church in the city, had such a large attendance that the Clerk of Assembly was not able to report the number present at the Constitution of the Assembly [B N L, 10 March 1886]. The Moderator conducted solemn opening devotions and explained that the Assembly had met ‘to consider the present serious state of the country, and the duty of this General Assembly in relation thereto.’ The proposed

Home Rule legislation, said the Moderator, was a ‘ subject of extreme delicacy and difficulty, requiring the most careful thought, the fullest information, the greatest clearness and precision of statement.’ [Witness, 12 March 1886] The Assembly resolved to meet in private as a committee of the whole house, to be able to debate free of Assembly procedures and the need to keep minutes of their discussion. Over six hours later resolutions were passed by the whole house that affirmed the Assembly’s ‘devoted loyalty to the person and Throne of her gracious Majesty’, deplored the ‘disrupted and lawless states of major parts of the country’, and recognised the ‘unsatisfactory state of the land question as a fruitful source of the unrest and misconduct that abounds’. The final and strongest resolution related to the policy of a ‘separate Parliament for Ireland’. Such a policy would, asserted the Assembly, lead to matters of religion, education, civil administration falling into the hands of one ‘class and creed’, and no guarantee could ‘safeguard the rights and privileges of minorities scattered throughout Ireland’. The Assembly resolved that ‘our present relation to the Imperial Parliament’ was the only way that ‘liberty of the subject in the discharge of civil and social duties’ could be properly secured. A delegation of leading Presbyterians was set up to present the resolutions to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Dublin at the earliest opportunity.

While Laggan Presbyterians played their part in the national political scene, they were also involved in local political meetings and demonstrations. On 3 March 1886 the Belfast News Letter reported on an ‘Important Meeting at Lifford’ as part of the Loyalist Campaign. It took place on the steps of the Court House and ‘many were present from distant parts of Donegal, notwithstanding the severe snowstorm prevailing.’ The gathering was presided over by the High Sheriff, and addressed by the Duke of Abercorn, who proposed the first resolution declaring that ‘the meeting, representing various political views, was profoundly attached to the Throne, and steadfastly adhered to the Union’. The Duke praised the Presbyterian Liberal loyalty that was evident among the crowd- a political viewpoint that he said the Nationalists

had wrongly claimed ‘many adherents amongst them.’ The Duke declared the ‘Liberals of the North of Ireland are just as true and just as loyal as the Conservatives…at heart they are just as true as any of us.’ He continued ‘We have met to protest against the assumption that any section of the Protestants of Ireland are adherents of Mr. Parnell. [BNL, 3 March 1886]

The Duke’s resolution was seconded Dr. Bellis, minister of one of the Ramelton Presbyterian churches, and a ‘loyal Unionist’. It was, he said, time to defend the Loyal Union ‘as being absolutely necessary to protect the interests of the loyal minority. Those who stood aloof…incurred a serious responsibility, and were only Loyalists in name.’ A second resolution protested against Home Rule in any form, and was proposed by Mr. W.J. Hanna, a farmer, and seconded by Mr. J..M. Guy, minister of Ballindrait Presbyterian Church. Mr. Guy presented himself as a Presbyterian, the representative of a congregation loyal to the core, and prepared to resist to the utmost anything in the shape of Home Rule. He said that if their statesmen failed them, the ‘Loyalists of Ireland would be equal to the emergency. They would join hand in hand, heart to heart to contend, as their forefathers had done before them—to contend against the common enemy; and God defend the right.’ He continued, ‘ Before they would allow their beloved country to be delivered up to anarchy, to treachery, to lawlessness, and impecunious sedition-mongers, they would, they must, know the reason why.’ For this, Mr. Guy received a rapturous welcome and great applause. The Derry Journal also reported the meeting in Lifford, commenting that Mr. Guy had favoured the ‘imperial parliament’ approach to the Home Rule question, concluding that ‘the interest of the minority would not be safe under a native Parliament, because every concession made to the Irish people only made them more clamorous for further and more extended concessions’. [D J, 3 March 1886] The Journal, questioned the use of the County Courthouse as the gathering point for the demonstration, asking if the building paid for by the majority of the public should have been

used for such political ends, and commented on the lessons to be learned from what it considered to be a small and unrepresentative meeting. [D J, 8 March 1886]

Renewed opposition greeted Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill introduced in February 1893. Organisation against future Home Rule legislation had not ceased in 1886. A 'Great Convention' had been suggested in May 1886, and Gladstone's 'single-minded devotion and commitment to the cause and achievement of Hume Rule' [Lucy, 1995; p. 3] convinced leading Unionist politicians, including J. A. Rentoul, unionist MP for East Down, and a member of a Donegal Presbyterian family, that a convention would be an important tool for practical politics. Thomas Sinclair, a leading businessman and elder in the Presbyterian Church, together with a former Moderator of the General Assembly, the County Grand Master of Belfast Orangemen and leading Liberal and Conservative MPs garnered support for the Convention in Britain and in Ulster. A special Convention Pavilion was constructed to accommodate the 12,000 delegates, with numbers attending from various districts across Ulster, except Co. Donegal, being reported in the press. Delegates travelled at their own expense and for those travelling from the west of Donegal attendance entailed four nights away from home. [Lucy, 1995; p.19] The proceedings at the beginning of the Convention were conducted by The Most Rev. R. Bent Knox, Anglican Primate of All Ireland, with Rev. Dr. Brown of Limavady, a former Moderator of the General Assembly reading Ps. 42. The themes of the Convention reiterated the calls for support that had been made in opposition to the First Home Rule Bill, loyalty to Crown, the threat to Ulster's wealth and prosperity, the fear of Roman Catholic domination, the threat to peace posed by the Land League, and the desirability of remaining under the rule of the Imperial Parliament. The Witness, remarked on the day of the Convention ,'Today is a great day for Ireland and especially for Ulster; such an occasion has not been seen here since the Union.' The Witness declared, 'Ulster is loyal to Britain…nothing but cold Steele will ever compel Ulster…to serve an Irish Nationalist

Administration.' The freedom for which the Union stood was the essence of Protestantism, 'the right of the individual man to worship God according to his own conscience and to Holy Scripture'. Everything good in Ulster, The Witness editorialised, 'we owe to our own hard work, our own honesty and industry'. The Nationalists had shown themselves unfit to govern and had 'latterly knuckled down to the most imperious and exacting of all tyrannies, the clericalism of the Church of Rome.' They expressed the final hope that 'on this great day nothing will be said or done by Protestants unworthy of their high privilege and holy faith'. [Witness, 17 June 1892]

Meetings in preparation for the Convention had been held in Donegal, which included significant contributions from Presbyterian ministers. At Lifford parish hall on 31 May Dr. Kinnear and Mr. A. G. Lecky spoke in favour of resolutions supporting the Convention. The Belfast News Letter reported that 'Dr. Kinnear, in the course of an eloquent speech, called upon the manhood of Ulster to show loyalty, independence and resolution, qualities, he was persuaded, would be called for before the impending struggle was decided.' [B N L, 1 June 1892]

The campaign in Donegal against Home Rule continued in 1893, with meetings taking place in several towns and villages. The Londonderry Sentinel reported a meeting in the lecture Hall of First Raphoe Presbyterian Church, with over 500 people attending. The meeting was 'marked by the spirit of enthusiasm and determination in harmony with the Loyalist traditions of this prosperous and progressive Protestant district of Donegal'. The tone of the meeting was one of 'earnestness and political intelligence'. The proceedings began with psalm singing and the meeting was presided over by Captain Stoney. Presbyterian clergy were among the speakers, as were clergy of the Church of Ireland. Mr. A. G. Lecky spoke in rousing tones, criticising 'the cruel and dangerous conduct of Mr. Gladstone', and listing the deficiencies of the Bill. He also reported the opposition of women

to Home Rule, and his experience of collecting signatures from the houses he visited. He was 'both pleased and gratified to see the readiness with which ladies in every home not only signed but subscribed'. Several other speakers added their voices of opposition to the Bill and the meeting ended with the singing of the National Anthem. The Sentinel later declared in an editorial, 'The Raphoe demonstration…was a great success and most creditable to that staunchly loyal and typically Unionist district. It would be well for county Donegal if she had more Raphoes within her boundaries.' [L S, 16 March 1893]

Two days later another 'crowded and enthusiastic meeting in opposition to the Home Rule Bill' was held in St. Johnston, in the Presbyterian Lecture Hall. The minister of the congregation presided over the meeting where clergy and 'the staunch Unionists' of the surrounding area met. Mr. Chambers, the Minster, opened the meeting by declaring that

> the creation of an Irish Parliament would involve consequences detrimental to the interests of all classes and creeds in the community, and would hand over the property, wealth, the industry and the intelligence of the country to the mercy and the control of a body of impecunious agitators.

He regarded those who had argued for Home Rule over the last few years as working 'more for the purpose of agitation than for any other purpose.' The meeting went on to declare 'un-abated loyalty to the Queen and Constitution of Great Britain and Ireland as now established, and reaffirmed the resolutions of the Ulster Unionist Convention. It also declared ' that while we cannot deny the right of the British Parliament to cease to legislate for Ireland, we utterly deny the right it assumes to hand us and our property over to our heredity and avowed enemies, and pledge ourselves to resist to the death any attempt at such abuse of power'. Other speakers rehearsed the arguments against Home Rule, including mention of the role of Orangemen in 'earnestly and solemnly' warning 'against papal aggression, anarchy and treason'. The combination of religion and politics, 'embracing past, present and future,' is part of the 'remarkably cohesive ideology' which emerged as a result of the Ulster Protestant

opposition to Home Rule. This ‘cultural bedrock of Protestant assumptions and values’ became central to ‘the emergence of a Protestant identity in Ulster’. [Hempton, 1996; p.107]

A Women’s Demonstration in Strabane on 20 March 1893 provided the opportunity for women of East Donegal, Derry and North Tyrone to unite in their opposition to Home Rule. Their meeting began with the singing of Ps. 46, and the meeting had a strong religious note. One speaker declared, ‘ Until Ireland is emancipated by the only true law of liberty promulgated by the King of Kings in his statute book, the Bible, she cannot govern herself. ’ The same speaker expressed the hope that:

> this agitation, so disturbing now, may be blessed by God specially in causing us Protestants to see our shortcomings towards our benighted countrymen and women in not presenting before them in love, as we should have done, that Gospel of Christ which alone makes His people free. When the principles of an open Bible are made Ireland’s code of government in all things civil and religious, then we shall not have Home Rule or Rome Rule, but the domination of the Lord of lords and union in our sins. [L S, 21 March 1893]

Presbyterian opposition to Home Rule culminated in a Special Meeting of the General Assembly, held in Belfast on 15 March 1893. The Assembly met ‘to consider the dangers of which our civil and religious liberties are menaced by proposed legislation, and to determine what action should be taken thereon’. The Assembly again took this meeting as an opportunity to declare loyalty to the Queen, and affirm their strong attachment to the Constitution of the United Kingdom. The Assembly listed reasons for opposing Home Rule: it imperilled civil and religious liberty, left minorities unprotected and proposed changes that had no support among Protestants. The Land Question was identified as the root of the Irish discontent. The Assembly called upon all members of the Presbyterian Church to ‘continue to cultivate forbearance, peace and good will toward their fellow countrymen of every class and

creed, and to exhibit calmness and patient reliance upon the Most High in the present crisis'. The 26 March was identified as a day of 'prayer and humiliation', when members of the church should 'entreat the Most High to avert the dangers with which the Church and the country are at present threatened, and to extend His kingdom throughout the entire land'. The Witness urged its readers not to forget the harm that would 'surely be done to Religion and Morals' by the Home Rule Bill. The editorial declares, 'There is hardly an interest of true piety, New Testament Christianity, that is not threatened and imperilled by the Gladstonian scheme.' There were certainly 'no compensating advantages that can be discerned as even probable'. [Witness, 17 March 1893]

The week before the Special Assembly the Londonderry Sentinel had conducted a survey of clerical opinion on the question of Home Rule. The paper summed up its findings as a 'Unanimous declaration against the Scheme.' The minister of Monreagh Presbyterian church commented, ' I can see no good, but only evil, and that continually, resulting from the passing of the Home Rule Bill…. my congregation are…without exception, determinedly opposed to the Bill.' Robert Beattie, minister of Convoy wished to remain part of a united British Parliament. He said, ' I would feel deeply wounded by any project of foregoing the influence of the Irish members in the Imperial Parliament.' Mr. Leitch of Letterkenny praised the work of the Imperial Parliament and doubted if an Irish parliament would bring anything but 'national bankruptcy'. Dr. Kinnear of Letterkenny regarded the Home Rule Bill as ' a measure that will utterly fail as a settlement of the Irish Question. It appears to me to be an imbecile attempt at an inversion of our time honoured British Constitution.' He confirmed, 'It will bring no peace in its train and not even a moiety of prosperity nor of comfort…Our philanthropic and social and religious institutions will writhe and stagger. ' Furthermore:

> What dare not be attempted directly, cunning craftiness will attempt in an indirect form, and educational schemes, evangelical and missionary labours, the great cause of

> temperance, the paramount institution of the Sabbath, the circulation of the Word of Life—that work dear to the devoted God-fearing man of Ulster—all these will indirectly suffer under the regime of a Home Rule government, relegated as that government would be to the least educated and the least intelligent.

A picture of Ireland under Home Rule would be ' a high capital of Satan and his peers'. He concluded that in the current situation of crisis there is only one encouragement, and that was 'verily there is a God who reigneth' he is the King of nations and the King of saints. Therefore, let Irish Christianity be calm and possess its soul in patience, and repose the issue with Him.' [Supplement, LS, 14 March 1893]

Kinnear's loyalty to Queen and country had been given a fuller expression when he preached in Letterkenny on Victoria's Jubilee in June 1887. His sermon received such an appreciative reception that it was published by request of his congregation and widely circulated. [Kinnear, 1887] The Queen's Jubilee was 'The Joy of Her Subjects', the title of the sermon taken from the text in 1 Kings 8:66. In expressing his loyalty to Queen Victoria, Kinnear was preaching out of a sense of 'duty to God' and acknowledging the 'overpowering plenitude of blessings by which her reign has been distinguished'. In the course of his address he recounted some of the 'great and manifold things God has done …for our country', which include the blessing of civil and religious freedom confirmed in 1688, freedom from 'the terrible scourge of war'. God had also preserved Ireland from 'the sore judgements of pestilence and earthquakes', and he acknowledged that it had 'seldom...known the reality of famine'. The religious situation under the Queen was mentioned at length, since the 'degree of civil and religious liberty as render this British Empire (is) the admiration and envy of mankind.' Chief among these was 'the translation and free circulation of the Scriptures in our own language'. Kinnear could not think of any advantage that had not been bestowed on Queen Victoria's subjects:

> we cannot but be profoundly persuaded that nothing could have been done that the Lord has not already done for us, in the abundance of His providence and His grace.

Kinnear regarded his life under Victoria's reign as 'the happiest of circumstances that I have been born a British subject, and I live in these prosperous days of Queen Victoria, and partake in the benefits of her humane and auspicious government'. We can understand why, six years after preaching this sermon Kinnear could write to a Presbyterian anti-Home Rule meeting in Belfast that he could regard it as ' the most important held in Ireland in this century.' [L S, 16 March 1893]

Towards a new political identity

The period of anti Home Rule demonstrations was significant in Co. Donegal for other reasons. During these years, 'slowly but relentlessly Catholics began to replace Protestants as the influential and dominant faction in society.' [Tunney, 1995; p.684] The Presbyterian population declined from 11.4% to 9.3% from 1861 to 1901, with the Church of Ireland population falling from 12.2% to 11.5% in the same period. The Roman Catholic population increased from 75.1% to 77.7%. With this increase in population there were also improvements in Roman Catholic educational standards, reflected in positions held in local government, the professions, commerce and business. The once dominant position of Protestants was being eroded. These changes, together with election and land purchase reforms, were 'eating away at the monopoly that Protestants had once enjoyed over the primary economic resource'. [Tunney, 1995; p.685]

This period of social, political, economic and cultural change saw what has been described as ' the crystallisation of a provincial mentalite which drew upon a distinctive Protestant culture' [McBride, 1996; p.7]. This attempt to construct a cultural myth to support the idea of Ulster particularity can be interpreted as 'an expression of the Presbyterian pride in their own

cultural distinctiveness and of the sense of moral righteousness which had long characterised the Presbyterian community in Ulster…' [Walker, 1996; p.35] The Presbyterians of the Laggan participated in this cultural definition through the writings of A. G. Lecky, minister of the Ballylennon congregation and clerk of the Raphoe Presbytery. In 1905 Lecky published The Laggan and Its Presbyterianism followed in 1908 by In the Days of the Laggan Presbytery. Lecky wrote from 'a Presbyterian stand point' so that his readers might 'value more highly the principles of civil and religious liberty for which their fathers suffered hardship'. He described Donegal as ' dark and distant' and identified two Donegals 'an outer and an inner.' The outer Donegal he described as wholly Roman Catholic, but the inner Donegal as largely Protestant, 'largely peopled by immigrants from Scotland, whose descendants, unto this day, till the fields their forefathers then acquired, and keep to the Presbyterian principles they brought with them from their native land'. [Lecky, 1908; p.1] The planters from Scotland brought with them their faith and

> the Scriptural creed, and habits of industry, and love of liberty, which have always been prominent features of Presbyterianism, and which have, since then, helped so largely to transform Ulster from being the most turbulent and backward province in Ireland into the most peaceful and prosperous. [Lecky, 1905; p.6]

In telling the story of the Presbyterian community in the Laggan, Lecky ensured that the picture given is one of loyalty to the Crown. He described the response of the Presbyterian farmers to the rebellion of the Native Irish in 1641: ' They were at all times, and under trying circumstances, loyalists of the loyal, and when danger threatened the State, on any side, they were ever to the front.' [Lecky, 1905; p.20] When the first Solemn League and Covenant was administered at Raphoe in 1644, ministers and people alike subscribed and Lecky commented 'It is evident that at this time "Lagganeer" and "Presbyterian" were almost synonymous'

[Lecky, 1905; p.23] He supported evangelical religion and acknowledged that in ' this Laggan there were times of spiritual declension…and serious defection from the truth', yet in the balance of history 'the great body of its ministers and people were staunch and true in upholding the doctrines and constitution of their church, and in contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' [Lecky, 1905; p.75]

While the Presbyterians in the Laggan were participating in the birth of a new culture, larger forces were at work in the world that also impinged on Donegal society. The 'growing menace of European war' contributed to a 'cult of discipline, training and mastery of arms which swept Ireland…in the last years of the peace'. [Fitzpatrick, 1996; p.382] In the Laggan this militarist spirit was exhibited in the Ulster Volunteer Force, an outgrowth of the numerous drilling parties that had been gathering at Orange Halls to prepare for defence against Home Rule. The Orange Order, which had previously mainly been strong in the south of the County, had established a presence in the Laggan by the turn of the century. When, by 1910, Home Rule had again come to the centre of the political stage, Orange Lodges had been organised in St. Johnston, Newtowncunningham, Carrigans, Monorcunningham and Raphoe, and an Apprentice Boys association was well established in Convoy. The Lodges became a rallying point for opposition to Home Rule and 'the brethren began to drill and train in large numbers'. [Haddick-Flynn, 1999; p.322] The resulting Ulster Volunteer Force was supported by Edward Carson, leader of Ulster Unionism, on the grounds that previous mass demonstrations had made little impression on the Government's policy of perusing Home Rule. The culmination of UVF activity in Donegal took place on 2 October 1913 when a formal review of Volunteers took place at Oakfield Demesne, Raphoe. Sir Edward Carson, accompanied by leading Unionists and landowners, addressed 1500 Volunteers who had travelled from all over the County. The platform party included Church of Ireland clergy and F. C. Wallace and A. G. Lecky, ministers from neighbouring

Presbyterian congregations. Carson assured the Donegal Volunteers that on the matter of opposing Home Rule, 'you know that you and I have made up our minds that we are going to see this thing through together.' Carson addressed the particular situation of Protestants in Donegal:

> I am indeed gratified at this splendid turnout because I know you are turning out in a county where, though in a great minority, nothing has ever for a moment inclined you to swerve from your allegiance to our King and the old flag.

Carson also emphasised the unity of the Volunteers:

> it is in districts like Donegal, where you are to a large extent in many places scattered and isolated, that it is even more important than anywhere else that you should be banded together.

Their mutual support would be enforced by their united conscience. Nor, should the Donegal Volunteers feel separated from the Unionists of the rest of Ulster. Carson assured his hearers in Raphoe:

> …how ever isolated you may be out there, remember that round you there are friends and comrades bound by the same Covenant that you are bound by, and believe me, those friends and comrades who are perhaps more happily situated than you are can never, and will never, desert you.

He also encouraged them on their drilling and preparations for armed defence of the Union, 'Let us slacken no effort to bring our force to the greatest possible state of perfection.'

Leading Unionists also addressed the Donegal loyalists who had gathered in Raphoe, as the dignitaries returned to the home of the Duke of Abercorn, the Volunteers returned to their homes in Ramelton, Convoy, Ballindrait, Myroe, Castlefin, Mulroy, St. Johnston, Donegal, Stranorlar, Ballintra, Killaghtee, Inver, Brady, Artigarvan, Donemana, Castlederg, Ballyshannon, Newtowncunningham, Carrigans, Rossnowlagh and Londonderry. [L S, 4 October 1913]. The Belfast News Letter congratulated those who had attended the Raphoe rally as being 'as steadfast as their comrades in other parts of this loyal province in their

resolve to preserve their rights under the Imperial Parliament.' The Donegal Volunteers 'welcomed their leader and assure him by their presence and discipline that they will be a useful and loyal part of the Ulster Army if it should be called into action'. [BN L, 3 October 1913]. The Derry Journal, voicing the opinion of those favourable to Home Rule, was less congratulatory, describing Carson as 'the Chief Bluffer', bringing with him his 'circus' of supporters. The Journal estimated the crowd as no greater than 'three or four funeral corteges combined' and regarded the review of volunteers as 'well over the borderline of the ludicrous'. [D J, 3 October 1913]

Earlier in the year a police report of the activities of the Donegal Volunteers had also questioned their ability to participate in any military opposition to Home Rule. A local sergeant reported, ' I cannot find here that these clubs have any defined plan of campaign and I think many persons join because there are led to by leaders to do so, without knowing what is really expected of them'. The report goes on to comment on the 'very bitter feelings against home rule' by the great majority of Protestants, but that the ' friendly feelings that genuinely exist between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants' would prevent them from taking military action. [Murphy, 1981; p.197]

The strength of Protestant feeling in Ulster had been demonstrated the previous year by the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant. The massive support of the Covenant, with almost 250,000 people signing it, indicated that, not only had it voiced the feelings of 'Protestants of all ranks' [Beckett, 1966; p.428] but that 'the stakes Ulster was playing for were higher' than the rest of Ireland [Foster, 1989; p. 466] In Donegal 8,300 men and 8,730 women signed their respective Covenants, representing 'a major organisational effort by the entire community.' [Tunney, 1995; p. 688] The Protestant churches played a leading role in supporting the Covenant both nationally and locally [Holmes, 1982]. Presbyterians had provided the leaders of a Anti-Home Rule Convention in February 1912, meeting in Belfast

[Walker, 1995], and in the Laggan Presbyterians organised opportunities for signing the Covenant at church services and on church premises. Notices appeared in the local newspapers giving times and places of services, and the Moderator of the General Assembly published a letter to all Presbyterian ministers urging them to set aside 22 September 1912 as a day of humiliation and prayer, that Presbyterians might offer prayers to God 'for the blessings we need and the deliverance which we humbly seek in His name and for His glory'. [B N L, 9 September 1912] Sir Edward Carson had visited Londonderry on 20 September, and addressed a large rally of supporters in preparation for signing the Covenant on Ulster Day, 28 September 1912. Local rallies had also been organised, including a gathering in the Lecture Hall at Second Raphoe Presbyterian Church, where 'an enthusiastic meeting of the Unionists of Raphoe and the districts of East Donegal …met to protest against the Home Rule Bill'. Clergy of the Church of Ireland and neighbouring Presbyterian congregations supported resolutions that were proposed by visiting politicians. Banners that had been hung at the Convention in Belfast decorated the meeting hall. A. G. Lecky of Ballylennon stated his belief that ' the Covenant would be unanimously signed by the Unionists of that district'. He added:

> The men who fought behind the Walls of Derry must have been largely recruited from the Laggan district and he believed when called upon the people of the Laggan today would show their adherence to the principles for which their forefathers suffered more than they today could expect to suffer should the worst come.

David Wilson, Raphoe solicitor and Presbyterian elder, said 'it behoved all Unionists and especially those in Donegal to sign the Covenant, and to show to Englishmen and Scotchmen the tremendous body of opinion in Ireland against the Home Rule proposal'. The evening

ended with J. C. Wallace, minister of Raphoe proposing a vote of thanks to the speakers and leading the meeting in singing the National Anthem. [L S, 28 September 1912]

Church services in the Laggan were held on Ulster Day in St. Johnston, Letterkenny, Manorcunningham, Carrigans and Raphoe. The service in Raphoe was held in the Church of Ireland Cathedral, involving a congregation 'large beyond all expectations'. Presbyterian ministers from Raphoe and Convoy joined with three Church of Ireland clergy to lead a service where 'all were of one heart and mind, joined together before a common mercy seat.' Following the service the congregation, joined by others, signed the Covenant where they pledged,

> in solemn Covenant, throughout this our time of threatened calamity, to stand by one another in defending ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship…using all means necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland.

In the event of such a parliament being established, the Covenant signatories promised 'to refuse to recognise its authority ... in sure confidence that God will defend the right…' [B N L, 20 September 1912]. The separate Women's Covenant associated the 'loyal women of Ulster, and loyal subjects of our gracious King' with the uncompromising opposition of the men of Ulster to Home Rule, was signed alongside the Solemn League and Covenant at meetings.

The Witness had published information about services and places where the Covenant could be signed, emphasising that the issue was religious, but clearly there were political implications. The Moderator of the General Assembly had declared, 'There are two nations in Ireland, differing in race, in religion and in their sense of national and civic responsibilities;

the fusion of the two is an absolute impossibility.' The Witness added,' If Ireland should be separated from Britain, Ulster should be separated from Ireland.' [Witness, 4 October 1912]

In their preparations for armed resistance to Home Rule, and their willingness to support it, the Laggan Presbyterians, along with their brothers in arms, were not put to the test. The outbreak of the war against Germany in 1914 prevented Home Rule from becoming a reality. There were, however, ample opportunities to display loyalty to King and country. Sir Edward Carson called on all men who had enrolled in the Ulster Volunteer Force, to enlist in the service of the Crown. The men who had formerly comprised the Ulster Volunteer Force were formed into the 36th (Ulster) Division, and underwent extensive training in Co. Down and in Donegal. At Finner camp men from working class Belfast encountered life in rural Donegal, the two Donegals that Lecky had described, colliding: a soldier writing home once recalled:

> We halt one day beside a house well off the beaten track, and go to explore the place. The primitive state of the dwelling amazes us. A woman appears, apparently in a state of terror, and we ask for a drink. She has no bread but proceeds to make scones like pancakes, baked on a flat affair over some burning twigs in the open hearth. Not a word does she say. Has she heard of War? Probably not. Maybe she thinks this country is invaded.' [Jeffery, 2000; p.148]

In May 1915 the Ulster Division marched through Belfast, on their way to Sussex, and France in October.

At home republicans were furious at the postponement of Home Rule. The Irish Volunteers and men of the Irish Citizen Army seized a number of buildings in Dublin and declared an independent Irish Republic on Easter Monday 24th April 1916. The Rising was swiftly put down and military tribunals condemned insurgent leaders to execution. The

Rising took place largely in Dublin when 'there seemed no hope of victory for the Allies' and much was pinned on an offensive being planned for the early summer along the River Somme. [Bardon, 2001; p.454] In the first two days of battle on the Somme 5,500 men of the Ulster Division were killed or wounded. At home in Ulster the 'Protestant community would never forget the terrible sacrifice that had been made.' [Bardon, 2001; p.456]

Political reaction to the executions of the leaders of the Rising forced the Irish Parliamentary Party to press for the immediate implementation of Home Rule. Ulster Unionists, negotiating with Lloyd George, agreed for the first time to accept the offer of the exclusion of the six northeastern counties from the home rule area. On 12 June the Unionist Council, the alliance of Unionist bodies that had co-ordinated opposition to Home Rule, agreed to abandon the three Ulster counties with nationalist majorities. Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan were sacrificed to ensure a Protestant majority in the six remaining counties of Ulster. Ronald McNeil, a member of the Council reports, 'It was the saddest hour the Ulster Unionist Council ever spent. Men not prone to emotion shed tears.' [McNeill, 1922; p.249] The decision, re-affirmed at a Council meeting in March 1920, would leave the Protestants of these three Ulster counties to fend for themselves when the new Irish state would come into being. The Presbyterians of the Laggan, who had rallied for the cause of the Union and the Crown were sacrificed by their co-religionists and political allies, for the sake of a Protestant Ulster, just as surely as the 36th Ulster Division had been sacrificed at the Somme, and the leaders of the Easter Rising at the firing squads at Kilmainham Jail. When the Presbytery of Raphoe met in September 1916 they passed a resolution of profound sympathy with Mr. & Mrs. Lecky of Ballylennon on the ' death in action in France on 16 July 1916, of their only child, John Lecky, Second Lieutenant', and commended them to the 'tender compassion of him who in the affliction of His people is afflicted'. [M R P, 5 Sept. 1916]

Martin has observed, 'In the last resort, what made Ulster "different"-- both in definition and degree-- was neither its drumlins nor its proximity to Scotland, but its Protestantism.' [Martin, 1999; p. 83] The history of the involvement by Laggan Presbyterians in opposition to Home Rule demonstrates that they defined themselves as Ulster Protestants. Political involvement before the Home Rule legislation of the 1880s was centred on agitation for land reform. The political career of John Kinnear of Letterkenny up to 1885 focused on the land campaign and improving conditions for tenant farmers, under a broadly Protestant government. With electoral reform and the demise of Irish liberalism, the focus of political life for Presbyterians became the defence of the Union with Great Britain. Politicians marshalled arguments of every variety but the Presbyterians, previously united with their Roman Catholic neighbours to fight for tenant rights, viewed their religion, their faith and their Church, wedded to the cause of the Union. The political border came into existence with the creation of the new Irish state, but what the history of the Laggan Presbyterians in this period demonstrates is that 'the Irish Border long ante-dated Partition…it was firmly in existence a third of a century before Partition…' [Edwards, 1999; p. 243] Laggan Presbyterians participated with ease in the political and religious dimensions of opposition to Home Rule legislation over a 30-year period. Having allied themselves so strongly to the fate of Unionism, they were abandoned when in, 1916, after 'all the tearful rhetoric had subsided', they were 'served notice that their brethren in Belfast and eastern Ulster would look after themselves.' [Jackson, 2003; p.171] With the partition of Ireland Laggan Presbyterians found themselves on the wrong side of what Herdman had called the 'edge of darkness'. As a new era in Irish history dawned, Lecky's 'Loyal Lagganeers' had a new country to live in and a new identity to create.

PUBLIC RELIGION

'Impressively Pathetic': the religion of John Kinnear (1849-1909)

'Undoubtedly it was the Presbyterianism which the settlers brought to Ireland which gave their communities cohesion and permanence. The structures, doctrines and discipline of Presbyterianism contributed to their self awareness as a distinctive people—a people of God.' [Holmes, 1988; 101] The religion which the Planters brought with them to their new home in Ireland did not remain static, for their new context in Ulster brought change and challenge.

The religion of Laggan Presbyterians undoubtedly had an influence it had upon their community. John Kinnear offered his parishioners a religion that was Biblical, intellectual and doctrinal; he was a controversialist in the sense that he defended orthodox Calvinist teaching against the errors of modern theology and emotion. He drew his examples in preaching from the Bible and urged a faith lived within the community of faith and under the direction of the church. He was a firm believer in the temperance movement and the life of prosperity and confidence that it promised. In his personal affairs he displayed the fortitude and consistency that he encouraged in others.

In contrast to the ' indigenous tradition of popular revivalism in Ulster' [Hempton & Hill, 1992; p.146] stands the confident and respectable religion of Irish Calvinism. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland was encouraged to 'modify the tenets of orthodox Calvinism' by the vivid experience of religious enthusiasm. In the revival period not 'all the theology which was taught concerning the assurance of faith was orthodox' [McKee, 1990; p.53]. In determined opposition to 'mere religious excitement domineering the propensities of men' [Kinnear, 1898], stood the orthodox preaching of Rev. John Kinnear. He was 'strongly attached to the principles of the early reformers and was greatly opposed to the new theology, and to all that appeals to the emotions without instructing the understanding.' [Witness, 16 July 1909]

In 1880 when Kinnear was in his prime as a public figure and regarded as a leading figure in the Presbyterian Church, a visitor to Letterkenny recorded impressions of his conduct of public worship:

> He wore no pulpit gown. He preached for 50 minutes without manuscript, and very earnestly. The sermon was one of a series extending over four years. The service lasted nearly two hours. His voice is clear, and though loud yet agreeably sonorous, and his manner indicated a man intellectually master of his work. The large church was well filled, and I was pleased to see the rapt attention of the entire congregation all day, and the deep solemnity that pervaded them. [Weir, 1960]

Kinnear regarded preaching to be 'the most solemn, and I trust, the most blessed course' a man could follow. He believed in 'an educated and Christian ministry…avoiding the extremes of absurdity and superstition', with each minister exhibiting the 'peaceful serenity of men of God'. The preacher was to make 'the Word of God your daily study' he was to be a man of prayer, and to carry out his work in his 'own sense of that responsibility (which) should enforce your ministerial duty'. Preachers should 'buckle on the armour of God' to be able to 'denounce the newer theologies', for it was through 'the teaching of the pulpit (that) the battles of the Lord are still to be fought.' In addition to teaching, the preacher must also 'be an evangelist', which would be made possible through 'our Presbyterian organization, apostolic as you know it to be…'

The preacher, according to Kinnear in 1887, had many enemies with which to contend. 'These' he said, ' are days of loose thinking and careless speaking'. He listed 'sentimental fancies…aestheticism…infidelity and scepticism… and the spirit of irreligion…' as 'agents of the god of this world' which 'sweep along like a desolating scourge, …diffusing their moral poison, and sowing seed of error and immorality and crime'. The faithful minister was to 'carry a message from God to sinners,' to be ' an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity'. They were 'really and radically to teach the people as the commission of the Master requires'. [Kinnear, 1887].

Kinnear was able to bring together his pastoral concerns, with his political position, in his opposition to 'the great national evil' of drunkenness. In Parliament he spoke in support of 'Sunday closing of Public Houses' and the 'righteousness of the universality of doing so', and called upon the Church, at the General Assembly in June 1882, 'through its various congregations…to sustain our hands by flooding in petitions in its favour to Parliament.' The temperance question was 'one of the vital questions of the day' and it was to him a 'Joy that Ulster had been ever to the front on this question.' Kinnear consistently taught that the church had a vital role to play 'As a great evangelical Church we must labour on warning the people against those temptations that are sure to seduce into crime and degradation and vice.' The Christian pulpit had a vital role also: ' our pulpits are powerful engines for good…' [Kinnear, 1882]

Temperance was a cause that he supported through out his ministry, arguing against the 'loathsome Golgotha of intemperance', but it was his calling to 'an educated and faithful ministry', which was his abiding concern. Reflecting on his work of over fifty years of Christian ministry he says: ' I have been long persuaded the chief business of this kingdom is to persuade men "We beseech you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." ' It was his conviction that the Kingdom of God 'comes in the silent exhibition of truth…it is internal…' This was 'no mere transient emotion', but a 'feeling calm and abiding, entering into every concern of life and into all the exercises of religion…' He was able to speak of his own faith in the terms that his hearers would recognise ' I know God as the father of my Saviour, and as my own God, boundless in His loving kindness and gently attractive in His tender mercy…' His family had known tragedy by the loss of his wife and children through infection and disease, yet he was able to affirm, 'save when the angel of death so frequently visited my family, my home has been one of prosperity and brightened my own love for my Master's work.'

The work of the preacher had an important part to play in the work of God, for ' by the spread of the Bible, and the clear and faithful preaching of the Gospel, the Saviour shall be known in every clime and to all people…' Indeed, in Kinnear's own time God 'has made wondrous strides in the fulfilment of this prophecy'. Through the work of 'Christian Mission…He is shaking the territory of Islam, China, India ' and the 'whole Christian community (is) labouring to create a more healthful and humane practise even beyond the circle of the Church's adherents.'

His own part in 'unfolding to you the Master's message…the most sublime of topics, had been a source of great pleasure'. His life and ministry had been the result of the guiding hand of God. In a sermon entitled 'The Providence of God Illustrated in the Succession of Christian Ministers' preached on the occasion of his forty sixth year of ministry, following his father's 54 years, Kinnear said '...like Solomon, must I acknowledge that the promise and Providence of God have all my live lived in union together, the one attracting and winning me.' [Kinnear, 1894] It was the duty of the children of God to 'meditate on Divine inferences', both in terms of his general Providence, and in his special Providence. Our family and 'the prayers and pious example saintly counsel of a godly home…' Together with the 'essential work of the Spirit in effecting our personal illumination' is the same power that 'raised Christ from the dead '. Providence is the power that 'leadeth onto salvation', it is 'all pervading, some times dark and mysterious, but always judicious and vigilant.' It was this 'impressively pathetic' Providence that surrounded him at the time of centenary celebration. Past providences 'encourage the soul to anticipate those that are new and future'; they 'let us abide in the security of His pledge that His promise shall not fail'. [Kinnear, 1894]

Kinnear practised what he preached in relation to the duty of reflection on the Providence of God. Preaching at the 'Close of the Jubilee Year of a Presbyterian Minister' in 1898, he began ' This reviewing the past our gratitude is roused, seeing that we ourselves have been

guided and sustained in all our way through the past fifty years.' This duty of reflection had a corrective influence:' if we properly reflect, we will find enough to prevent our thinking more highly of ourselves that we ought to think.' In his years in the ministry he had seen ' the progress of society, earnest Christians striving to drive back the swelling and cursed tide of drunkenness, and varied forms of corruption…', but he had also seen' a cloud of indifference' and the errors of 'Christian Scholarship', 'Higher Criticisms', 'Cultured Learning', which were 'maiming the word of truth (and) unsettling the faith of many…' People came to church, ' to the House of God to be fed, to get solid food needful to their souls, to be confirmed, yea, strengthened with the truths of the old Gospel…' Here Kinnear was referring to what one historian has called 'a challenge to traditional notations of biblical authority and …a paradigm shift in the…theological task.' [Holmes, 2006; p.371]

In his pulpit ministry Kinnear had 'tried to illuminate the Gospel in accordance with our measure of capability'. It had been his aim to:

> build solidly on the divinity and atonement and resurrection and intercession of the Son of God, on the plenary inspiration of His world, and the full and free Gospel He has given to the children of men—that Gospel embodied in the Bible, summarised in the Decalogue, epitomised in love to God and man, developed in the standards of Presbyterianism, and cherished in the affections of all who have seen its beauty and felt its power. [Kinnear, 1898]

The bulwark in his preaching had been the Westminster Confession, which has had a central position in Irish Presbyterianism since the formation of the General Assembly [Thompson, 1981; p.15], although not always without contention [Barkley, 1991; p.181] It was 'a standard of faith' from which could be obtained 'a clear and systematic conception of sacred truth.' It was a faithful guide because 'the spirit of the Bible permeates it, and provides sound doctrine and declares every great truth of the Gospel of Old.' In celebrating the 250 anniversary of the Confession, Kinnear affirmed its continued usefulness to the church, so that 'the young shall not be ignorant of the first principles of godliness' or ' disarmed (of) a chart and compass in their earthly pilgrimage.' Kinnear had preached a series of 220 lectures

on the Westminster Confession and the Catechisms, beginning in November 1876 and continuing 'with comparative regularity' until August 1884. It had been ' a pleasant and edifying labour.'

The sermon preached after his retirement in 1901, gives us an insight into the 'impressively pathetic' nature of Kinnear's religion. He gives us a picture of ' my pleasing experience of the piety and religious attainment of your ancestry'. These members of the congregation he had ministered in were 'bright and blessed specimens of the power and plenitude of the grace that made them what they are.' He gives us short portraits of an old woman sitting at home reciting Bible passages for comfort in the face of illness, a woman alone after domestic work had left her exhausted, a man able to 'enter on the meditation and the application' of the Psalms on his own experience, another man who 'had his mind impressed with the word mystery', and who Kinnear felt had a mind capable of 'the higher walk of a public Christian believer'. Other individuals mentioned were those who had experienced hardships, illness, and who could trace 'the miraculous power of the Son of God', a man 'whose mind was much exercised on the Providence of God.' Kinnear himself was influenced by the 'work of Grace on your ancestry'. After an interview with one parishioner he 'arranged that I would hence forth daily read five chapters of the Bible. This has been my daily labour through fifty- one years of public life among you'. In the case of each individual cited he claimed he was 'able to trace their spiritual change to the word of truth, or the ministry of the Gospel', and he offered their examples because they 'have lessons for and offer stimulus to, intelligent Presbyterians throughout all our land'. [Kinnear, 1901]

Official Religion: the Visitations of Presbytery.

The closing ‘commendation’ of the Presbytery Finding in Ballindrait provides a picture of the religion to which the Presbytery aspired for all the congregations under its care

> …the Presbytery earnestly exhort all the people to be constant in the cultivation of every Christian grace…that the heads of families order their households in the fear of God, training up their children in the fear of God, seeing that there are regular in their attendance at Sunday School and at public worship, that all remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy , not forsaking the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is. [M R P, 18 May 1922]

Here we find the serious urging of faithful church attendance, bringing up children to respect the patterns of religious life of their fathers and elders, all framed in language that echoed with the tones of the Bible. It was a religion that valued authority, tradition, restrained public and private devotion, order and simplicity.

The Book of the Constitution and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, published by the authority of the General Assembly, gave the Presbytery ‘superintendence of all matters relating to doctrine, discipline, and order, in the several congregations under their care’. [Book of the Constitution, 1868; par. 107] The Presbytery exercised this duty of superintendence through a programme of Congregational Visitation, the procedure for which was established in 1868, and remained unchanged until the 1950s. An investigation of Visitation public questionings of office bearers, and written Finding, gives us an insight into the officially sanctioned religion of Presbyterians in the Laggan.

The Presbytery was required to Visit each congregation ‘at least once in seven years’. [Book of the Constitution, 1868; par. 198], but in the Raphoe Presbytery the pattern of Visitation assumed a nine or ten year pattern, due to the small number of ministers available, and the occasional vacancies which occurred. The pattern was quite consistent, with the Presbytery taking this duty very seriously. Meetings were held for the sole purpose of Visitation, while on occasion lengthy business sessions could follow. The congregation was invited to be present as minister and office bearers were asked prescribed questions, and

congregation members were asked if they agreed with the answers provided. Members of Presbytery had the right to ask additional questions if matters of concern arose.

Each Visitation began, after a report that preliminary arrangements had been completed, with an interview with the minister. At the beginning of the period there is a sense in which the minister of the congregation was viewed as a separate observer of the life of the congregation. At St. Johnston in 1893 the minister reported, ' I believe a large proportion of the members of the congregation are good God fearing people, drunkenness is rare, with some there is a want of devotional spirit. A small proportion are apt to be carried away by any novelty in religion.' [M R P, 10 Oct. 1893] Two years later the minister of Ballindrait reported on his congregation that he 'did not know of any violation of the fourth commandment' and that the general state of religion was 'decidedly in advance of what it was 20 years ago, as evidenced by more attention being given to spiritual concerns'. [M R P, 5 Nov 1895] In 1892 the minister of Raphoe reported 'slight progress among older members; among the young a decided advance, many take a hearty interest in the affairs of the congregation, in the Sabbath School and in the cause of temperance'. He explained the difference in the numbers of families that attended worship and the number who gave financial support by saying,' the difference was caused by the fact that many were so poor that they were unable to pay anything.' [M R P, 10 May 1892]. At the following Visitation in 1901 he recorded an observation of a different kind: ' we feel encouraged by the state of religion in the congregation…We have a good many earnest Christian people, but many are far from being what they should be.' [M R P, 5 Nov. 1901] Ten years later the comment had a more resolved tone: ' Have good and bad, piety not as bright as it ought to be…' [M R P, 18 May 1911] The minister in of St. Johnston in 1912 commented, 'There is a large proportion of good people…drunkenness has largely diminished…State of religion is hopeful. I am optimistic on the whole.' [M R P, 16 May 1912]

As the century progressed, notice of the work and contribution of elders increased. In Newtowncunninghman in 1910 the minister commented that the elders were ‘men of temperance and promote peace’ and the Presbytery commented that the Kirk Session ‘ co-operate zealously with the minister in the oversight of the congregation’.[M R P, 19 May 1910]. Following the minister’s return from duties during the First World War, the Kirk Session of Newtowncunninghman were congratulated on the conduct of their duties, ‘ the interest of religion in the congregation in no wise suffered during this interregnum…Session zealously co-operates with their minister…’ [M R P, 21 May 1919]. Generally, comment on the work of the elders was favourable, with the Ballylennon elders being congratulated on their ‘ good counsel and advice to the careless.’ [M R P, 3 November 1896]. In Ballindrait the Presbytery commented on the ‘diligence with which the members of Session and Committee attend to their respective duties.’ [M R P, 21 May 1914]

The questions to the elders about the work of the minister were answered in a way that showed appreciation of the minister. One exception to this accepted state of affairs, and an example that demonstrates that the procedure of Visitation was an effective way of exercising oversight of the congregations, occurred in Raphoe in 1921. When asked if the Kirk Session was satisfied with the work, life and character of the minister the elders replied: ‘We are satisfied with his life and character, but not with his work.’ When questioned about his answer they replied, ‘ he gave us no information regarding this meeting and if further cause of complaint is needed we would give it.’ When commenting on this reply the Presbytery said ‘they are sorry to find that serious friction exists in the congregation’, and since this was a ‘grave matter’ they ‘refer the whole matter to the Synod’. [M R P, 11 October 1921] The matter was later resolved when the minister Mr. Meek, retired on ground of ill health [M R P, 1 November 1923].

A concern that was consistently expressed by Presbytery from the 1880s, and indeed, to the 1950s, was the practise of 'Family Worship'. Visitations of each of the congregations recorded concern of the demise of worship, conducted by the head of the family, in the family home. In St. Johnston in 1893 the Presbytery urged 'more careful observance of family worship'. [M R P, 10 October 1893]. Nine years later the Visitation recorded the comment from the minister of the congregation that he 'found family worship observed in some places where one would not expect to find it, but I fear a considerable number neglect their privilege.' The Presbytery 'affectionately urge on all who are living in neglect of family worship, to set up a family altar in their homes'. [M R P, 5 November 1902] A decade later the Presbytery took a firmer tone in their comment on family worship:

> they would affectionately and earnestly urge upon all the members of the congregation increased attention to family religion and a more general observance of the constant duty of maintaining the worship of God in their households…' [M R P, 16 May 1912].

In 1921 the Presbytery 'recommend to the heads of families for use in their homes the book of family prayers published by the General Assembly, and also that a Sabbath School library be provided'. [M R P, 19 May 1921]

The booklet Prayers for the Family had been published by the Sabbath School Society in 1905 and contained morning and evening prayers for eight weeks and prayers for special occasions like first day of the year, before Communion, birth of a child, when a member of the family is leaving home, sickness in the home, recovery from sickness, seed time, harvest, baptism of a child. The preface states that the prayers were 'not meant to take the place of free prayer, but rather to give temporary help to those who lack the confidence necessary to begin this sacred exercise'. [Barkley, 1961; p.120] By the 1940s concern for family worship was expressed in urging ' the use of a system of Bible readings and a book of prayers as an aid' to family worship. [M R P, 20 May 1947] By the early 1950s the Presbytery still 'regretted that family worship is not universally observed' and stressed ' the value of regular

Bible reading for those seeking to follow in the footsteps of the Master'. [M R P, 19 May 1953]

A similarly consistent concern for Presbytery in all its supervision of each of the congregations was the matter of church attendance. At the beginning of the century comments could be found that indicated that the Presbytery were content with the level of church attendance. In Newtowncunningham in 1900 the Presbytery remarked, 'people attend with so great regularity and diligence on the ordinances of public worship and on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.' [M R P, 6 November 1900], and in Ballindrait in the 1930s commented 'the people in general "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and attend with commendable regularity on the services of the sanctuary.' [M R P, 25 May 1933] By 1941 changes in church attendance had taken place and the Presbytery urged a change of heart: they 'would exhort the members to a better attendance on public worship and the sacrament of the Lord' s Supper.' [M R P, 19 May 1941] By the end of the 1950s the comment was more particular: ' Attendance at public worship would be improved as the average is less than one per family.' [M R P, 22 May 1958] A more pointed comment was made in a neighbouring congregation in 1942:

> Presbytery notes with some concern the smallness of the average attendance at the Sabbath services. It feels that members of the congregation should make an effort to improve their position here. It urges them to a greater diligence and a more loyal support of their minister in this most important part of christian life and witness. [M R P, 21 May 1942].

In Ballylennon the admonition of the Presbytery bore fruit, as a later Visitation remarked 'attendance at Communion and the ordinary services of the sanctuary is fairly good and the spiritual tone of the congregation is quite good.' [M R P, 15 May 1951] In Convoy congregation church attendance in the 1950s was described as ' satisfactory' [M R P, 19 May 1953], by the 1960s it represented ' a low average attendance' and the people were called upon 'to remedy this defect.' [M R P, 5 October 1965] By 1975 concern was expressed that

‘an average attendance at Sunday worship at not even one member per family.’ The Session were urged to ‘keep and eye on Communion abuses…with possible retraining for lapsed Communicants’. [M R P, 22 March 1977]

The Presbytery’s supervision of work among young people developed in a particular direction, moving from participation in Sunday School, to supporting a variety of youth organisations. Raphoe congregation was congratulated for the ‘success with which the Minister and Sabbath School teachers are training the youths of the congregation.’ [M R P, 10 May 1892] In Convoy the Sunday School was praised for catering ‘ for the needs of the young’ who ‘ are diligently instructed in the Sabbath schools’. [M R P, 17 May 1917]. In the Visitation of Ballindrait in 1922 the hopes of the Presbytery for young people was expressed in their urging families to ‘train up their children in the fear of God, seeing that they are regular in their attendance at the Sunday School and at public worship…’ [M R P, 18 May 1922] The following decade it was noted that ‘Young communicants are asked to sign the Total Abstinence Pledge.’ [M R P, 25 May 1933] By 1953 the Presbytery noted ‘the needs of the young for fellowship and recreation are…admirably catered for…’ [M R P, 19 May 1953] Later in the 1950s the Presbytery recognised that ‘young people…must be looked to as a useful source of increased givings called for in every department of the church’s life in these days.’ At the same Visitation the work of the Boy’s Brigade was favourably commented on and it was hoped ‘that it will continue to be a feature in the life of the congregation.. [M R P, 22 May 1957]. Raphoe congregation was congratulated for ‘providing an outlet for the energies of the young’ through the Badminton Club [M R P, 3 May 1967] By the mid 1970s the need for accommodating the needs of young people in the worship of the church was recognised. In Ballylennon it was advised ‘the formation of a Children’s Church in the congregation would be useful and helpful in introducing children to the regular Sunday worship of God.’ The situation, which this innovation sought to address, was one where ‘most

children leave for home after Sunday School, rather than wait for the service which follows.' [M R P, 23 November 1976]

The appeals and memorials that were brought to Presbytery, show the functioning of the church in its system of 'courts of the church', and the oversight that the Presbytery offered to congregations through its operation of the rules of the church. The disputes, which arose over decisions made in congregations, show that congregational life could be contentious, and that problems could not always be resolved through the work of elders and ministers. Some times the disputes that came to Presbytery concerned the elders themselves, while other appeals asked for changes in decisions that the Kirk Sessions had made. When we look at these disputes we see a religious community seeking to maintain order, and to organise itself through applying Biblical and theological principles.

The disputes that concerned the Raphoe Presbytery at the close of the nineteenth century concerned the everyday matters of religion. In 1894 the Presbytery heard a complaint from five members of Ballindrait congregation whose names had been omitted from the list of those who could vote in a forthcoming election of a new Congregational Committee. The Presbytery discussed the matter and the action of the Kirk Session of the congregation was upheld. A separate appeal was also made against the election of a person who had been elected although their name had not been on the list of those to be nominated. In this case the Presbytery decided that his name should be removed from the list of those elected. [M R P, 14 August 1894] The Presbytery adjudicated on the allocation of pews lettings in St. Johnston after a dispute arose in 1896 [M R P, 16 June 1896]. The minister of First Raphoe congregation sought guidance from the Presbytery on the request to baptise a child of a member who was associated with Raphoe congregation, but whose name was still on the roll of another congregation. The Presbytery 'after consideration, directed the minister of First

Raphoe to administer the ordinance of baptism to this child in the same way as he baptised the children of the other members of his congregation'. [M R P, 2 July 1897]

The Presbytery authorised the setting up of a prayer meeting in Ballyholey [M R P, 28 June 1904], admonished an elder for using 'unbecoming language' [M R P, 5 February 1907] and heard a complaint against the Kirk Session of Raphoe congregation against their refusal to issue a certificate of disjunction. [M R P, 16 May 1918] An appeal against the Kirk Session of Raphoe congregation, which had disqualified a candidate for Committee membership because of canvassing, was heard, and the appeal denied. [M R P, 6 September 1927]

The Religion of the people.

Each congregation elected from among their membership elders, who were appointed to this office for life. The elder's duties included matters pertaining to the governance of the congregation, but more importantly, he (at least until the 1920s) had duties concerning the religious life of the people. Elders were appointed 'to watch for souls…to warn the unruly, reprove the careless, comfort the weak, and urge all to avoid prevailing errors and sins, and to discharge faithfully the duties of the Christian life'. [Book of the Constitution and Discipline, 1868; par 71] What we can see from an examination of the records of the meetings of Kirk Session is the working out in daily life of the religion, and the falling short of it, of Presbyterian people. The Kirk Sessions in the Laggan concerned themselves with questions of baptism and communion, church music and praise, behaviour of members, use of church premises, and relationships with neighbouring churches. Routine arrangements in the life of the congregation are rarely mentioned, suggesting a religion that was based on precedent and tradition. Issues that were discussed in Session meetings suggest a departure from accepted behaviour or from established patterns of religious life.

Kirk Session approval had to be sought by parents seeking baptism for their child. The rules of the Church directed that 'This ordinance shall be administered publicly, in the presence of the congregation, except in cases recognized by the Session as cases of necessity.' [Book of the Constitution and Discipline, 1868; par 418] Sessions took this duty very seriously. In Second Ray, the session met to consider a request for home baptism, but refused the application as 'no valid grounds for any departure from the teaching of the Code' was found. [Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 9 July 1882]. Later the same year they met to consider a similar request, and decided to have the child baptised 'before the session', rather than at home. [Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 8 October 1882] Following an application for private baptism the session decided that elders' from whose districts the applicants came were instructed to consult with the applicants and endeavour to get them to comply with the law of the Church'. [Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 4 January 1891] The following week an applicant was refused private baptism because 'not sufficient reason' had been given. [Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 11 January 1891] In St Johnston the Session agreed to a home baptism, 'owing to the sickness of the child', and it was agreed to organise a prayer meeting in conjunction with the baptism. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 7 December 1876]

Applications for baptism frequently became matters of church discipline. In St. Johnston a father requested baptism and confessed 'that his child was born too soon after his marriage'. After expressing his repentance, he was suitably rebuked and restored to the fellowship of the Church and permission was given to have the child baptised. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 13 July 1879] A similar request was made a few years later, this time by the mother of the child, who not only confessed that 'a child was born very soon after her marriage', and that 'she was married to a Roman Catholic'. To support her case the woman reported that 'her husband had become a Presbyterian and she was determined to adhere to the Church of her Fathers'. The Session agreed to the baptism and the senior elder gave her 'a few words of

advice and encouragement'. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 16 April 1882] In Newtowncunningham the Session received applications for home baptism from fathers who confessed ' guilt of the breach of the seventh commandment'. After suitable admonition the fathers were 'urged by all to seek forgiveness from God' and baptism was authorised. Mothers also appeared before the session 'confessing the breach of the 7th Commandment'. In one case the woman, who had been re-instated to Church membership and married, was 'admonished and leave given the moderator to baptise the baby'. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 9 May 1893] One Session heard two cases of 'fornication' at one meeting, and after confession and rebuke, both requests were granted. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 27 May 1883] At a Session meeting in Ray a mother was 'present with her illegitimate child and was willing to be subject to the Law of the Church'. She 'acknowledged her guilt and expressed contrition and was solemnly admonished by the Moderator'. The members of Session 'joined in prayer on her behalf' and after wards agreed to the baptism of the child'. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 17 February 1895] There was only one case where the father stated 'that the family was in poor circumstances…' as among the reason for home baptism. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 10 January 1897]

Ray congregation had several applications for baptism that received special attention because a 'fama clamosa' had arisen. In one case 'it was not considered advisable to grant the request'. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 26 May 1907] Later in the year the woman involved appeared before the Session, 'stated that she had been guilty of the sin of immorality' and that she ' realised the seriousness of this offence in the Sight of God and that she repented…and asked divine forgiveness'. She promised 'that in future she would, with God's help, live a purer and a holier life'. The Session declared themselves satisfied and restored the woman to the fellowship of the Church and later agreed to baptise the child. The Session later departed from their pattern of hearing the requests of parents previous to

baptism and unanimously gave the minister discretion in matters of baptism , except in cases where ‘there seems to him to be any irregularity.’ [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 12 December 1915] The Session continued to hear applications for home baptism until the 1950s [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 7 February 1925; 8 March 1959] In Newtowncunningham a different pattern of baptism had emerged in 1898, when the minister reported to the Kirk Session baptisms having already taken place. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 20 October 1898]

Kirk Sessions treated with great seriousness questions of membership of the congregation. New members from with in the congregation were presented to the Session before Communion and the new ‘communicants were examined and approved’. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 3 May 1877] The Sessions did not specify the course young people had to follow, although Ray Session did suggest that ‘new communicants attend the minister’s Bible Class for at least the preceding half year’. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 1 April 1900]. Members whose attendance had lapsed also had to appear before the Session to have their membership restored. In St. Johnston this duty was not taken lightly, one man appearing in 1884 desiring ‘to be restored to church fellowship’. The man ‘confessed that a charge affecting his moral character was true and expressed his repentance’. It was only after this recognition of fault that the Session agreed to restore him to church membership. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 24 April 1884] In Newtowncunningham this responsibility for ensuring the authenticity of membership was applied to family who had moved to Scotland. The Session agreed to issue a certificate only ‘after being satisfied that the (family) had appeared before the Session of the Congregation they were about to join, and express sorrow for their sin…’ [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 20 September 1896] A husband and wife were restored to membership only ‘after they confessed their sin and were suitably addressed’. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 3 September 1904]

While church attendance was a duty of membership, it was not addressed as a separate issue or cause for concern until the turn of the century. In 1904 Newtowncunningham Session decided 'to divide the congregation into five divisions to be in charge of an elder' and discussed 'the best means of inducing habitual absences from the Lord's Supper to pay due attention to the observance of this ordinance.' [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 22 April 1904] No conclusion was arrived at and a similar discussion took place in 1911, including ways of securing 'closer connection with the congregation of certain members…' [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 18 April 1911] The matter of attendance was also a cause for concern in St. Johnston were the matter was discussed in the 1910s, 20s and 70s, each time agreeing that 'there was room for improvement' and that the 'elders in their own districts keep in touch with unconnected families…from time to time'. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 28 February 1927]

Matters of discipline arising because of disagreements among members of the congregation were also brought to the Session for judgement. In St. Johnston in 1917, a member of the congregation was summoned before the Session to answer the charge of a woman, also a member of the congregation. The Session heard the evidence, and agreed that Rule 501 applied, which stated, 'when after the fullest investigation of a case the evidence does not appear sufficient to warrant either acquittal or conviction, the Kirk Session may stay procedure till God, in His providence shall give further light.' The parties were informed of the decision and the matter was concluded. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 1 June 1917] Ray Session on the other hand had a number of disputes to deal with. In April 1884 the session was informed of charges being brought against Samuel Leckey by Thomas Leckey, and ' approved of an effort being made to effect a reconciliation and settlement'. The following month the parties in the dispute 'agreed to the suspension of their privileges as Church members' until the matter had been 'adjudicated upon by the Session'. [Second Ray

Kirk Session Minutes, 2 May 1884] On 12 October the Session met to hear reports of ‘slander and malicious and injurious reports’ and after ‘some reasoning had’ tried ‘ in vain to bring bother parties to an understanding and to a more Christian fellow-feeling’. Having failed in their efforts they met on 26 October to hear the matter, but when one of the parties ‘had not put in an appearance, the subject therefore dropped’. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 26 October 1884]

The Session effected discipline within their own congregations when, for example in July 1911 the Session decided to summon three members of Newtowncunningham congregation ‘to answer for their conduct in disturbing the praise service of the congregation’. The session decided at a meeting one week later not to summon the members, but to write to them in connection with ‘the serious offence and grave sin of wilfully and contemptuously disturbing the praise service of the congregation’. The Session resolved ‘ to disconnect you from membership and prosecute you for brawling in church’, if they did not offer an apology, express repentance and give a written undertaking that the offence would not happen again. A deadline was given and a meeting arranged to receive the apology. The apology offered was considered unsatisfactory and it was agreed by the Session that if a satisfactory apology was not received ‘each of the defaulters be prosecuted at the next ensuing petty sessions in Newtowncunningham.’ Elders were appointed to receive the apology, which where duly signed and the matter not mentioned again.[Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 26 & 31 July 1911]

Kirk Sessions were responsible for arrangements for Communion and Sunday worship, and it was changes in these matters that resulted in most controversy in the congregations. In St. Johnston the Session received a delegation of four members requesting that ‘Unfermented Wine should be provided for the members of the congregation who desired to have it as the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper’. The Session considered the request and agreed to make

‘such arrangements as would be most convenient in the circumstances’. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 14 April 1901] The following year saw a change of mind. The Session ‘considered it undesirable to give effect to the resolution in view of the mood of animosity on the par t of the congregation which has been discovered in regard to the matter.’ [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 6 April 1902] The following year some middle ground had been found as two elders were delegated to attend the evening service to ‘distribute elements to those who had desired unfermented wine’. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 3 November 1903] In Second Ray congregation the introduction of non-alcoholic wine followed an announcement to the congregation, asking if there would be any objections to the introduction on a trial basis, ‘and should the wine not appear to have given satisfaction they would consider the prospect again of reverting to the alcoholic’. The Session agreed, after receiving only one objection, with no reason given, ‘that the best non-alcoholic wine be used at the forthcoming communion’. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 22 April 1906]. The matter was not raised again, and the introduction of ‘the new Individual Cup service’ for communion, was introduced without comment. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 28 April 1928]. In St. Johnston the introduction of the new service took place in 1919, but without the difficulty that the Session anticipated [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 23 March 1919]

In Ray congregation changes in the music used in public worship where introduced without controversy. In 1886 the congregation agreed to the ‘ advisability of starting a singing class, under some capable teacher’ and in 1893 ‘unanimously agreed to introduce the Revised Version of the Psalms into the public worship of the congregation.’[Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 7 February, 1886 & 1 January 1893] In St. Johnston the matter of the conduct of the praise did not become an issue until 1925, when the Session discussed the ‘the question as to whether anything could be done to improve the Praise part of the service both in numbers and in tone’. Following a meeting with the choir, it was agreed ‘ that this part of

the service was not so effective as it might be' and the matter was left in the hands of the minister 'to do as he thinks best.'[St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 23 January, & 1 February 1925] Within a month the question of new hymnbooks had been introduced and the elders each agreed to buy a copy for the use of the choir. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 22 February 1922] the matter was not raised again until the 1950s, when it was agreed that some measures would have to be introduced to 'helping and improving' the choir. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minutes, 6 March 1951]

The introduction of change in the musical arrangements in Newtowncunningham congregation was not as straightforward. In May 1882 the Session met to consider a memorial signed by members of the congregation in regard to the choir. The memorialists asked for the precentor to be restored to his former position, and wanted the Session to agree that 'no change should be made in his present mode of conducting the Psalmody of the Congregation'. The memorialists also recommended that 'a class for the practise of Sacred Music be formed as soon as possible'. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 18 May 1882] Some years later the Session discussed the 'question of introducing Hymns into the evening service of the church'. There was no agreement among the Session and the matter was brought to a meeting of the congregation, where they were asked to approve the proposal that ' liberty be granted to Mr. Knowles to introduce hymns in the evening service…' The vote was taken, and declared lost. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 27 April & 4 May, 1913] The following year the Session discussed the introduction of an organ for use at the evening service. It was decided to ask if any member of the congregation objected and following a pulpit announcement the minister received ' objections from four families in the congregation and from four others'. The Session agreed that 'since the objectors were so few and the proposed changes did not in any way affect the morning service they should have the organ installed in the evening service'. One elder resigned, and the change was effected. In

1915 the Precentor resigned his position and the Session, receiving a favourable opinion from the Congregational Committee, decided on 'the advisability of introducing the use of the organ in the morning service as had already been done in the evening service, we take steps to have this done at an early date'. A few months later the Session reported to the Presbytery that the organ had been introduced in the morning service 'almost without a word of dissent and that all was going as well as could be expected'. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 22 October & 26 December 1915] The transition to a new form of worship did not reflect the ' passion of the instrumental music controversy' that had led to contentious debate throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in earlier decades. [Tosh, 1990; p.141]

Political matters rarely interrupted the discussions of Session, but occasionally current events were considered by elders, and church premises became the focus of political activity. In April 1883 Newtowncunningham Session considered the Sunday Closing Amendment Bill, of particular interest to those who supported the temperance cause. The elders decided unanimously that 'an opportunity was to be afforded members of the congregation affixing their name to the petition'. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 20 April 1883] The same Session considered politics of a different kind when they agreed, at the height of opposition to Home Rule, to make the church available to their minister to preach to the members of Newtowncunningham Orange Lodge. When he asked for permission it was unanimously agreed. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 9 June 1912] Opposition to Home Rule was again favoured when the Session decided to support a memorial to the General Assembly asking for ' a clear deliverance against Home Rule'. It was again agreed to 'have this memorial placed before the congregation for signatures'. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 27 April 1913] The connection with the local Orange Lodge continued into the 1930s, when a special service took place in the church. [Newtowncunningham Kirk Session Minutes, 22 May 1938]

EDUCATION

The National School System.

The Presbyterian community of the Laggan, as heirs of the Reformation and children of John Knox, were profoundly aware of the importance of education, both for the life of the church, and for the prosperity of the community. As with many of their Calvinistic neighbours in Europe, they sought to develop 'the superior systems of parish schools' [McLeod, 1997; 38] that their children enjoyed. No effort was spared to make the opportunities of education available to the greatest number of children as was possible within the limited resources available within the rural community and the restricted provision made by the government. The religious 'imperative of spreading Bible knowledge demanded it.' [Bebbington, 1989; 69]. Education, for this religious minority, as it had become for so many others in times of change, became 'a major area of conflict.' [McLeod, 1997; 16] In the realisation that 'systems of schooling are not only shaped by society, but they in turn shape society' [Akenson, 1975: ix] the provision of education played a significant role in the political and cultural world of Laggan Presbyterians.

The system of National Schools that was announced in 1831 by the Chief Secretary of Ireland, the Rt. Hon. E. G. Stanley, indicated the Government's intention to establish schools for the education of the poor. There had been a series of commissions, the first established in 1788, but its report was never formally presented to Parliament and was not printed until 1856. This report is unique in that it was 'the first complete survey of an educational system in any English speaking country, if not in Europe' [McIvor, 1969;p. 69]. A Commission in 1824 reported that nationally there were 11,823 schools, 3449 of them in Ulster. There were 3540 teachers in Ulster, 938 of them Protestant Dissenters. In Co. Donegal, there were 376

schools, with 57 of them being classed as Presbyterian. At this time it was estimated that only 8% of the population attended school. One of the Commissioners, John L Foster reported that 'the Presbyterians are the most reading class of our population; there is scarcely one, I believe, who cannot read.' [McIvor, 1969; p.76]

The new system of national schools intended to replace the existing largely informal and fragmented provision was not greeted with an unqualified welcome. The Church of Ireland opposed the system until 1884, maintaining its own schools until then. The Roman Catholic Church's initial opposition was intensified under the leadership of Cardinal Cullen and expressed at the 1852 Synod of Thurles [Lyons, 1973; p.91] The Presbyterian Synod of Ulster opposed the system, largely owing to the exclusion of Bible teaching during school hours. W.D. Killen, minister of Raphoe in the 1830s entered the national discussion, and his opposition to the system was stated in his pamphlet, The Bible versus the Board- the Priest- and the Court of Chancery; with the subtitle 'The working of the New System of National Education, as exemplified in the history of the Ballyholey School, the parish of Raphoe in the County of Donegal' [Killen, 1835]. In addition to giving an account of his own attempts to establish a school that was in keeping with the Presbyterian view of education in his own parish, Killen articulated the general Presbyterian opposition to the system: that it was designed to produce change, that it would 'arrest the progress of Scriptural Education', and that it would strengthen the 'interests of Popery'. He criticised the arrangements for religious instruction as 'utterly futile', complained that the Board treated all systems of religion as of equal value, and remarked that it is 'frequently induced to pursue a vacillating course' and concluded that it had failed in accomplishing the proposed design of its establishment.

Opposition continued, both at the local level and through government contacts. Dr. Henry, as church spokesman, reporting to a Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1854 stated with satisfaction that the most significant objections to the system have been resolved:

the Bible was allowed to be used in normal school hours, the regulation that Patrons were to keep a register of attendance of children at Sunday worship was withdrawn; the regulations regarding text books for religious instruction were modified, the necessity for joint applications with other clergy, for financial aid , was withdrawn; clergy right of religious instruction of children of their denomination was clarified, and the mandatory exclusion of children of other denominations from religious instruction given was withdrawn. The position regarding the use of schoolrooms for religious meetings after school hours, was made clear. The church had yielded on one point that of the erection of school signs without the church connection being specified. [McIvor, 1969; p. 106]

These objections to the National school system amounted to an articulation of principles of Presbyterian education. At a later period of change, this time the establishment of the new State of Northern Ireland, the Presbyterian Church also led a coalition of opposition to changes in educational provision. The principles insisted on in the 1830s, were shown to have born fruit in the 'good service for the people ' that the National Schools provided. [Corkey, 1960; p.16] At this later time of educational opposition, the virtues of continuing Bible education in schools were stated: because of the great worth of such an education; its value in the formation of character; it provides inspiration to those struggling for freedom and social progress; that it lies at the heart of great literature [Corkey, 1960; p. 11] So, 'the principles of an educated democracy which Scotland had received from Knox' were determinedly held by their descendents in Ulster. [Corkey, 1960; p.14]

With the objections to the National School System removed, congregations and clergy settled down to supervise the schools that were drawing increasing numbers of children. Between the years 1870-1890, numbers of children on the rolls of National Schools increased by 86,000, which was a substantial achievement in a period of population decrease. Attendance was a different matter, in 1890 average daily attendance was only 59% of the

pupils enrolled, and in the years before 1920 it 'hovered around 70%.' [Akenson, 1996; p. 536]. Compulsory attendance was not introduced until 1892, a measure which was opposed by Catholic Bishops as an infringement of parental rights. From 1871 school life was dominated by an examination system that determined not only the work the children had to complete, but also the salary the teachers received.

The day-to-day management of the schools fell to the local clergy. Ministers not only employed teachers, but also supervised the administration of the school, building projects, and any fundraising that was carried out. As the Presbytery acted as the supervising body, annual reports were submitted, particularly regarding Bible instruction. Ministers arranged to visit schools under Presbyterian management, and examined all students attending. Information on the number of schools visited and the number and denomination of children examined was reported at Presbytery meetings. Vigilance was also exercised regarding the visits of clergy to schools. In 1895 the Raphoe Presbytery noted, following a report from Mr. Meek, that 'Presbyterian Children attending Ballindrait National School were in the habit of attending an annual examination on religious subjects conducted by the Rector of the Parish of Clonleigh, at which the Prayer Book and Catechism of the Episcopal Church formed part of the subject of examination.' [MRP, 16 April 1895]. The meeting decided to instruct local ministers to investigate the situation and to take ' such steps as they may consider advisable'. Presbytery oversight extended to comment on changes to legislation, the appointment of ministers as 'managers' of schools, and the inspection of schools during the routine Visitation of congregations. No information is given regarding the detail of the annual inspection of schools, other than the numbers of schools and children involved, but it is clear that the expectation for all ministers was to have a close involvement in the life of the schools attached to their parish. When a syllabus of 'religious instruction' was introduced by the General Assembly, reports were presented at Presbytery regarding the number schools

visited, the number of Presbyterians attending, and the number examined. In 1961, for example, before the amalgamation of the Letterkenny and Raphoe Presbyteries, there were 403 Presbyterian children attending 13 schools under Presbyterian management. Of these, 326 had been 'examined in religious instruction' during the year. [M R P, 5 September 1961]

The National School system was characterised by small schools. At the turn of the century more than 3/5 of schools had an average daily attendance of fewer than 50 pupils. Most National Schools were one room, one-teacher schools and 'were educationally deficient compared with larger schools having several teachers and more educational apparatus'. [Akenson, 1996; p. 536] Revolution to National Schools came, not with the advent of a new state, for 'the Irish revolution was less a revolution than a change of management' [Akenson, 2003; p.720], but with new educational thinking introduced in the 1960s. It was not until 1975 that 'the first change in the management of primary schools since the 1830s took place'. [Akenson, 2003; p.752] The introduction of the Irish Free State brought a period of co-ordination rather than reform. The churches, the leaders in education, were satisfied with existing educational arrangements. Investment in National Schools remained low. Statistics for 1960 show that 'over 40% of the Republic's primary school buildings either had been formally declared obsolete…or had been standing for 80 years or more.' [Akenson, 2003; p. 725] The focus of educational change was not on management or buildings, but on the 'recasting of the curriculum in an effort to revive the Irish Language'. [Akenson, 2003; p.725]

The Donegal Protestant Board of Education

Meeting in the Newsroom, Raphoe, on 13 June 1891, representatives of the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland began a new chapter in the provision of education for the

Protestant community of east Donegal. The meeting had been brought about because a new Scheme, drawn up by the Commissioners of Education administering an Act of 1885, had made provision for the continuance of the Ulster Royal Schools, by the establishment of a local board to provide intermediate education. In Donegal the scheme was dated 22 May, 1891, and enabled the Raphoe Royal School to continue in its former home of premises built by Bishop Foster in 1730s.

The Royal School, Raphoe had its origins in a request, made by George Montgomery, Bishop of Derry in July 1607. The Bishop, who was on friendly terms with James I wrote to the King to urge him to set up 'free schools' which would assist in the 'northern and most barbarous parts of Ulster' in 'reducing this people to civility.' While there was some delay in selecting areas which would be suitable for the support and maintenance of the proposed schools, the King directed on 30 January 1612 for Letters Patent for the endowment to be established. The grant of lands for Raphoe was not made until December 1626, when 1437 acres of arable and pastureland, and 5390 acres of mountain land, was assigned for the support of the school. The first headmaster was appointed in 1618, with the school being located in Donegal, later moving to Raphoe in the 1670s. An inspection of the school by Parliamentary Commissioners in 1788 found 20 pupils: 2 boarders and 18-day boys, of whom 5 were being educated free. A further inspection in 1807 found a total of 35 pupils. The headmaster, John Irwin, noted in 1813 of the student body, ' few of our pupils enter the Dublin University—they chiefly have consisted of the children of Presbyterians who enter at Glasgow or Edinburgh—a large proportion of the population of the neighbourhood is Presbyterian.' [Quane, 1967; p.163] An account of the school lands mentions an additional school, described as a 'scriptural school', which was attended by 30 Protestant families, while there was no provision for the 150 Roman Catholic families in the same area. Reports from the Commissioners in the 1810s- 40s often comment on the financial affairs of the school, the

management of the school lands, and the difficulty in collecting rents, with many tenants falling into arrears in 1813, and these being carried forward until the1870s. The picture of the school as a centre of learning situated in unlikely circumstances is betrayed by the headmaster, who in his 1855 school prospectus stated that 'there is no communication with the village'. The Commissioners for Education reported in 1869 'notwithstanding the many difficulties with which it has to contend, in consequence of its remote and isolated position, its small endowment, and other causes, it has, through the exertions of the present Master, been enabled to retain that character to which we have felt justified in referring in some of our former annual reports.' [Quane, 1967; p.193]. John Pentland Mahaffy, later Provost of Trinity College Dublin, commenting on the School in 1880 noted the Presbyterian 'farmers' sons come as day boys, on ponies and cars, from several miles off to the school.' He wrote 'the style of the school, which is ruder than the other Royal Schools, is perhaps suited to the class who chiefly attend it.' [Quane, 1967; p.195]

Pupil numbers in the 1880s fell from 38 at the beginning of the decade to 11 by 1888. Discussions on education in government culminated in a Bill in 1885, to regulate the various Educational Endowments then in operation. The Bill at first proposed a reorganisation of formerly endowed schools, including the funding of schools for Roman Catholic children. There was considerable opposition in Raphoe to this suggestion, with a public meeting being held in October 1885 to protest against the closing of the Royal School, Raphoe. An amended Scheme was finally enacted in 1891, which provided for a Protestant and a Roman Catholic Board, each with the duty to provide 'intermediate education' [Lyons, 1973; p. 91]. These fundamental changes coincided with a vacancy in the headmastership in Raphoe, and the new Board together with a new headmaster, took up the task of running the school in 1893. [Quane, 1967; p.200]

The Donegal Protestant Board provided intermediate education to the Protestant population in the period for 1893 to 1971, when a new school was opened under a new Comprehensives scheme. The Board's pre-occupations were not unusual for any school as there were the usual struggles with finance and employment. In addition, though, we can see improving educational standards, maintaining the involvement of the Protestant community, and negotiating the changing political context and promoting a religious ethos, were matters that regularly occupied the Board.

For the first decade of the life of the Board, the Commissioners for Education operated a scheme of financial support for schools determined by the examination success of pupils. At a meeting of the Board in February 1893 the secretary informed the members that the Commissioners required an ' average of 20 pupils, 7 of whom will be required to pass the Intermediate by examination in 1895.' [DPBE, 3 February 1893] Three years later, the Commissioner's Inspector Mr. Murphy wrote to the Board to inform them that ' the Royal School had failed to fulfil the prescribed conditions'. [DPBE, 25 October 1898] The following year, of the 60 pupils on the school roll, 16 pupils presented themselves for the Intermediate Certificate, with 7 pupils being successful, therefore fulfilling the requirements to the Commissioners.

The Board set up a 'Visiting Committee' to supervise the daily running of the school. Following an inspection in April 1901 the Committee recommended a number of changes in the practical arrangements of the school: that the roll of the school should be called every morning, that a timetable should be clearly displayed in the school rooms; that the assistant master should keep a classbook, and that an 'examination of the whole school be held, and the tabulated results submitted to the Board'. The report was presented to Mr. Bain the headmaster, who agreed to carry out the proposals, and the Visiting Committee was thanked, and re appointed by the Board. [DPBE, 26 April 19.01] A report of the Inspector for 1914

commented on ‘ the failure to pass any pupils at the recent Intermediate Examination’. The headmaster responded by commenting on the ‘quality of the pupils presented in the junior grade had been poor…owing to the long absence of Miss O’Hara on account of an accident…’ The situation was currently ‘being remedied.’ [DPBE, 6 November 1914]

Employment difficulties affected the quality of teaching provided in the school, and also brought the Board into conflict with staff members. In September 1910 the Board held a special meeting to consider the recent examination results, which had been particularly disappointing, especially in French and Latin. Mr. Bain the headmaster and Mr. Tackery, the classics master, were interviewed. Ten days later a further special meeting was held, and following an interview with Mr. Bain, the Board passed the resolution ‘that (Mr. Bain) be required to vacate his position of Headmaster of Raphoe Royal School and the residence occupied by him before 31st December next.’[DPBE, 15 September 1910] The context of the examination results was that in August the Board had provided a testimonial for Mr. Bain who was considering a position in Canada. The Board met on 22nd September to confirm their previous decision, and the following month began the process of beginning the search for a new headmaster. When an appointment was made, Mr. Bain instigated legal proceedings against the Board for wrongful dismissal and breach of contract. The case was heard on 21 March 1911 in the Londonderry Assizes, when in addition to the details of the dismissal, it was also alleged that children of Board members were in the poorly performing examination classes. The Court found that the Notice calling the meeting ‘was not sufficient to enable them to dismiss and deal with the dismissal of the headmaster.’ [DPBE, 5 May 1911]. Costs were awarded to Mr. Bain in addition to £50 damages. A Bazaar was held in Raphoe in June to raise funds to meet legal costs, which produced £572.1.10.

By the 1960s the Royal School Raphoe had over 100 pupils, but was still regarded nationally as a small school. In 1964 the Government introduced increased maintenance

allowances for schools and introduced Building Grants for schools with more than 150 students. In the case of the Royal School Raphoe there would be no benefit. At a meeting in May 1964 the Board agreed to 'register a strong protest' and showed itself will to make use of political representatives as well as the Church structures. Concern was expressed through the local TDs, as well as consulting the Protestant Secondary Schools Council. [DPBE, 2 May1964]

Although the Board was not able to provide emergency accommodation in 1969, it did have a tradition of involvement in the community. In many ways it was unlike the majority of secondary schools, managed by the local Roman Catholic Bishop, or by religious orders, in that it was managed by a group of local representatives. Among the first decisions of the original members of the Board was to 'co-opt five additional members, three Presbyterian and two Episcopalians'. [DPBE, 25 May 1892] In the 1920s this concern to ensure local support was reflected in a resolution which sought 'the co-option of additional members with a view to increasing the public interest in the School… ' [DPBE, 7 November 1924] Later efforts in the 1930s were limited because of the opposition of the Cavan Board of Education.

One area where the Board was directly reliant on local support was fundraising. The history of the Board is punctuated with financial crises. Indeed it only be in 1973 that the Board could report a financial surplus [DPBE, 12 May 1973] In 1898, after only five years in operation, the headmaster agreed to 'renounce his existing agreement' with the Board in order to clear the Board's debts. At the same time the individual members of the Board agreed to secure the debt at the bank. [DPBE, 25 November 1898] In January 1900 the first in a series of appeals was made for subscriptions [DPBE, 26 January 1900]. In March of the same year the overdraft was paid off only because the Armagh Board had forfeited £16.16.0. because of reduced numbers qualifying for the Intermediate Certificate. [DPBE, 30 March 1900] The financial year beginning in 1948 showed a 'very serious adverse balance'. The Presbyterian

Church had promised £30 per annum, and Board members agreed to 'make an appeal to the Orange Order for assistance'. [DPBE, 13 February 1948] In September of the same year the Board agreed to appoint a delegation to fundraise in Belfast and district with the hope of raising a 'substantial amount'. [DPBE, 16 September 1948] By the following May the appeal had raised £897.17.2, more than half of which would be spent on re-wiring the School building [DPBE, 5 May 1949] In the 1950s the financial concerns continued. In 1956 each member of the board agreed to raise £10 for debt reduction, and the Board agreed to make an appeal to the Orange Lodges in the County for 'something in the nature of an Annual Subscription.' [DPBE, 10 March 1956] The secretary of the Board reported in 1957 that ' normal income of the Board fell short by at least £60 of normal outgoings'. [DPBE, 4 July 1957] The conversion of the Royal School building into residential accommodation following the creation of a new school in 1972 placed enormous financial pressures on the Board. In making preparations to raise estimated building costs of £30,000, each Board member agreed 'to make himself responsible for the raising of a target figure of £1000', and it was also agreed to approach the wider church community for financial support through the Diocesan Council and the Presbytery of Donegal. [DPBE, 2 May 1970] Following the first 10 year period of operation as boarding accommodation for the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, the Board were able to report 'credit balances on all accounts, with investments of over £20,000'. [DPBE, 19 September 1981]

Concern for financial security and community participation found expression in the Board's efforts to make available scholarships to provide free places at the Royal School. In March 1898 the Board adopted a scheme that provided two scholarships worth £50 each, awarded on the results of an examination, on the condition that the pupils would become Boarders at the School. An additional scholarship was awarded to girls on the same basis, and there were also two Day Scholarships [DPBE, 25 March 1898] These provisions compare

favourably with the situation under the previous management of the school were, in 1858 only four scholarships, of lesser value, were available. [Atkinson, 1969; p. 110] These scholarships were much sought after and in one case a parent took the Board to court because his son had not received a scholarship place that he believed should have been awarded to him. In November 1908 Mr. George Lucas appeared before the Board 'in reference to a scholarship which he thought his son should have obtained'. The Board dismissed the application because the boy had not 'fulfilled the necessary conditions'. [DPBE, 6 November 1908] Two weeks after the interview, the Board received a solicitor's letter on behalf of Mr. Lucas, and in February, a delegation represented the Board at the Letterkenny Quarter Sessions. Judge Cook dismissed the case against the Board on that occasion, but the same delegation appeared for the Board when the case was heard on appeal in Lifford in May 1909. On that occasion Mr. Justice Holmes confirmed the decision of the Quarter Sessions. [DPBE, 7 May 1909]

The Donegal Protestant Board of Education had the support of clergy and congregations from both Presbyterian and Church of Ireland denominations in the provision of the Royal School Raphoe. What is perhaps less clear is the religious ethos of the School. As with the financial position of the School, the provision of religious education was a constant theme in the discussions of the Board. The first mention of 'religious instruction' in the Royal School was made at a meeting in February 1894, when the secretary raised the matter. This first discussion did not bear much fruit as the Board 'in the absence of any definite proposal … declined to discuss the question.' [DPBE, 18 February 1894] At the start of the term in September the headmaster sought sanction from the Board to 'open the school with reading and portion of Scripture and prayer every morning…' [DPBE, 2 August 1894] Following the first report of the Visiting Committee in 1901 the Board considered the ' propriety of having systematic religious instruction …' The Board referred the matter to the clergy of Raphoe,

with the headmaster to make arrangements to have a programme carried out. [DPBE, 25 October 1901] The following month the Board agreed that pupils should be allowed to attend Sunday School classes and weekday classes held by the clergy of Raphoe. [DPBE, 29 November 1901] In January 1902 it was arranged for Mr. Robert Millar, local Church of Ireland rector, to instruct 'Episcopalian children' during school hours. [DPBE, 31 January 1902] The following year Mr. Meek, agreed to teach Presbyterian students on a weekly basis. [DPBE, 6 February 1903] In February 1904, following discussion of the General Assembly's programme in Scripture, the headmaster Mr. Bain, was 'strongly recommended…to have the school opened daily with Devotional Exercises.' [DPBE, 5February 1904] The following year 9 prizes were awarded to Presbyterian students and 6 Church of Ireland students for religious education [DPBE, 3 February 1905] With the advent of a new headmaster, arrangements were made for local clergy to teach religious instruction, and by 1914 both Presbyterian and Church of Ireland programmes were being taught. [DPBE, 6 February 1914] The following year a school prize was presented for religious education, and the Board expressed the wish that 'all pupils of the School be permitted to compete'. [DPBE, 5 August 1915]

GENDER

The social context of religious change.

The records of decision-making bodies with the local church portray a church that was controlled by men. Indeed among the first mention of women in the Raphoe Presbytery minutes was a discussion at which the eligibility of women for office in the church was considered. The Presbytery discussion did not deliver a resounding endorsement of the work that women had been carrying out, for 'the numbers being equally divided on this question no

further action was taken.' [M R P, 5 November 1924] The Presbytery did speak decisively in 1930, when an overture supporting women candidates for the ministry was rejected unanimously. [M R P, 5 March 1930] Ordination to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was open to women in 1973, and until three years after this decision, the legislators for the Presbyterian congregations in the Laggan were men. In a sense, prior to 1976 the church was a man's church. But that was not the only church—there was one for women as well. These were not separate churches, but separate spheres within the same church. The role of women 'was seen as simply an extension of women's primary role in society, that of mother and wife'. [Holmes, 2006; p.85] Only gradually were the two spheres of men and women's work brought together in the church, as over the century the women's sphere was enlarged to create a space equal to that of men.

The distinctive history of women in the church has been influenced by developments in women's history and gender history in the arena of historical scholarship [Shaw, 2004; p. 103]. The achievement of these historians has been to make clear 'the invisibility of women' [MacDonald, 2000;p.2] in many historical narratives, and to confront long standing assumptions which regard men as the agents of political and cultural change [Weed, 1989], and about what constitutes nature and history [Riley, 1988]. Indeed, it has been claimed that historical work has an important role in the feminist task because it takes account of specificity and diversity in different societies and periods. [Rubin, 1975] The period under discussion in this chapter concerns a 'Christian culture (which) inherited from the Victorians a highly gendered notion of religion and piety'. [Brown, 2006;p. 69] In order to recognise the specifics of gender, class and the experience of women in Laggan Presbyterianism the concept of 'women's space' [Markkola, 2006] will be used. This concept allows issues of patriarchy, authority and the multi-faceted experience of women within the church to be examined, recognising that 'For many women, Christendom stands as the symbol of the

patriarchal power at work. For many other women, Christianity represents the cornerstone of women's emancipation.' [Markkola, 2006; p.568] The changing experience of women in Laggan Presbyterianism will be examined in its social context, and also in the context of institutional change in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It will also describe the local and personal involvement of women in the church. The story that emerges is not one of 'outrageous women', but rather a process of change from gender hierarchy to gender difference, in both personal and public life.

James Rentoul, former minister of Second Ray congregation who later had a career as an MP and circuit court judge in London wrote about public life in Donegal in the 1880s and 1890s. He remarked 'In those days…the appearance of a member of the gentler sex at any political gathering would have been regarded as almost indecent.' [Rentoul, 1921; p.18] The introduction of Home Rule legislation, and the popular opposition to it from the Ulster protestant community, was to mark one of the first public movements where women were encouraged to register their opposition. The political domain, which had been exclusively male, was opened up to women, as they were used as an 'unpaid source of labour' [Urquart, 2000; p. 3] A series of Unionist Rallies, organised by Lady Louisa Antrim, wife of the leading Unionist politician, demonstrated the significant part women were playing in the anti- Home Rule campaign. The demonstrations that took place at the end March 1893 in Raphoe, Strabane and Omagh ' provided an indication of how unionist women were becoming politicised.' [Urquart, 2000; p.49] By the end of the second home rule crisis, women's place within Unionism was defined and accepted.

Kennedy observes: 'Land, family and Church form a trinity which dominated much of Irish life at least until the 1960s.'[Kennedy, 2001;p. 6] In Ireland, a largely agricultural economy, economic activity for most families was based on the small family farm. The entry of the country into the EEC in 1973 brought the transformation of Irish agriculture, and the

demise of the small farm, with the modernisation of family patterns. Indeed, it has been argued that patterns of Irish family life are similar to that of other industrialised nations, with the exception of the later onset of economic development. [Kennedy, 2001; p. 4] A study of Irish family structure carried out in the 1930s reveals a rigid gender-based division of labour and a patriarchal authority structure. [Arensberg & Kimball, 1940] Changes in Irish welfare legislation, which provided allowances for lone parents, influences from the wider world via the media, and the advent of legal abortion in Britain following the Abortion Act of 1967, brought a very different context for family life.

Following the 1937 Constitution of the Republic of Ireland, ' the ideal of Irish women in the home was being equated with patriotism, necessary for the 'common good' of the state'. [Lambert, 2004; p.154]. This was however not the whole story. Thousands of Irish women emigrated to Britain and America, and many who remained sought to resist the 'Ecclesiastical discourse (which) explicitly tied together nationalism and Catholicism, arguing that a return to catholic standards would bring about the return of a traditional Gaelic nation. [Valiulius, 1995; p.172] By the end of the period under discussion, economic development, welfare reform, ease of travel and greater educational opportunities brought 'dramatic changes… (which have) carried women far beyond the aims of most early campaigners …'[Cullen, 2003; p.891]

Institutional Change within the Presbyterian Church

The 'contribution of women to church life was to earn deep respect'. [McCaughan, 1990; p. 115]. This contribution to the life of the church was made in terms of the support of the decisions of the courts of the Church, as women throughout congregations showed themselves to be 'the resourceful "help-meet" of Presbyterian history' [McCaughan, 1990; p.

114] This daily and weekly devotion was expressed in service to Sunday schools, local Temperance societies, and acts of private charity. Women were encouraged to serve in these spheres through the 'popular and vibrant characteristics' of late nineteenth century religion, 'to which women were particularly responsive'. [Hill, 2000; p.170] The provision of hospitality at church gatherings and public meetings, decoration of church buildings for harvest services, and collecting money for benevolent societies, particularly the Presbyterian Orphan Society, were the out-workings of domestic religious endeavour. As the Mission work of the Church developed, the Home Mission recommended that 'fully trained women be introduced into congregational work'. This decision led to the inauguration of the Deaconess Institute in 1908, and the first deaconess took up service in Belfast in November, 1909 [Simpson, 1990; p. 75] The Presbyterian Women's Union was set up in 1905, which organised discussions and lectures, and aimed to meet the needs of girls coming from rural areas to work in Belfast.The Girl's Auxiliary followed in 1911, which encouraged girls to take an interest in the work of missions in India and China. The Auxiliaries worked through congregational branches until 1975 to achieve their aim: 'Through thought, prayer, comradeship and service its members seek to discover God's purpose for their lives, and to fit themselves for the fulfilment of that purpose.'[Patterson, 1990; p. 178]

The earliest, and fundamental organisation for women within the Church was the Female Association for Promoting Christianity among the women of the East. The 'Zenana Mission' was founded in June 1873, following the meeting of the General Assembly in Belfast. The first missionary of the Association left for India in October 1874, when Miss Susan Brown, joined her brother, and took up the education of girls and 'gave much attention to the teaching of Christian women and enquirers…' [Patterson, 1990; p. 175] This Mission was to grow into an organisation that had a profound effect on the lives of many women overseas, and which transformed the home lives of its members in Ireland and the congregations of which

they were members. Over the coming decades mission education infiltrated the private sphere of the home, and stretched the boundaries of socially sanctioned notions of femininity. [Hill, 2000]

The 'unprecedented areas of activity for Ulster Protestant women' [Brozyna, 1999; p.185] provided in the work to support the Zenana Mission was supported and directed by the organisation's quarterly periodical, Woman's Work, published without a break since November 1877. This practical and at times inspirational publication wove a single thread of faith and encouragement through the lives of thousands of women throughout the church. Women were given a new 'typology of sanctity' [Shaw, 2004; p.109] as the actions of women in foreign countries were celebrated, and new ways of strengthening the religious community at home were presented.

Advice given within the first few years of Woman's Work regarding the holding of an annual sale of work found ready acceptance in Raphoe. The sale, held in February 1887, was held in support of the Presbyterian Orphan Society. 'A large assortment of goods, both useful and ornamental, was displayed, principally the work of the ladies of the congregation.' Those who attended the sale could not only enjoy the 'well-appointed refreshment table', but also a magic-lantern exhibition, a display of valuable scientific instruments and a musical programme. The proceeds of the day amounted to more than £25. [L S, 10 February 1887] The hope of Women's Work that sales of work would encourage work parties through the winter months, with the result that 'the books that are read and the prayers that are offered gather the sympathies of the workers round the Master and His mission.' [WW Oct, 1884], was realised in Letterkenny in 1893. The 'young women's guild' of the Second congregation had met through the winter and the work that they had produced ' both useful and ornamental…came to be disposed of in order that the proceeds might be applied to missionary objects'. [L S, 8 April 1893] The class had been conducted by Miss Leitch, and it

was her father, the minister of the congregation who opened the sale by conducting 'devotional exercises'. The sale also included musical entertainment, a bran dip, a shooting gallery, and a hospitality table. The report of the sale that appeared in Woman's Work stated that 45 members of the Young Woman's Guild in the congregation had met weekly throughout the winter, for 1 ½ hours, and that the proceeds of their sale amounted to £17.5.3, of which £12 would be donated to the Zenana Mission. [WW, July 1893]

Reports of women's groups holding sales of work in Donegal and St. Johnston congregations were also reported in the 1890s, which reflect the ethos of prayerful devotion to, and practical support for, the mission of the church. In Donegal the women had held monthly 'work meetings', and after each meeting the members 'took home some article to finish before the next meeting'. On the occasion of a sale of work the women decorated their church schoolroom, and provided a refreshment table and gun shooting. The proceeds of £4.11.10 were for the benefit of the Zenana mission. The writer, conscious that 'the sum appear small', was careful to state that 'it was not raised without the sacrifice of time, trouble, and money on the part of our members'. It was the women's prayer 'that God may accept our small sacrifice and make it the instrument of good in these dark and foreign lands, where the lamp of Gospel truth still burns dimly'. [WW, Jan 1894] In St. Johnston 16- 20 girls met through the winter to work for the Zenana Mission. The girls, 'all working girls', also sold their pieces of work, and were able to report that 'we have no trouble in getting it sold as we charge only the value of the article (no bazaar prices).' They reported that as a result of their meetings ' we all want to know all about (the Zenana Mission) and the meeting together makes us all the more interested in each other.' [WW, April 1894]

The following year reports of sales of work were printed, with details of the weekly meetings in St Johnston added. At the meetings Scripture passages were read and memorised, and 'Sankey's hymns' were sung while they worked. The task of keeping in

touch with the women who attended the weekly meetings did not stop if ‘any of our girls leave to go away to a situation’ as the group ‘write to absent members once a month’. They wanted to keep a ‘hold on the girls after they have left’ and their letters ‘cause them to continue an interest in missions.’ [WW, April 1895] In 1898 the Donegal women again sent information of their activities, adding a note of appreciation for Woman’s Work, especially in view of their feelings of isolation from other congregations: ‘only those in outposts, like ours, know the difficulties of carrying on work of this kind. We are so far from the centres of our Church, and never see any of our own missionaries to keep up our interest.’ [WW, July, 1898]. St. Johnston women wrote of the benefits of having a visitor to their group, reporting ‘ the interest felt in our districts is much livelier this year, partly owing to our having had a missionary from India…I know I have got largely over my usual amount of subscriptions, and the subscribers gave freely and cheerfully…’ [WW April 1898].

Leading, Guiding and Supporting.

Throughout the period under discussion, definite and practical support was given to groups of women to assist them in their meeting together. From the very beginnings of the organisation, it was made clear that success did not depend on great numbers of women meeting together. In April 1885 advice was given that ‘if a congregational association was too small’ women could meet in the Presbyterial Association with a working party from each Auxiliary’ [WW, April 1885]. Women were not to be discouraged in the early stages of their organisation. The theme was continued in later years when advice was given on ‘What Shall I make for our Sale of Work?’ Giving money was the starting point, and if there was a little time as well as a little money, then it would be possible ‘to do some trading for our Lord’. The first point was to ‘see that we make things on which we can get a reasonable profit’, the second, was ‘to make things which are really wanted’. Women were advised to ‘have variety at your sale’

and they were cautioned that meetings should be ‘conductive to happy relations between the members of the congregation, and if all are working with the sole purpose of glorifying God, there will be no petty jealousies or hurt feelings after the sale’. [WW, Jan 1908] Advice given over a decade later focused on the rationale of the meeting, rather than on the products to be made. Women were reminded that their work parties were ‘the women’s special form of activity in the Church’s great enterprise.’ Meetings could be held in the afternoon or evening, ‘to enable the greatest possible number into membership’, and the members were encouraged to ‘try to bring the new comers into touch with older members’. Those who brought women to the meetings ‘ will often discover a genuine interest where it was never suspected, and so make the Church appear a living organisation…’ Devotional exercises should follow tea, and women ‘should always have something definite before us in the way of increasing our knowledge and quickening our imagination’.

Women’s groups were also supported through the practice of sending visiting speakers to groups to encourage and bring current information to members. The offer of deputation speakers was first made in 1887, when 51 groups requested a visit. In April of that year, Mr. A W Hamilton travelled the 90 miles from Lisburn to Raphoe, where he spoke to 80 women, among them ‘ excellent secretaries and many ready workers’ [WW, April 1887]. A similar meeting 30 years later was the occasion for the election of new branch office bearers [WW, Oct 1907]. The central committee later spread its work to include visits to Presbyteries, and in 1936 the Raphoe Presbytery was the 29 to ‘have the claims of the Women’s Association placed before them’. [WW, April 1936] Three years later, Miss Harper, a missionary on leave from Manchuria, visited the women’s groups of Raphoe, visiting a number of congregations, and giving a ‘ most interesting and vivid description of her work, and with the aid of maps and photographs [women] were able to visualise a little of what the country and people of Manchuria are like’. [WW, Jan 1939] Miss Stockman visited several congregations, showing

a ‘missionary film’ in Raphoe, where ‘the lovely pictures were greatly enjoyed by a large audience representative of every congregation in the Presbytery’. [WW, Jan 1941] The following April, the Donegal women organised their own ‘Missionary Rally’ which drew women from the neighbouring congregations. As well as hearing an address on ‘Present Day Christian life in Manchuria, the local groups ‘read reports on their work.’[WW, April 1942] The practice of holding an annual missionary rally continued, with the 1963 Rally in Donoughmore being attended by 350 women.[WW, Jan 1964]

The readers of Woman’s Work were introduced to teaching skills to enable them to be more effective mission educators. In ‘A Simple Plan for Conducting a Missionary Meeting’ it was suggested that a leader or Sunday School teacher might allocate an article in the magazine to each member of their class and ask them to ‘ notice any part of it which particularly strikes her, and be able to tell about it at the next meeting’. This tactic would then allow the teacher ‘to ask each in turn what she has to tell, this will lead to explanations and amplifications on your part, and often it will give you an opportunity of pointing a lesson to be learned by all, or of illustrating some truth already studied with them in the Bible’. The women who were in these positions of influence over children were urged to ‘get your classes thoroughly interested in mission for ‘ the widening of sympathies will be of immense value to the scholars themselves’. [WW, October 1894]. A later edition of the magazine gave sample questions for women to use with children, to test their knowledge of India, and missionary personnel [WW, January 1896].

Women’s groups were given descriptions of ‘The Ideal Subscriber’ and ‘ The Ideal Collector’. The ideal subscriber was ‘a person with strong convictions, a sensitive conscience, and some consideration’. Examples were given of each of these qualities, each practical and focused. A woman with a sensitive conscience knew, for example, that ‘a new pair of gloves is not a valid excuse for an unpaid subscription’. The ideal collector should

view her task as one where ‘they are truly conferring a favour on those they go to visit, in giving them an easy opportunity of contributing to the needs of the Lord’s cause’. They were encouraged to be well informed about the work they are supporting, and the habits and customs of the houses they visit. They were women ‘free from self-consciousness, or any tendency to take offence’, for even Presbyterian congregations can contain ‘a few grumpy folk ’. Their approach was to be personal, for ‘a pleasant word will at least draw attention to the subject’. [WW, January 1901] The articles were reprinted over twenty years later because of their usefulness [WW, January 1924]

Consistent support was given to women in organising the programmes for their meetings. In 1904 a ‘new idea for meetings’ involved dressing up two women, one as a Muslim and the other as a Christian, and to have them meet and ‘have a conversation on the difference between the lives they lead’, the editor of Woman’s Work could supply questions and answers. A suggested programme for the winter months of 1911 included hymn singing and scripture reading, and members of the groups giving a short paper on ‘Early Irish Missions’, ‘The Waldenses’, ‘Changes in China’ or ‘ Native pastors and Bible-women in Gujarat.’ It was noted that ‘these papers might serve more than one occasion, as they could be lent to other auxiliaries’. The January1915 edition was given over to articles giving advice on running groups for young women, and the following year an account was given of ‘ How One Girl’s Auxiliary Does its Work’ describing the initial contact with members, ‘ chiefly factory girls, of a very lovable type’, format of meetings, details of a lending library operated for the benefit of the members, sewing and knitting projects for soldiers, and musical evenings with games. Encouragement is given to those who have full attendance, and to ‘work among the careless in our village, to get them to church-- if we can.’ [WW, Summer 1916]. Advice was given in the 1940s on ‘Meetings without a Speaker’, when ideas offered included holding Bible evenings, as ‘it is sad to see how little of it is well known to many of our people.’ [WW,

Oct 1944] Programme suggestions in 1967 included: service to the local congregation, help in personal and family life, caring for the community, outreach at home and overseas, and international and interchurch relations. The aim was to provoke lively interest and participation and the use of local talent. Dullness, sitting in straight rows, and long prayers, were on the list 'to avoid.' [WW, June 1967]

From the very outset, it was made clear that the women of the Church should be 'choosing one of their own number as their representatives, and supporting her in India or China'. This 'idea...is one which ought not to be lost sight of '. [WW, July 1889] The following year a special appeal was made to office bearers that they should seek out ' Christian women, well educated, endued with good health, good temper and sound commonsense, and on fire with love of Christ, and the souls of men, to carry the message of salvation to the women of India and China'. [WW, January 1890] The sales of work, door to door collecting, spreading of Information was all focused on this goal. The chorus 'The Missionary Penny' suggested for use at meetings in 1915, presents the goal of these missionary minded women:

Do you see this penny? It is brought by me
For the little children Far across the sea.

Hurry, penny, quickly, Thou you are so small,
Help to tell the heathen, Jesus loves them all

As we bring our offerings, we can softly pray:
Jesus, bless the children, living far away.'
[WW, Jan 1915]

The devotional dialogue 'Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By', suggested for use at a meeting of young women, expresses the inadequacies felt by the members, 'We confess...our coldness, our sloth and our selfishness. We have been much occupied with this sad war and other things that we have though little of Thy work.' The voice of ' The Master' comforts the women, 'The bitter cold of the trenches pierces Me, and in every pang of the wounded I suffer too. And My souls yearns over those in far –off lands who have never heard of My love.' The

voice of the women express the difficulties they encounter or anticipate, ‘ Some people are cold and think we only formed the Auxiliary for our amusement. And some of our parents and other wise people say we should leave the work to others who would do it better.’ But the voice of the Master comforts and encourages the women by saying, ‘ You are my fellow – labourers…bear the burdens of others, of the poor, the neglected and the sick. ‘ They were to help the existing workers of the church and to ‘let your light shine at home.’ Still some troubles worried the young women, ‘ could not angels do this?’ The Master assured them that they had been ‘ chosen and ordained’ and that ‘The joy of the lord is your strength’. [WW, Spring 1915] Biblical quotations were interspersed with the encouragements, and a gentle tone carried throughout.

From the earliest days of organisation within the Church, women were encouraged and supported to share something of their faith with their children [WW, Jan 1887], and in 1892 a regular children’s page was introduced in Woman’s Work [WW, Jan 1892]. The question of interesting children in missionary work was directly addressed in 1893, when women were given the advice to give the children ‘plenty of true stories’, they were to ‘let them have little books of tracts prettily got up, but let the story always contain the conversion or turning to God of some individual, whether a heathen chief or some boy or girl, as the case my be’. Work parties could be arranged for children, and with a little ingenuity something could be found for the boys to do, for ‘it was important to gain the boys.’ Self-denial was also suggested, ‘with the understanding that the money saved would go straight to the missionary box.’ [WW, Jan 1893] The issue was again addressed in 1906, when advice was focused on setting up a ‘young people’s association’, with the hope of having ‘the boys helping in future as well as the girls’. The meetings were to be ‘quite informal’ and as well as making objects for sale, were to keep young people up to date, for ‘ if you do not keep your society posted up with missionary news the interest will soon flag.’ The women were not to be deterred by the

difficulty of the task: ‘You are not responsible for success, but you are responsible for doing your best’, and they were encouraged to work with children as ‘their sympathies are easily aroused in anything good, and they are always anxious to help.’[WW, July 1906] Women of faith were encouraged to begin the habit of the ‘Sunday Evening Occupation’, were the mother of the family would ‘ gather the children round the big table in the dining-room’ and Sunday by Sunday guide her children to write and illustrate Bible verses, and chart the progress of missionary work in India. [WW, April 1914] Further advice was given in 1916 [WW, Spring 1916], and those involved with children and Sunday Schools were urged ‘that a personal study of the whole Book of Acts will be great help to you’ and would ‘encourage the children to know that you also are working at it’. [WW, New Year 1916]

Issues in personal development and health were brought to the attention of women. In 1917 an article about preparation for missionary service gave instruction on correct posture and deep breathing. Women were encouraged ‘let us hold up our heads and breathe deeply’. The proper mastication of food was also praised, as poor chewing was ‘responsible for much indigestion and serious illness resulting there from.’ [WW, Spring 1917] Ten years later the focus was on ‘the girl who reads’, who was encouraged to read ‘with a purpose’. A short article remarked that ‘if we do not have some end in view in our reading, when winter is over we shall only have a very vague and confused idea of all we did read’. The suggestion was Presented that women should resolve ‘to read all we can about India’. Women were ‘to look for that five letter word for’it will leap out of many pages’ and perhaps the purposeful readers would ‘shortly feel almost capable of writing a book about the Continent yourself.’ [WW, Jan 1927]

LAGGAN PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE INTERWAR YEARS.

'The Ireland that the soldiers came back to in 1918 was a very different place to the one they had left four years earlier—in fact the world had changed decisively.' [MacGinley, 1987; p.135] As war -weary soldiers returned to the townlands and farms of east Donegal in 1919, the topography of hills and rivers was exactly the same as when they had marched away. The human geography was quite different. The Presbyterian community had lost many of its young men to battle, and the political context of their lives had been redrawn by the Home Rule programme of the government. Although there were hopes that everything would return to the status quo ante bellum, there were political and military forces at work that could not be resisted by the Protestant Unionists of Ulster. This section will trace the history of the Laggan Presbyterian community in the Interwar period, and seek to explain something of the 'suddenness and completeness of their reversal of fortune.' [Lyons, 1967; p. 99]

Introduction

In 1917 Sinn Fein, won a series of by-elections. Eamon de Valera become president of the party, and in 1918 under the threat of conscription being introduced to Ireland, led the party to win seventy-three of the seventy nine seats won by nationalists at the general election. The following years saw a deteriorating security situation marked by several atrocities carried out by the Black and Tans, set up to augment the police force. The 1920 Government of Ireland Act envisaged as a settlement of the Irish political situation, provided for separate parliaments and administrations in a twenty-six county, nationalist, southern territory and a six county, unionist one in the north-east, with a council of Ireland, under a United Kingdom jurisdiction. The Act was implemented in the case of Northern Ireland, but not in the rest of the country. Following prolonged negotiations a new treaty was agreed by representatives at talks in

London and debated by the Dail in January 1922. The terms of the Treaty were endorsed by sixty-four votes to fifty-seven, upon which the anti-Treaty faction, led by deValera, withdrew. The Irish Free State was inaugurated on 16 January. A General Election followed in June, showing strong public support for the Treaty. Civil War followed when the Free State Army shelled the Four Courts that had been occupied by the anti-Treaty IRA. The anti-Treaty forces were forced from a number of urban centres over the summer, but continued to conduct a guerrilla war in the countryside, characterised by brutality on both sides. In 1923 de Valera, convinced of the futility of the campaign, brought the civil war to a close, although the bitterness of the campaign continued in political discussions for decades following.

Following the Civil War the pro-Treaty Sinn Fein party led the government of the Free State, establishing a secular constitution and a parliament with an upper and lower house. The resources of the State were brought to bear on preserving the Irish language, making a compulsory examination subject and a necessary condition for employment in the civil service. The Boundary Commission was a disappointment for the Free State government, in effect confirming the existing partition arrangements. The government did use to the fullest extent the state's dominion status to maximise independence, gaining admission to the League of Nations (1932), equality with the UK within the British Commonwealth (1926) and legislative autonomy in relation to the United Kingdom parliament (1931). On the economic front growth was neglected, and the old age pension reduced by ten percent.

During this period politicians were profuse in their devotion to the Roman Catholic Church, and to its moral teaching, borne out by legislation against birth control and divorce (1925), and by the strict censorship of films (1923) and of periodicals and books (1929), and most of all by deValera's Constitution of 1937 which was strongly influenced by Roman Catholic social teaching, and acknowledged the special position of the Roman Catholic Church as the guardian of the faith of the majority of Irish citizens. The 1920s witnessed a

substantial exodus of the Protestant population to Britain, partly in reaction to sectarian violence and the Roman Catholic climate of the State. In Northern Ireland, the Unionist government under the leadership of James Craig, set about establishing a local parliament in Belfast, and ensuring Unionist domination at regional and local level. There were high levels of unemployment as traditional heavy industry declined, and high levels of social hardship, with only scarce resources of public housing to meet the expanding need.

In 1926 deValera founded the Fianna Fail party and entered the Dail in 1927, when the party won fifty seven seats at the general election. In 1932, with the support of Labour deputies, deValera formed a government. He set about removing the remaining vestiges of the British connection. Land annuities, payable to the British government in respect of loans to tenants to buy out their holdings under land acts were repudiated, resulting in a damaging economic war. In 1937 deValera devised a new Irish constitution enshrining his conception of Ireland as a sovereign, culturally Gaelic nation, and which claimed the whole island as the national territory. The Roman Catholic Church was accorded a special position, and Catholic social teaching, emphasising the centrality of the family and the role of motherhood was reflected. In 1938 Ireland's first President was elected under the new constitution and the Anglo Irish agreement brought to an end the economic war. The British government accepted a modest lump sum as payment of the outstanding land annuities, and agreed to evacuate the Treaty ports, so making possible the Free State's neutral stance in World War II.

One of the most prominent events in church life following the First World War was the erection and dedication of war memorials. As the political situation in the country worsened, church property in Letterkenny and Convoy as well as other places were damaged or used for military purposes. In January 1922 the Garda Siochana replaced the RIC and Civil War violence was experienced in the area. The 1920s also witnessed disruption of Orange Order parades, and opposition to the exclusion of east Donegal from Northern Ireland. The

Presbyterian Church published its first Book of Public Worship, and women were permitted to be ordained to the eldership. In 1927 Patrick O'Donnell was ordained Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe and the new County Council offices in Lifford were opened in 1930. In 1938 Mrs. Bewglass was appointed editor of Woman's Work, and Lough Swilly was returned to Irish control following agreement on the Treaty ports with the British government.

POLITICS

The Politics of Betrayed Unionism.

When the Presbytery of Raphoe met in February 1919, they were pleased to congratulate Mr. Knowls on his safe return from war. [MRP, 4 February 1919]. In April 1919 the congregation of First Ray welcomed their minister, Mr. Ernest J. McKee on his return from France. Mr. McKee had served as a chaplain to the Ulster Division and had been wounded during his tour of duty. The congregation commended their minister's 'fine spirit and example', his 'Christian courage' and 'the moral strength of your comradeship'. In welcoming him home the congregation hoped he would continue his pulpit ministrations, which had been 'free from the taint of a spurious Higher Criticism' and which had been calculated ' to build-up rather than pull down', and which had 'ever been most practical and profitable'. Mrs. McKee was also commended for maintaining a 'brave front' alone in the manse. She had never 'murmured or complained' and had been ' willing to bear a noble woman's part of the sacrifice'. In accepting gifts of pulpit robes and an illuminated address, Mr. McKee thanked the congregation for their generosity, and also for their 'patriotic spirit… and their steadfast encouragement which enabled me to serve to the victorious end'. [L S, 1 May 1919] Before the concert party for the evening began, neighbouring Presbyterian and Church of Ireland clergy brought commendations and greetings from their own congregations, and a special poem written for the occasion was recited by Mr. W.J. Gallagher, a member of the congregation.

Congratulations were extended to members of the Orange Order who had returned from war at a special Boyne anniversary service held in First Derry Presbyterian Church. Mr. David Hay, minister of the congregation, took as his text 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom… I was freeborn' and linked the religious freedom gained in 1688 with that won in 1918. They, the Orangemen 'had done their part, and it is only right and fitting that we give honour where honour is due.' God had supported the men in battle and had supplied the victory:

> We thank God for the freedom of 1688 and of 1918, we feel and acknowledge that His own right hand had gotten him victory. We know that if God had been against our efforts, our struggle, and our sacrifices would have been in vain: but we went in the strength of the Lord, and the Lord has once more delivered His people, and we are here today to magnify and to praise His great and glorious name.

Perhaps with a view to the current political scene, Mr. Hay urged his hearers to 'go in the strength of our God, determined with His help, to safeguard and maintain the liberties into which we were born and which we fought to maintain'. [L S, 8 July1919]

Orangemen from the Raphoe District joined with fifty lodges and thirty bands when they attended the Twelfth of July celebration in Derry in 1919. At the gathering resolutions proposed by officiating clergy were passed thanking God for 'deliverance from Prussian military tyranny, trusting that the government would bring forward legislation what would encourage employment, the prosperity of the country and the welfare of the Empire.' The gathering also declared their loyalty to the King and their 'readiness to assist the Government in protecting life and property in Ireland' at the same time 'demanding the suppression of Sinn Fein as an illegal society, and the repeal of the Home Rule Act'. Dr. Robert Gatchell, minister of Donemana, stated that in passing these resolutions the Orangemen had 'no enmity towards their Roman Catholic countrymen.' They did demand the 'civil and religious liberty that had been won for them, and which Roman Catholics enjoyed with equal freedom.' [L S, 15 July1919] Before joining the celebration in Derry, the Orangemen of Manorcunningham

had paraded their new banner, led by the Manorcunningham Unionist Flute Band. The special train which brought them home in the evening was greeted by the ladies of the Protestant churches, who had ‘provided an excellent tea and its adjuncts’ to await the arrival of the Orangemen. [L S, 17 July1919]

Later in July, Raphoe celebrated the end of the War by holding their own Peace Day. A Committee had been formed to organise a victory parade, sports events, and a gala concert. The front of St. Eunan’s Church of Ireland Cathedral had been decorated with bunting and ‘from its tower a large Union Jack floated’. Through the energies of the Committee, and the glorious weather, Raphoe had been transformed into a ‘veritable fairyland’, where ‘Peace angels (or fairies) made their appearance.’ Miss Stony, dressed in white, played the part of nurse, other ladies paraded with tridents, to make the parade a celebration of ‘ British character’. The decorated bicycle competition drew much attention, the winning entry entitled ‘the fruits of victory’, festooned with flags, flowers and produce. ‘ Colour, freshness, majesty, grace’ were in all the day’s programme. As the day drew to a close those who had gathered from the surrounding areas were treated to bonfires, and renderings of ‘Land of Hope and Glory’, ‘God Save the King’ interspersed with ‘The Mountains of Mourn’ and other choruses. One press report of the occasion concluded, ‘The sense of the Peace which had descended white winged, “glorious and victorious” rang a heart chime, and life was stronger and purposes were heightened, because Raphoe had royally contributed to the great programme of a world peace.’ [L S, 26 July1919]

Raphoe clergy joined with a local committee to organise a social evening to honour returned soldiers and sailors. The Royal School House had been made available for the event, and decorated with banners and laurel wreaths. Tributes were paid to ‘our heroic defenders’, and 68 men received presentations of silver cigarette cases. Thanks were extended to Mr. J.C. Wallace, Presbyterian minister and Mr. David Wilson for their care of the wives and mothers

of servicemen, ‘who had tarried and looked after the children’. Mr. S. Meek, spoke of the spiritual debt that they owed to soldiers and sailors, and especially those who had died and had ‘joined the Choir Invisible.’ He commented, ‘Those who have left home or brethren, or houses for My sake shall receive a hundredfold.’ The evening continued with entertainment and supper, concluding with a heartily sung ‘God Save the King.’ [LS, 26 July 1919]

The following months were to witness more solemn occasions when war memorials were erected and dedicated. Ballindrait congregation were the first to erect a memorial tablet on 14 December 1919. On that Sunday morning members of the congregation gathered to hear Dr. James McGranahan, a minister in Londonderry re-open the church after renovations, but most importantly to have the memorial tablet unveiled. Dr. McGranahan spoke on the theme ‘The temple of Humanity’ and paid tribute to ‘the brave men who, like the men of old, went out to battle with the forces of evil and in the strength of God, overcame…’ Following the sermon, the Dead March was played and Major J. Weir Johnson unveiled the plaque. He mentioned by name those who had died, and remarked that of 72 families in the congregation, 28 members had served in the forces and seven had died. They had given their lives ‘not merely for patriotism…but because the cause of right and truth was at stake’. A guard of honour from the 1st Battalion Dorset regiment from Londonderry presented arms and a trumpeter sounded ‘the Last Post’. The service concluded with the singing of the National Anthem. [L S, 16 December 1919]

In January 1920 Mr. A Gibson, former military chaplain dedicated a memorial to the late Capt. David McCausland, a member of St. Johnston congregation. Mr. Gibson spoke of Capt. McCausland’s ‘reputation in the battalion as the bravest of the brave, the most modest of men, and white all through.’ [L S, 15 January 1920] In May 1920 Second Ray congregation held special services to mark the dedication of a new organ and the unveiling of a table ‘in honoured memory of the men of the congregation who have fallen and in grateful recognition

of those who served'. The sermon of the day was on the text 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.' Mr. David Corkey, visiting preacher said ' Though it was fitting and right that we should raise memorials to the courage and fortitude of the men, nothing on earth could make up to them for what they endured day and night.' [L S, 27 May 1920] In July, Ballylennon congregation unveiled their memorial, following a service conducted by Mr. John Knowles, and Capt. Wagentreiber of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. At the beginning of August the congregation of Donoughmore were joined by Mr. E.J. McKee and Brigadier-General Ricardo of Sion Mills for the unveiling of a war memorial. Buglers from the Queen's West Surrey regiment, accompanied by a detachment of troops were also present. The congregation stood with heads bowed following the unveiling, while the organist played the 'Dead March' and 'I know that My Redeemer Liveth' [L S, 14 August 1920] In November the former Moderator of the General Assembly and Chaplain in Chief to the British Army, the Very Rev. Major-General Simms, conducted services in First Ramelton, on the occasion of the unveiling of the congregation's War Memorial [L S, 27 November 1920] The absence of military personnel reflected the deteriorating political situation , although the congregation concluded the service by singing 'God Save the King.' When the war memorial was unveiled in First Raphoe in March 1922, the political situation had deteriorated to such an extent that the service concluded with the organist playing 'The Dead March.' [L S, 16 March 1922]

But political unease had been growing in east Donegal since October 1919. A meeting of the Donegal Unionist Association had been held in Derry at the beginning of the month when leading East Donegal Unionists expressed concerns about current political developments. David Wilson, a leading member of Raphoe congregation was joint secretary, along with Mrs. Boyd of Ballymacool, who in her speech wished to emphasise 'that there were not keener Unionists in Ulster than in county Donegal.' The main speaker for the event was T. W. Brown, Unionist M. P., who assured the gathering that he 'knew the fine spirit of manliness

and strength of purpose of the Unionists of the country and he was certain they would not be behind the Unionists of the other counties of Ulster in the present struggle.' He stated that the unionists of Ulster 'were under a deep debt of gratitude to their brethren in Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan'. He addressed the issue of their previous willingness to be excluded from the Home Rule area, but observed that this was only as a war measure, and they must now be included along with the rest of Ulster. 'The message he gave the Unionists of Donegal was the same message as he gave the Unionists of Antrim, Down, Derry, Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh: it was now time for action, now is the time for work.' [L S, 4 October 1919]

The Association met again in February 1920 to hear a report on the political situation from Major Moore, and to elect delegates to the Unionist Council. Major Moore spoke about the danger of town versus agricultural interests, and the policy of 'peaceful penetration' whereby Roman Catholics might hope to gain a majority in Ulster, just as they had in Derry. He defended the leadership of Sir Edward Carson who had always 'acted in the most patriotic and loyal manner', remembering that'a more astute, a more loyal, or a more straightforward man he had never spoken to'. The question of peace in Ireland was the more pressing question, and ' never was greater need for the organisation of their forces than at present.' Their opposition was the Catholic Church and 'the only other society that had ever stood up against it successfully was the Orange Order'. David Wilson reported to the meeting that he had been giving his attention to voter registration in east Donegal and he hoped that soon they would be in a better position to mobilise the 5000 Unionists voters in 'the Unionist stronghold of the county.' Office bearers were elected on a regional basis for the County, and the selection of the delegates for the Unionist Council was left in the hands of Major Moore, with the meeting deciding that 'it would be undesirable to bind the delegates to a certain course'. [L S, 26 February 1920]

A meeting of the Manorcunningham branch of the Association took place a few weeks later, in the Lecture Hall of First Ray congregation. The minister chaired the meeting, and again Major Moore was present. Arrangements were discussed about 'what could be done in the matter of securing a proper representation of Unionists rights in the present contingency'. A number of meetings were to be organised to 'secure a forcible statement of their position and their right to be included in the Ulster Parliament.' Dr. McKee, minister of the congregation, stated his preference to be included in a nine county Northern Parliament and said, 'We are an asset and we intend not to be put under the heel of a Southern Parliament.' Ministers of the other Protestant churches in the town were also present at the meeting. [L S, 6 March 1920]

Just as levels of political organisation among Protestants and Unionists increased, so did the level of unrest and political violence, both in Donegal and the rest of the country. The general election of December 1918 saw the transformation of Irish nationalism, with Southern Unionists holding three seats and Sinn Fein holding seventy-three. In the political violence that followed between the forces of the Crown and the IRA, 'rural loyalists were in a vulnerable position…comparatively isolated, landed property was more difficult to protect and agricultural operations were easily disrupted. Loyalist houses were frequently raided…[McDowell, 1997; p.97] Thomas Pickens, a local labourer, was on his way to Lifford to vote in the election on 18 December 1918 when he was stopped by Thomas French ,a Sinn Fein supporter, at Rossgeir and told to go home. French remarked ' Pickens you will not vote for a Unionist so long as I stand here. Go back or you will never return.' While the incident was isolated, it does indicate the strength of feeling in the County at the time. [LS, 14 January 1919]

As 1919 progressed so did political violence. The country was engulfed in conflict during the War of Independence, and then in the Civil War, until a ceasefire was agreed in May

1924. The Letterkenny company of the IRA took part in over thirty engagements in the War of Independence, even though the town was well policed by forty constables stationed in two RIC barracks. The town was also base for the Dorset regiment and a rifle brigade. Nationalist volunteers concentrated on frustrating Crown forces by disrupting railway traffic and blocking roads used for military patrols. [Roarty, 2006] Anyone who drove cars for the RIC was boycotted. These tactics were sufficiently effective by the end of 1920 to see many of the barracks in the west of the county evacuated. Black and Tans were stationed in the County, mounting roadblocks and searches for arms. In May 1921 Daniel Gillen of Ray took a loaded pistol past a roadblock, only to be thoroughly searched on the way home, after disposing of the weapon. Donegal escaped the vicious fighting seen in the South and West of Ireland, with only two Donegal volunteers being killed by British Forces in the county, both in 1921. [MacGinley, 1985; p.43]

In July 1921 a truce between British forces and the IRA was declared. 'The pathetically equipped Volunteers had befuddled the strong, well-disciplined and well equipped forces of the English colonial administration'. [MacGinley, 1985; p.44] Presbyterians in east Donegal watched with dismay as nationalist political opinion became dominant. Two years earlier military authorities had prohibited a political rally planned by Sinn Fein and 'a large detachment of troops from the Dorset regiment was sent to enforce the order.' [L S, 1 November 1919]. By August the following year divisive politics had taken over society to such an extent that a meeting of the Co. Donegal Lunatic Asylum Committee world unanimously pass a resolution which objected to ' the buttons of the Crown being worn by attendants ', and which ordered 'the removal of the pictures of the King and Queen of England'. [L S, 14 August 1920] The previous month First Letterkenny Presbyterian Church had been broken into, but nothing stolen. The building was damaged, with plasterwork being broken and wainscoting smashed and various boards being removed. Mr. Logan, the minister,

supposed this was ‘ a raid for arms’ and remarked that ‘an ignorant bigotry could make some people suspicious without any cause whatever’. The Congregational Committee passed a resolution:

> We resent and repudiate any implication that our church or church property is being, or ever has been, used for the storage or arms or ammunition or for any improper purpose. We desire to live at peace with all men, and we pray that the ugly spirit which prompted this abominable outrage may soon be exorcised from this community, whose people have always lived together in mutual friendship and toleration. [L S, 8 July 1920]

The following August much greater damage was sustained. At six o’clock in the morning a fire was discovered in the church, and one hour later, despite the presence of the fire brigade, police and army, the roof fell in and the walls collapsed due to the intense heat. Two prominent members of the congregation were able to rescue some small items of memorial furniture, but the building was largely destroyed. [L S, 1 September 1921]

The following Sunday the two Presbyterian congregations in Letterkenny met together for worship in Trinity Church, with Mr. Logan preaching on the text from the Book of Exodus ‘The bush burned but was not consumed.’ He, pronounced that along with the members of his congregation he had been:

> forced by the facts to that this country, in which we were born and our fathers have lived and toiled for generations, that this country is polluted by the presence of some creature who was capable of forcibly entering our church and deliberately burning a house consecrated to the worship of God.

Mr. Logan had received sympathy from neighbours and clergy of all religions. He ‘could not conceive of any reason for the crime.’ He concluded his address: ‘I turn from the blackened walls and pitiable ashes where so much of my life’s work lies burnt and broken. I look up to the Throne of my God. Anew I put my trust in the Lord who rulest in heaven and upon the earth.’ [L S, 6 September 1921]

During the Civil War that raged for almost two years from the Spring of 1922, Church property was occupied by armed forces on both sides of the political divide. In Convoy the

Black Memorial Hall was occupied by Republican troops. Mr. Beattie, minister the congregation, protested to the Divisional headquarters. The reply was courteous:

> Rev. Sir, In accordance with promise made yesterday I have investigated facts concerning the Black Memorial Hall and find that it has never been used for other than Church purposes. I am issuing an order for its immediate evacuation, I trust you will pardon intrusion which was unintentional on our part.' [Mullin, 1960;p. 64]

In Raphoe the Masonic and Orange Halls were occupied, together with David Wilson's solicitor's office in the Diamond, which was used as Independent regional headquarters. 'We live in a state of constant fear and dread', Wilson is reported to have remarked. [McDowell, 1997; p.125] Almost every village and town along what was to become the Border saw some sort of political activity; raids were reported in St. Johnston in January, there were repeated incidents in Raphoe involving threats to merchants, and car thefts, and lawlessness was rife. Newtowncunningham and Stranorlar were the sites of ambushes of Free State troops by Republican forces. In February 1922 attempts were made to kidnap prominent Loyalists from south Donegal, including Major Myles, MP for the area and First World War veteran. He managed to escape capture, but others were not so fortunate [L S, 9 February 1922] The murder by the IRA of Charles Burns, a Presbyterian farmer and ex-serviceman, near Milford, was brought to national attention by Sir Edward Carson. Carson saw this death as an example of the results of British policy in signing the Treaty. Quoting the words of Mr. Joseph McCausland, a local minister, Carson preached:

> How are the mighty fallen. We were promised that our country would be a land fit for heroes to live in. Yes, it has come to such a pass that it takes one to be more than hero to live with any faith and hope. You have been deserted by those you supported. [L S, 7 March 1922]

The situation had further deteriorated to such an extent that by May, the ' Loyalists of the county generally are living in a state of constant apprehension.' [L S, 4 May 1922]

The level of intimidation of Protestants in Donegal had now reached such a level that ‘ Loyalist refugees’ had begun arriving in Derry. The local Protestant newspaper published an appeal for help, suggesting that ‘the Protestant clergy of the city should meet and form a committee, with the view to doing all that is possible to succour these arrivals in our midst, and to tide them over this period of distress.’ [L S, 16 May 1922] At the end of the month the same newspaper could report that ‘the evictions of Donegal Loyalists by IRA bands from their homes and farms continue…the roll of refugees daily grows in numbers, and temporary accommodation is being provided for them by sympathetic friends…’ [L S, 27 May 1922] A few days later it was reported that refugees were being accommodated in the Sailor’s Rest in Londonderry, and in Strabane and other parts of rural districts of Co. Tyrone. [L S, 30 May 1922] The question of refugees leaving the Free State and arriving in Northern Ireland, or England, and needing aid had been brought to the attention of the Irish Provisional government by the Imperial Cabinet in London. The Provisional government, while accepting financial responsibility for the refugees, took the opportunity to raise the matter of violence suffered by the ‘Catholic inhabitants of Belfast and the surrounding counties of North East Ulster’, asking that immediate steps be taken ‘ to ensure that adequate protection is afforded to the catholic inhabitants of that area’. [L S, 1 June 1922]

Incidents of violence and intimidation along the Border continued, including a prolonged battle at the Strabane–Lifford frontier. Rifle shots were aimed at the Strabane side, but were not returned from the northern territory. Workers were not able to cross the bridge and railway traffic was affected. The Urban Council discussed the situation and it was decided to ask local clergy ‘to form a committee to use their influence in preserving life and property’. [L S, 3 June 1922] As the month progressed the official IRA troops gained ground on Republican forces, gradually forcing them from previous strongholds. Protestant- owned shops in Letterkenny and Raphoe were targets for retreating soldiers, and a curfew was

introduced from 3 August, requiring every person to be indoors between 11:30PM and 5:00am [L S, 1 August 1922] After September, the 'Civil War in Donegal was negligible, compared to other counties.' [MacGinley, 1985; p.100]

Boundary Commission: Last hope frustrated.

During the Anglo- Irish Treaty negotiations of 1921 the idea of a Boundary Commission had been suggested to Griffith and Collins to encourage support for the terms of the Treaty. Nationalist expectations were that territory world be transferred to the Free State, especially areas in counties Tyrone and Fermanagh, and possibly the city of Derry, along with areas in Co. Down and Armagh. In nationalist eyes, this would have left Northern Ireland as politically unviable. After considerable delays, due partly to political instability in the Free State and partly to non co-operation from the Unionist cabinet in Stormont, the Commission met on 6 November, 1924. It was composed of South African judge, Richard Feetham, as chairman, Eion MacNeill, minister for education, representing the Free State, and J.R. Fisher, a prominent northern Unionist nominated by the British government to represent Northern Ireland. After an initial tour of the areas concerned, the Commission had first to define its remit. Feetham took the view that Article 12 of the Treaty charged him with defining the border, not with reconstituting the area of Northern Ireland in total. Considerations of geographical and economic factors were also part of their preliminary discussions. The figures of the religious census of 1911 were accepted as a guide to the wishes of the inhabitants, on the basis that Protestants wanted to be included in Northern Ireland and Roman Catholics sought inclusion in the Free State.

Expectations of the Boundary Commission were high on both sides of the Border. In Co. Tyrone, Nationalists were convinced that their areas would be transferred to the Free State, which partly explains their lack of organisation in preparation for Commission meetings.

[Dooher, 1986; p.482]. In Donegal, Bishop MacNeely and Fr. John O'Doherty, his administrator, worked to prepare the case showing the economic unity of Derry and Donegal. MacNeely organised meetings of businessmen in January and February 1925, and hoped that even if the campaign were unsuccessful it would at least 'rebut the case of Unionists that a portion of Donegal should be included in Northern Territory'. Fr. O'Doherty gave evidence to the Commission, emphasising the economic links between Donegal and Derry [Harris, 1993; p.165]

Opinion in the Unionist community was equally strong in both Tyrone and Donegal. The representatives of Herdmans Ltd., presented arguments to be included in the Six County area based on economic considerations: connections with professional associations, the possibility of higher taxes, and the cost of living for workers. The company reported that they were the 'biggest payers of rates and taxes in Co. Tyrone' and that the financial impact 'of what we state should receive consideration from the Commission; and be duly weighed, before any change in our conditions be suggested'. But there were other reasons too:

> If we were to be torn from the Six Counties and placed under the Free State, we should be surprised if such a change were not accompanied by strife and bloodshed, to the inevitable ruin of the concern, and to the importing of religious feuds, which, in the past, have been distinguished by their absence.

Security was a pressing concern: ' It must be remembered that we are only two miles from the Border, and are open to attack from that quarter. Indeed there was a time, when we were very nervous in the respect.' [PRONI/ CAB 61/75].

Protestant hopes were high that Donegal would be included on the Northern Ireland side of the Border, even though Carson had indicated his view in April 1920 that it would be better to have a ' strong Ulster of six counties…than a weak, faltering fabric of the whole nine counties.' [MaDowell, 1977; p.73] From the Donegal side of the Border twenty farmers and merchants from St. Johnston wrote to the Commission under the name of their secretary

R.J. Fleming, a prominent member of the Presbyterian congregation, and an Orangeman. Their concerns fell into two main categories, economic and cultural. To advance their economic argument they stated: ‘ We feel we have a grievance in now being burdened down with over taxation, and our desire being to live in comfort, under a stable government, in peace and comfort as loyal subjects.’ Their case took on a political overtone as they continued, ‘the comfort resulting from the hard work, performed already, not alone by ourselves but by our forefathers.’ The farmers and merchants represented by R.J. Fleming considered themselves ‘a different class of people from the remaining inhabitants of Co. Donegal, being of a thrifty, industrious nature, and having reclaimed two-thirds of the land of the district’. [PRONI/ CAB61/69]

The Raphoe Presbytery, meeting in St. Johnston in December 1924, was also moved to write to the Commission:

> That the Presbytery comprising the central part of the East Donegal and representing over 900 Presbyterian families, petitions the Boundary Commission for the inclusion of the Eastern part of the county in the six county area, in view of the fact that the Protestant population owns a preponderating proportion of the land and pays correspondingly a much larger proportion of the rates.

Later in the month the Moderator of the Presbytery had to write to the Commission to clarify that the Presbytery had written on behalf of Presbyterian families only, and ‘not, as has been wrongly reported 900 Protestant families in the whole eastern part of the county.’ [PRONI/CAB61/ 128]

While the Presbytery of Raphoe was the only Protestant corporate body to make a submission to the Commission, Strabane Presbyterian Church Congregational Committee articulated Presbyterian views and visited the Commission, making their substantial argument on economic grounds. The evidence was presented by a delegation of seven: the minister Mr. E Clarke, and Mr. William Harpur, who, as well as being the treasurer of the congregation, was a member of the Strabane Traders Association. The other members of the delegation

were also merchants—three grocers, one motor dealer and a solicitor. Clarke's main argument was that the population of the Rural District on both sides of the Border, was 'predominantly Protestant and Loyalist, and that this district should therefore be included in the six county area.' From this premise it followed that there would be a shorter border if Donegal were included, and therefore 'reduce the expense required by Customs and Police service'. There could also be continuity of the railway service and improved revenue from tourist traffic. The creation of a border between Tyrone and Donegal would also lead to unemployment and a resulting increase in taxes.

These economic arguments were clearly for the benefit of the protestant population. The town of Strabane may have had a majority Roman Catholic population, but the 'larger proportion of the rates are paid by Protestants, and the district of country which surrounds the town on both sides is, we believe, predominantly Protestant and loyalist.' When interviewed by the Commission Mr. Clarke said that his congregation were business people, 'shop keepers, bankers, lawyers, doctors…I have not got many poor people.' He was able to report that ' practically all the well to do farmers around Strabane on both sides are Protestants'. He argued that those who should receive consideration from the Commission were 'not the moving population of labouring people but the people who really inhabit the country, who are settled—that is, the farmers'. In this case the 'Protestant farmers on the Donegal side of the Rural district.' Mr. Clarke had no difficulty declaring that 'he did not regard the border as anything but a temporary expedient. As far as he was concerned, 'I do not believe that there will ever be satisfaction in Ireland until there is no boundary at all.' [PRONI/ CAB61/ 136]

A. G. Lecky, clerk of the Raphoe Presbytery, together with representatives of other Protestant organisations, made their representations to the Commission on 27 May 1925, and the Strabane representatives on 26 June. Sir James Craig had called a general election in April and secured a renewed majority for the Unionists in Northern Ireland. By the end of October

the Report was nearing completion. Earlier in the month J.E. Fisher wrote to Sir Edward Carson: ' …I am well satisfied with the result which will not shift a stone or a tile of your enduring work for Ulster…If anybody had suggested to me twelve month ago that we could have kept so much I would have laughed at him…' [O'Callaghan, 2000; p.47] Unfortunately for those who had hopes for the Report, the Morning Post of 7 November published a 'forecast' of the Commission's report. The political crisis that followed resulted in the existing Border being agreed between the governments, thereby releasing everyone from the charge of surrendering territory to the opponents. For the Protestants of Donegal, this meant that the recommendation of a transfer to Northern Ireland of the area around St. Johnston and Carrigans would not proceed. The Report proposed a transfer of 42,627 acres to Northern Ireland, with 40,614 being transferred to the Free State. [Williams, 1990; p.31] In the end, nothing changed on the Border and 'an agreement which denied the legitimacy of Ireland's independence struggle, recognised partition and abandoned Northern Catholics to decades of discrimination' [Staunton, 1996; p.45] also abandoned Laggan Presbyterians to the same fate.

In Northern Ireland the reaction of their fellow Presbyterians to the agreement was jubilant. The Witness was 'sincerely glad and thankful that the result has been what it has been.' Sir James Craig was praised for following 'the path of strict duty and honesty'. The boundary that had been confirmed now allowed 'peace and fellowship to settle upon Ireland'. Now, all Irish hearts could be 'drawn to the only right way in politics and religion and that is, where they cannot agree, that they agree to differ in peace'. [Witness, 11 December 1925] The leaders of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland churches responded to Sir James Craig's wish that 'we should thus recognise the Divine blessing in a result which makes for peace and welfare, not only for our province, but for the whole Island.' [B N L, 5 December 1925] Prayers for Ulster and for Ireland were offered on Sunday, 6 December 1925. Sir James Craig attended worship in Belmont Presbyterian Church in Belfast, where

prayers were heartily raised. [B N L, 7 December 1925] In Donegal, members of the Raphoe Presbytery remained silent.

Political reaction and economic war.

The years that followed were years of retrenchment for the Presbytery. In February 1926 a request to hold evangelistic services was left to the discretion of congregations and ministers. In May of the same year the Presbytery decided not to support the suggestion that the Presbyteries of Raphoe, Donegal and Strabane should be amalgamated [M R P, 3 February 1926; 2 March 1926] A Visitation of Donoughmore Congregation noted a lack of Sabbath observance, which 'was to be deplored in this present day'. The same Visitation remarked: 'the Presbytery feels the state of affairs in the country during the past years was not such as tended to encourage our people to spend money on new school buildings.' [M R P, 19 May 1927] In February 1928 it was agreed not to hold temperance meetings because the 'time was not suitable for such meetings'. [M R P, 7 February 1928] In January 1929 their esteemed clerk of many years A. G. Lecky died, marking an end of an era that linked the current members to the pre-Home Rule period. Visiting the congregation of St. Johnston the Presbytery were delighted that 'the high standard of morality and Christian living which prevails among the Presbyterian community at large is sustained by members of the congregation'. [M R P, 22 May 1930]

Girvin has remarked that following the Boundary Commission the Protestant population of the Free State ' found themselves increasingly marginalized by the dominant ethos' of 'a homogeneous state.' [Girvin, 2003; p.139] The opening ceremony of the new County Council office in Lifford demonstrated the extent to which the Protestant churches had disappeared from local government functions. At a meeting of the Council in May 1930 a discussion took place regarding the exact nature of the opening of the new buildings. Ranges

of views were expressed, from those who wanted ‘no fizz at all’, to those who ‘wanted a jamboree’. Given that the building had not been paid for, Captain Scott reminded those who wanted brandy,‘It is to come out of our own pockets.’ [L S, 29 May 1930] The arrangements were left in the hand of a Special Committee, and later agreed by the Council. The opening ceremony took place on 26 June, performed by the Chairman, Mr. Michael Og MacFadden, T. D., who was presented with a ‘gold key of Celtic design and bearing an inscription in Irish’. The chairman ‘speaking in Irish, formally declared the building open, and cordially welcomed the members and guests.’ Fr. J O’Doherty, P. P., chairman of the Donegal Mental Hospital Committee, proposed the toast to the County Council, and later in the meeting took over the chair. Fr. O’Doherty praised the members of the Council who ‘look to the interests of the County as a whole’. Members of the Council Committees spoke about the advances that had been made, and the work remaining to be done. Mr. Mc Laughlin referred to the spirit of tolerance and fair mindedness that characterised the Council. As evidence of this he betrayed a precise knowledge of the religious background of employees and ‘mentioned that three of their most important officials were not of the Catholic religion and he ventured to say that during the time they had been in the service of the Council their religion was never mentioned’. Major J. S. Myles, T.D., the only protestant member of the Council, said that ‘his experience was that they were all working towards the same end, and that was the good of the county. Never had never had anything extended to him… but kindness, courtesy, and good fellowship.’ The final thanks were extended to Fr. O’Doherty for conducting the proceedings. [L S, 28 June 1930]

In Donegal, economic conditions were particularly difficult because of the effect of tariffs on cross- border trade. Until 1931 agriculture on both sides of the border were governed by the same economic forces and subject to similar government policies. The 1920s had seen a number of regulations introduced that provided for standardisation of agricultural products.

The decision by the Westminster government to impose tariffs on imported foodstuffs in 1932 gave preference to Imperial over foreign suppliers. Ireland might have expected to benefit from the policy of Imperial Preference, but the decision by the newly elected Fianna Fail Free State government in July 1932 to cease the repayment of money advanced for pre-independence land acts, brought an end to these hopes. In the 'Economic War' that followed the British decision to impose duties on agricultural products, to recover money due for annuity payments, was disastrous for the farmers of east Donegal, whose chief market was the city of Derry. The Belfast Boycott of 1921 and the introduction of customs posts in April 1923 had brought minor irritations and encouraged smuggling, but little else. The new situation brought about in 1932 was more serious. In the month of August 1932 alone, the Free State's cattle trade suffered a loss of £1 million. [Bardon, 2001; p.536]

The winter of 1934 brought Loyalists frustrations to a head, finding expression in a petition that was widely circulated and signed. The petition was immediately cast as a 'Unionist plot to partition Donegal' being led by 'influential agents of the Unionist party'. [D J, 12 November 1934]. The Donegal farmers were defended by the Londonderry Sentinel, which remarked, 'There never has been any attempt at secrecy…and there was never any reason for publishing in the Press the fact that the petition was being got up.' [L S, 15 November 1934] The 'Memorial on Behalf of the Loyalist residents in East Donegal' had been drawn up and signed by J.T. Fleming, of St. Johnston, and a committee of T.B. Rankin, J.S. Weir, R.W. Glenn, William Throne and Samuel McClintock, leading farmers of the district and more than half of them leaders in local Presbyterian congregations. The original petition had been passed to Sir Dawson Bates of the Northern Ireland Cabinet, and afterwards could not be found. Approaches may have been made at an earlier date than the petition as a letter from the Northern Ireland Prime Minister dated 5 September, 1934 states that his advice was 'to take no action on the matter'. [PRONI/CAB9B/227].

The petition in the name of '7,368 loyal subjects of the King residing in East Donegal' asks that:

> His Majesty's Imperial Government, being party to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, will take steps to restore us to our former rights and liberties by placing us under His Majesty's Government in Northern Ireland.

The petitioners made the point that 'we are cut off from our market towns …and we find it almost impossible to exist.' They were waiting for the Free State Government to take steps 'in the near future to further harass and impoverish us'. The ' confiscation of our property' and 'perhaps the taking of our lives' were considered possible. The question of 'impartiality and fairness in the issue of cattle export licenses' was also raised, stating 'Fianna Fail supporters get all the licenses they require'. A similar concern was raised over fishing rights in the Foyle. Their status as landowners and ratepayers was stressed, claiming 'we pay 85% of the rates' and 'own 90% of the land and property', and yet 'we have no say in the expenditure for these rates.' In the Laggan area they claimed 'at least 75% of the population', and noted that ' there are 23 Protestant places of worship as against 6 R. C. Churches.'

The petitioners were careful to state their credentials as loyal subjects: they belonged to the Imperial Province of Ulster, they were signatories of the Solemn League and Covenant, and that they successfully argued their case for inclusion before the 'Border Commission'. Unless the Report of the Boundary Commission was implemented, 'there will be nothing for us but to come out from the Free State and relinquish our homes and all that we hold most dear.' They asked that the Imperial Government would 'take such steps as may be in their power for the protection of ourselves and our property and the upholding of our rights and liberties as British subjects so that we may be able to continue loyal subjects of the King as in former and happier times.' [PRONI/ CAB9B/227]

A letter from Robert Glen and Thomas Rankin later in November stated 'our position has become more critical.' The implementation of legislation on potatoes, milk and Beef 'leave

us without any market for our produce, and we are absolutely unable to meet the demand on us.' A new solution to the situation was proposed: that His Majesty's government 'transfer those who wish to farms of equal value in Northern Ireland or England and the dissatisfied Nationalists of Northern Ireland to the Irish Free State'. The writers remarked that 'assistance was given in transferring Jews to Palestine and rectifying boundaries or lands abroad', and they hoped for similar assistance. [PRONI/CAB9B/ 227/ 29.11.1934]

The pleas of the east Donegal farmers received a sympathetic hearing among some of the Northern Ireland Cabinet. H. M. Pollock, Minister of Finance wrote to the Secretary of the Cabinet, 'I cannot think of anything worse than the tragedy of these people in the circumstances in which they find themselves…It is a dreadful thing that we can do nothing for these poor creatures in Donegal.' John Andrews, Minister of Labour wrote, ' …it should be remembered that these people were sacrificed at the time, first of all when we agreed to their exclusion….I am sure…at the very least, they are entitled to an expression of sympathy.' Stormont politicians were not above using the plight of Donegal loyalists for political uses, supplying information to the Belfast press, so that 'people will see there is a genuine desire from the people in the South to come up.' An article was duly published in the Belfast Newsletter. [B N L, 14 January 1935]

Although the Northern Ireland government did provide some relief on duties for farmers moving to Northern Ireland from the Free State, this was only on a case-by-case basis. Andrew McIlwaine, a Presbyterian farmer from Ramelton, on moving to Donemana, Co. Tyrone was assured by Sir Charles Blackmore that 'for your confidential information I can inform you that some friends who are interested in the matter will be willing to help financially…' when he moved his possessions across the border. The Ulster Unionist Council, with its close links with the Government, helped to arrange transfers of holdings for Protestant farmers from the Free State. Regarding one proposed transfer the Secretary to the

Council wrote,'I sent on the details of the farm to the Donegal people but so far without success. I am now trying it a little further down in the Free State.' [PRONI/CAB9B/227/7.12.1935]. In March 1936 Mr. William Kees, Presbyterian minister of Newbliss, Co. Monaghan wrote to the Northern Ireland Prime Minister to thank him for helping a loyalist farmer move to Northern Ireland.

The profile of the campaign in Donegal was raised when the petitioners came under attack from District Justice Louis J. Walsh, who said ' that a treasonable document, which might have very serious consequence both for those who circulated it and for the peace of the county' had come to his notice. ' I am very much concerned about the threat to...peace which the circulation of this document entails', he continued and referred to its 'illegality and unreasonable nature.' He supposed those who had signed had done so because of 'pressure from designing outsiders'. His comments strayed into the political arena when he said that the British government would not risk military action 'for the sake of a few anti-Irish bigots in St. Johnston or Burt.' He cited the Kellogg Pact of 1928, which provided for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, and warned that 'a shot anywhere from the Balkans to Newtowncunningham might unloose the dogs of war all over Europe.' He suggested that 'Donegal Unionists should make up their minds to keep clear of fooleries of this sort' and thought than most of them were prepared to do so, but were only prevented from saying it openly ' by the want of moral courage, which had always been noticeable in Ulster…' [L S, 17 November 1934]

Justice Walsh's comments were reported in the Belfast and Dublin press, and received some attention from The Times. The Londonderry Sentinel called the speech 'a concoction…of an experienced dramatist…pure humbug.' [L S, 20 November 1934], and many Unionist Associations in Northern Ireland made their own replies to the Justice [L S, 24 November 1934.] Some anti-Protestant feeling was reported, including one document that

instructed employers ‘on no account must they employ Protestants’. The document said: ‘We have won our own country for the Mother Church, now for England next, for rotten Ulster, the black spot of Ireland and Orange Bigots.’ [L S, 29 November 1934] The second request to the Northern Ireland government received press attention, the Irish Times characterising the Laggan as ‘a valley of whispers’. The reason for this secrecy was explained by a rumour which was circulating that the Free State Government ‘was going to take proceedings against the organisers’, and the feeling that ‘any open canvass would affect the relations between the petitioners and their Catholic neighbours’. Some Protestants had not signed because they thought ‘ the petition would not have much effect’. [L S, 8 December 1934] The matter had been raised in the Northern Ireland Parliament in early December by J. J. McCarroll, nationalist member for Foyle in Derry. Sir Dawson Bates replied to questions by saying, ‘The Government is not prepared to give any information on this subject…’ and then proposing to give assistance for the transfer of Nationalists from Northern Ireland to the Free State. [L S, 8 December 1934]

The Economic War continued when, in January 1935 the Northern Milk Act was due to be implemented. At first Donegal dairy farmers were hopeful of support from the Londonderry Milk Vendors Association, but their position changed at a meeting on 28 December. As the New Year began, police in Derry were gathering evidence for ‘ prosecutions against the Donegal Vendors.’ [L S, 12 January 1935] Major Myles had entered the dispute and had negotiations with the Northern Minister of Agriculture. He claimed that the chief objections of the Northern authorities could be easily overcome, by allowing inspections of diaries of Donegal farms, and the setting up of a trust fund to pay fines that might be imposed. He suggested that the chief obstacle was the ‘Six-County milk vendors….who are greedy to rush in on the Derry market’. Major Myles supported the Donegal farmers who had large stocks of winter feeding, workers engaged by the half year, and faced the ‘hopeless task of getting

rid of their milk cows'. He was glad to see the ' spirited stand taken by the East Donegal man in this matter.' [L S, 15 January 1935] The Presbytery of Raphoe passed a resolution expressing 'sincere sympathy' with those members of congregations who were now experiencing 'hardship' because of the enforcement of the Milk Act [MRP, 7 September 1937] On a completely different scale the Presbytery protested the 30% import duty on Bibles and hymnbooks [M R P, 5 November 1935] and objected to the difficulties involved in the delivery of their financial reports because of the 'Free State tariff wall' [M R P, 5 March 1935].

A Church voice?

The events surrounding the Anglo-Irish War, the Civil War, the Boundary Commission and the petition of 1934 show that in the 1920s and 30s there was considerable political involvement and discussion from within the Presbyterian community of the Laggan. One source of help the Presbyterian congregations could have expected to draw upon would have been the General Assembly, the voice of Presbyterians from all of Ireland. At the meeting of the Assembly in June, 1919 discussions took place about the 'serious position of affairs in Ireland' and resolved that 'the question of supreme importance at the present moment in Ireland is the establishment of law and order and the safeguarding of the lives of those engaged in the administration of justice'. The Assembly appointed a State of the Country Committee that reported on political developments, and each year in the 1921-1925 period its report was adopted unanimously, reflecting the single-mindedness of the gathering. Following the passing of the Government of Ireland Act, the Committee referred to the constitution and aims of Sinn Fein, listed a number of atrocities, stated that ' in some districts the protestant population is being entirely exterminated', deplored the fact that 'there seems no Christian public opinion to condemn them or help to bring to justice the perpetrators' and

called upon the authorities to protect lives and property 'irrespective of creed or class.' On the Government of Ireland Act the Committee commented:

> this change in the government of Ireland was not sought by the members of the Presbyterian church. We have repeatedly declared that we were anxious to remain within the Imperial Parliament and immediately under its jurisdiction. But our people, for the sake of peace, accepted the Act, and they are prepared to loyally carry out its provisions, so as to bring about settled government and establish law and order in our land.

In 1922 report, reflecting on hopes for peace and prosperity for the Southern Area of Ireland comments 'these hopes were doomed to failure'. The withdrawal of Imperial Forces from Southern Ireland …is one of the darkest strains in the annals of British administration'. By 1923, as well as hinting at sectarian acts of violence the Assembly declared itself 'fully assured that all the members of the Church within the Free State fulfil the duty of co-operating with the Government as by law established'. Commenting on the Boundary question in 1925 the Committee said:

> If local adjustments of the Boundary are thought necessary for the convenience of those who live near the border, there could be no objection to their being carried out in a just and friendly way; but we strongly protest against a large section of the Six Counties, given to the Northern Government in the Act of 1920, being wrested from it. [Barkley, 1975]

Occasionally Moderators of the General Assembly spoke on their own authority. In January, 1921 Mr. H. P. Glenn speaking in Dublin stated that Presbyterians outside Ulster '…intend to remain here and to take our part in the new Ireland that we hope will soon dawn…and with those qualities that have made us in Ulster... so strong and so prosperous, so wealthy…we hope to be a very efficient factor in the prosperity of the city'. [L S, 29 January 1921] In 1926 Mr. R. K. Hanna, a minister of a Dublin congregation, addressed the situation in the Free State: 'Conditions had wonderfully improved. Law and order was enforced. They were not aware of any religious disabilities.' They had an 'attitude of hope as to the future of the Church in Southern Ireland'. Now that the Boundary question had been settled, they 'prayed

that the relations between North and South might grow more and more friendly and that the two states…might vie in love and service to the land they all loved'. [L S, 8 June 1926] Rev. William Corkey, visited Donegal, at the suggestion of his predecessor. He told the Assembly, 'We have a great body of loyal people in Donegal, and especially in the famous Laggan…and they are passing through most difficult times…and they can see nothing in the future but black ruin.' He also commented on opposition by church members to the introduction of Irish language teaching in national Schools. His estimation of the mood of Donegal Presbyterians was that 'our people are manifesting in their grievous plight the same patient faith and brave spirit that brought our fathers through similar difficulties in former times.' The moderator moved on to other matters, and the attention of the Assembly left the Laggan Presbyterians in the same plight as they had found them. [L S, 5 June 1934]

In east Donegal, as in much of Ulster ' Unionism and Orangeism were, for many individuals, overlapping expressions of their religious, political and social beliefs.' [Megahey, 2000; p.65] East Donegal had Orange Lodges in Lifford, Manorcunningham, Raphoe, St. Johnston, Castlefin, Stranorlar and Carrigans. The St. Johnston Lodge had been formed in 1821, and a new Orange hall had been built in 1895. The Hall had been occupied by anti-Treaty forces in 1924, and afterwards returned to the Lodge. The Convoy Lodge was formed in 1919 as a memorial lodge in memory of former UVF members who died in the First World War. The former UVF premises were used until an Orange Hall was built in 1928, being extended in 1938. The Newtowncunningham Lodge was opened in 1911 and the following year had 72 members, with membership in the 1920s and 30s of around 50. Mananorcunningham Lodge came into existence in 1919 and met in the Parish Hall in the village. The Carrigans Lodge, which opened a new Hall in 1921, had a membership of 144. The Raphoe Lodge had been active since 1834. The fortunes of the Lodges in the Free State were affected by the same population changes and economic challenges as the churches. For

some, however, the ‘benefits of belonging to an Orange lodge were maintained or even enhanced after independence because of the ‘relative privacy’ afforded by the Lodge, which was valued in the context of ‘the brittleness of intercommunal goodwill in the border zone’. [Fitzparrick, 2002; p.59] As well as providing places to meet, some practical help was given through a loan scheme to buy farms or houses which otherwise would have passed from Protestant to Roman Catholic hands. Opposition in the new State to the Orange Order was demonstrated when an obelisk in Oldbridge, Co. Louth was bombed and scattered over a radius of two hundred yards. Battle of the Boyne celebrations resumed after the Civil War in Monaghan in 1923 with Donegal following in 1924. In June 1932 an Orange demonstration in Monaghan had to be abandoned, after which ‘no further major processions were held in the Free State outside Donegal’. [Fitzpatarick, 2002; p.64]

PUBLIC RELIGION

A Political Community At Worship

In east Donegal Orangemen had a close association with congregations and churches. Before setting out for the District celebration on 12 July 1919 the Manorcunningham Lodge, with their chaplain John Boyle, marched through the village before boarding an early train to Derry. [L S, 17 July 1919] The unfurling of the new banner for the Convoy Lodge took place in Raphoe Orange Hall in July 1920. Canon Cullimore of Raphoe presided at the meeting, at which Mr. W. J. Lattimer was also present, two other ministers sent their apologies. The celebration in Carrigans in 1921 were described in the local press as ‘enthusiastic and successful.’ The ‘approaches to the village were artistically decorated with flags and loyal emblems. The central road way was spanned with a very decorative arch, and everywhere bunches of orange lilies were in evidence.’ Mr. C. R. Thompson spoke about the ‘constructive side of Protestantism…’ They had gathered to celebrate liberty, and their

‘political opinions were the outcome of their faith in God’. Mr. John McClean remarked that the British alone stood for civil and religious liberty…and they all liked to worship God in the way they thought best.’ Dr. Robinson, supported the remarks of his colleagues and said that ‘ they were passing through one of the greatest crises the country had ever known, and he though it was a disgrace to our Government that the British nation, which had vanquished Germany could not protect our fellow subjects in this country, who were afraid to sleep in their beds lest they might be murdered.’ [L S, 14 July 1921] When Carrigans Lodge held a three-day bazaar in September 1921, the Protestant community from a wide radius supported the event, including clergy from Donegal and Derry. [L S, 24 September 1921]

In Raphoe after the annual Orange church parade, the 150 strong procession was ‘subjected to a fusillade of stones from a crowd which congregated on a corner’. One Orangeman had his sash torn off by a spectator. The Orangemen ‘were left to defend themselves, which they did, without reverting to more force than was necessary.’ [L S, 10 July 1924] The incident was raised in the Dail, the Minister of Justice stating ‘ the determination of the Government to maintain the right of any and every party in the State to hold meetings and processions in commemoration of anything which they considered worthy... provided the law was observed…’ [L S, 10 July 1924]. The Lifford anniversary service took place without incident in 1927 and in 1928, with the Lodge marching the two miles to Ballindrait Presbyterian Church, where the minister, Mr. J. H. Bewglass gave the address [L S, 3 July 1928] A few weeks later the Orange Hall in Lifford was damaged by vandals, along with Castlefin Parochial Hall, where the local Lodge met. [L S, 17 July 1928] In 1930 the Lifford Orangemen had to be escorted over the Lifford bridge on their way to the Londonderry demonstration. A number of Tricolour flags had been erected during the night and civic Guards ordered the removal of the flags before the parade. The Guards had to ‘attend at Lifford railway station, where the processions from Ballindrait, Raphoe, and

Convoy, on their return journey, displayed out of the windows a number of Union Jacks'. [L S, 15 July 1930] At the Lifford demonstration in 1931 a number of 'tricolour arches' had been erected on the route, 'but the orange brethren took no notice of them and passed on quietly to their meeting place'. [L S, 14 July 1931] By 1934 the Lifford demonstration could take place in a peaceful way, with the Lodges marching 'in processional order' to Ballindrait Presbyterian Church. [L S, 3 July 1934] In 1936 the East Donegal Lodges joined the Orangemen of South Donegal at a Demonstration in Rossnowlagh, the first time that such a parade had taken place. No speeches were delivered or loyal resolutions passed, and the 'proceedings passed off in an orderly manner, and there was no untoward incidents of any kind to mar the day'. The Civic Guards had taken precautions to ensure the security of the one thousand who attended, patrolling the railway and the roads [L S, 14 July 1936] In July 1938, the Orange parades to services in the Presbyterian Churches in Raphoe and Manorcunningham passed off without incident. [L S, 12 July1938]

In September 1939 de Valera announced the intention of his government that the Free State would remain neutral in any forthcoming war. That declaration marked 'the final chapter in the evolution of the Irish State to independence.' In Unionist eyes 'it was the final rejection of Irish Nationalism of all things British.' [Kennedy, 1988; p.234] 'Neutrality was motivated by fear' [Doherty, 2002; p.1] and it could be said, the enlistment of Protestants from east Donegal in British forces was motivated by fear also: fear of finding themselves abandoned in a country that was becoming more hostile to a Protestant ethos that sought comfort in continuing relationships with family and friends in Northern Ireland. Although Neutrality could not be strictly applied in Donegal because of the presence of United States forces in Lough Foyle, by May 1940 the Irish government sought to maintain a frontier between the Free State and Northern Ireland. The special situation of Donegal is seen in the enforcement by the County Council of the cowling of all public lighting –the only council to

do so, [Williams, 1974; p.175] and the production of turf. By November 1942, 97,000 tons of turf had been sold as fuel and paid for. The chief difficulty in production was the lack of men to do the work. The County Surveyor reported that Donegal was one of the largest turf areas in the country and a further 1000 men could have been employed in a 'vital service to the nation', with the additional benefit of 'earning wages previously unknown in the area.' [Williams, 1974; p.178] In the years 1939 – 1945 it is estimated that between 25,000 to 50,000 men and women left Ireland each year to find jobs in England, and many tens of thousands travelled to Britain to work for short periods. [Gray, 1997; p.8] One estimate is that 50,000 citizens of the Irish State volunteered for service in the British armed forces during the Second World War. [Gray, 1997; p.1] Laggan Presbyterians may not have been as isolated as those who lived outside the province of Ulster, but they did find themselves in a country that had removed itself in as many ways as possible from its former union with Great Britain. In the election campaign of June 1943 de Valera brought to the Donegal electorate a policy of 'Nationalist Republican ideas associated with partition and keeping alive Irish culture and language.' [Doherty, 2002; 43] Many Laggan Presbyterians decided that they had had enough. Those who decided to remain would have to console themselves to becoming a 'politically negligible minority'. [McDowell, 1997; p.194]

EDUCATION

The administration of a culture

The day-to-day work of the Donegal Protestant Board of Education shows the commitment and stamina of the leaders of the Protestant community in maintaining secondary education for the children of their community.

Often straightforward management issues like employment took up the time and skills of the Board. At a special meeting in June 1926 two respectable members of the community

had alleged that the headmaster, Mr. Burrows, was not a proper person to have in post as ' he has taken improper familiarities with the girl pupils and had come into class smelling of strong drink, and that he had been negligent toward many of the pupils'. The Board delegated Canon Homan, Church of Ireland rector to interview Mr. Burrows, and to meet the following evening to hear either his refutation or receive his resignation. Canon Homan reported that Mr. Burrows 'denied that there was anything more than what might be called a foolish freedom of manners with some pupils; that he used some drink occasionally medicinally, and may have smelt of it.' He promised by letter to 'be more careful in future.' [DPBE, 22 June 1926] Mr. Burrows was allowed to continue in post, but his resignation was accepted the following November. [DPBE, 5 November 1926] This incident shows the Board to be forthright in protecting the interests of children and responsive to the expressed concerns of parents. We can also see the ethos of the Board as a voluntary body, dependent on community support for continued existence.

The work of the Board was closely focused on the affairs of the School, but occasionally the politics of the times intruded upon their work. In 1922, for example, School property 'had been taken over for barrack accommodation' by the Free State Authorities. The Board agreed that 'no action could at present be taken in the matter'. [DPBE, 4 August 1922] In September the Board noted that the property was still occupied, and the secretary was instructed to write to the Officer Commanding, 'asking steps to be taken, if possible, to have it vacated.' [DPBE, 22 September 1922] By November no reply had been received, and a claim was made ' for rent and damages to the property'. In May 1923 a special meeting was held to 'consider an offer from Irish Office of Works of a sum of £36' in settlement of the claim, which was accepted.

In 1922 the introduction of the compulsory teaching of the Irish language by the new State was received with considerable consternation by the majority of the Protestant population of

the Irish Free State. Opposition to the measure was mounted at several levels, and in east Donegal Major Myles TD, wrote to the Donegal Protestant Board of Education urging them to pass a resolution regarding the teaching of Irish in secondary schools. The Board met to consider his request in November 1927, and found that a number ' of the points mentioned in the suggested resolution really did not arise.' [DPBE, 28 November 1927] The Board did take up the general thrust of the suggestion, strengthen by 'the peculiar geographical situation' in which the School was placed. The resolution that the Board adopted mentioned the 'tendency of pupils to migrate across the Border', a movement which they explained by 'the objection of parents to the introduction of Irish as an essential subject in the Intermediate Examination'. The Board did not have specific proposals for the Minister of Education to consider, but did ask for 'the possibility of some concession in respect of Irish as a compulsory pass subject'.

The Donegal Board found itself caught up in larger discussions when it applied for permission to co-opt additional members. The Scheme of the Department of Education established the composition of the Board and so any change would have to have approval from the Department. The changes suggested by the Donegal Board, for co-opting additional members, had been opposed by members of the Cavan Protestant Board of Education. The Department of Education Inspector, Stanislous Murphy suggested that resolutions for co-options to Boards should have support from more than one denomination represented on the Board. These suggestions were made ' with the sole object of meeting the circumstances of the case' and ensuring the 'religious constitution of the Boards'. [DPBE, 11 December 1930] The proposal of the Donegal Board continued to be opposed by the Cavan Board, and no change to the composition of the Boards was made. [DPBE, 7 August 1931]

The Raphoe School, while close to the Border with Northern Ireland, was not affected by the political boundary in the same way as the Church of Ireland managed secondary school in Lifford only four miles away. The Prior School, located in the border town, experienced

directly consequences of Irish budget measures, like the additional tax on bicycles in the 1932 Budget, and the conditions in Northern Ireland due to World War II. In 1940 numbers of pupils attending the school increased, bringing greater financial stability, while the opposite movement was noted in 1945, when pupil numbers dropped, with the resulting decline in fees, and financial losses incurred. [Moriarty, 1999; p. 21] The Raphoe School's experience of the war can be contrasted with other Royal schools. In Dungannon, for example, the Royal School welcomed 67 boys evacuated from the Royal Belfast Academical Institution. The close co-operation of the two schools for two and a half years led to a continuing close relationship after the War. The Dungannon School could form an Air Training Corps that produced cadets for the services and Memorials to former pupils who had served in the armed forces were also to be found in the Dungannon School. Neither of these could be duplicated in Raphoe. [Bardon, 2004; p. 62] Indeed the political sensitivities of the Emergency were felt acutely by the Donegal Protestant Board. When approached by the House Master for permission to serve as an engineer in the Emergency Reserve under the War Office, the Board gave lengthy consideration to the matter. Their decision 'that for several reasons it would be against the best interests of the School' to grant the request, shows that questions of national politics had profound implications at a local level. [DPBE, 1 November 1940]

The Board's account began 1922 in debt by £28.5.9 because rents and land lettings had not been paid. [DPBE, 13 January 1922] Following the storms of 1927 a 'ladies committee and members' wives' was formed, with the intention of holding a bazaar, and an appeal letter was sent to former pupils, in order to pay for repairs to damaged buildings. [DPBE, 4 February 1927] In 1938 an appeal for financial support brought in £20.1.6 from 19 contributors. [DPBE, 6 May 1938]

The scholarship schemes operated by the Board were adjusted to include provision for girls [DPBE, 4 February 1910], and also later for the compulsory subjects of Irish and

History, as directed by the Minister of Education. [DPBE, 5 February 1932] The Board also worked in conjunction with the Church of Ireland Robertson Endowment to provide Church of Ireland pupils with grants toward boarding fees, on a means tested basis, for a period of four years per pupil.[DPBE, 5 August 1932] The Board also introduced a scheme of reduced and assisted Scholarships, on the 'understanding that the Headmaster would exercise judgement and discretion in his discrimination between candidates of various churches.' [DPBE, 5 May 1933] The scholarships continued to be eagerly sought after with 27 applications for 4 free places in 1957 [DPBE, 4 July 1957], with applications for the same number of places rising to 42 in 1960 [DPBE, 30 May 1960]

The language question.

The introduction of compulsory teaching of the Irish language in national and secondary schools by the Irish Free State Government in 1922 was one of the key cultural moments of the Irish nation, and it was also critically important in 'generating Protestant alienation within independent Ireland'. [Bew, 2004; p.174] The Irish language 'has operated as a vehicle for debates concerned with cultural identity and political legitimacy in Ireland for much of its modern history'. [O Tuathaigh, 2005; p.42] Accounts of language use in Ireland in the nineteenth century reveals a complex picture, with 2 million Irish speakers, 1.5 million Irish-English bilinguals and 1.5 million English speakers. Irish was the language of the poor, and the numbers of Irish speakers probably increased up to 1845. The Great Famine (1845-50) decimated Irish speaking through death and emigration. The Census of 1851 (the first to include a language question) revealed that the total number of Irish speakers had fallen to about a quarter of the population at 1.52 million people. By 1891, the percentage of Irish speaking under ten year old children had fallen to 3.5 % and 'the language appeared to be ' on the point of extinction'. [O Murchu, 1999; p.2]

The Irish language did not feature as part of the nationalist movement until the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The Roman Catholic Church 'were, in the main, reconciled to, if not actively encouraging the language shift'. [O Tuathaigh, 2005; p.45] The Church had no satisfactory teaching of Irish at the national seminary at Maynooth, and as the Church began to take on a role as a missionary church, English became their language of mission. Indeed, most attention to the Irish language had been paid by Protestant churches, and evangelical societies, from 1790s to 1870s. Presbyterians, many of whom were Scots Gaelic speakers in origin, made use of their language proficiency in establishing congregations in the seventeenth century. Interest in the language continued sporadically, until in 1828, missionary and evangelistic concerns produced a requirement that all students of the ministry should learn the Irish language. [Holmes, 1985; p.112] Presbyterian support for the language peaked during these years of energetic outreach, and although there would be notable exceptions like Thomas Hamilton and Robert Lynd, the intense political polarisation of the Home Rule crisis produced 'mutually exclusive versions of cultural identity' which did not allow Presbyterians to include the Irish language as a component of their identity. [Blaney, 1996]

The culmination of those working for the restoration of the Irish language was the formation of the Gaelic League in 1893. The declared aim of the new movement was 'The preservation of Irish as the National Language of Ireland and the extension of its use a spoken tongue.' Partly the outcome of general humanism and a European wide movement of cultural nationalism, there was a particular sense that the loss of Irish was the outcome of military and political conquest. The work and energy of Douglas Hyde, Eoin MacNeill and D. P. Moran and the Gaelic League influenced the first political leaders of the Irish Free State, indeed it has been argued that 'the Gaelic League created, in effect, the political elite of independent Ireland'. [O Tuathaigh, 2005; p.49] With the new state, the Irish language was given a

privileged status in the Consultation, a position that was repeated in the Constitution of the Republic in 1937.

Within education these changes had a profound effect, and has been described as 'the single most important policy in shaping the educational system of independent Ireland.' [Kelly, 2002; p.1] For Unionists and Presbyterians the move confirmed suspicions of ' an official policy of forcing upon a well-defined minority a culture that it regarded as alien.' [Kennedy, 1988; p.183] Criticism of the education system had been made even before the new Free State had been established. In 1914 the General Synod of the Church of Ireland had questioned the suitability of history textbooks used in some National Schools, and in 1918 the Church's Board of Education spoke of 'Irish histories dealing with the subject incorrectly or with manifest bias'. [Jones, 1992; p.72] Presbyterian commentators spoke more forthrightly about what they regarded as Roman Catholic influence being used not only to teach 'sedition', but also to provoke hatred. In 1918, Rev. William Corkey, later a Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, wrote a series of articles in The Witness, later published in booklet form in Edinburgh entitled 'The Church of Rome and Irish Unrest', explaining 'How hatred of Britain is taught in Irish Schools.' [Corkey, 1918; p.1] Corkey, sets out to explain 'the manifest…disloyalty' of those Irish people who have come under the influence of the Roman Catholic Church through their management of National Schools. He claims, by analysis of textbooks used in schools, to show that 'hatred and distrust of the British connection has been carefully fostered and cultivated in the Irish schools'. [Corkey, 1918; p.7] He argues it is notable that in the schools under question 'the priest has absolute power' and that 'teachers have been dismissed for not attending mass'. Corkey found particular fault with the series ' The Irish Reader History' which had been published by the Christian Brothers, which he described as 'most bitterly anti-British in its tone' and a 'conception of the Vatican's real attitude towards Britain'. For Corkey, these distortions of

history and twisting of truth ‘show how the seeds of sedition are being sedulously sown by such histories’. [Corkey, 1918; p.10] Corkey takes a tour through the turning points of Irish history to show how ‘a clever and cunning writer…insidiously suggests the wickedness of England’. But the real point of criticism is the portrayal of Protestantism:

> the real animosity of the promoters of these history- primers is against the Protestant faith, and the children are taught to despise and hate Britain because she is a Protestant country.

With the new State, and the compulsory use of the Irish language in schools, the Protestant children of the Free State would be under the constant influence of ‘material insensitive to (their) religious beliefs …’ [Jones, 1992; p.73] Protestant objections received a sympathetic hearing from Eion MacNeill, Minister of Education, in the 1920s, but the attitude of the Department of Education ‘ hardened considerably’ in the 1930s, under the influence of Thomas Derrig, Minister for Education under the Fianna Fail government. The change of government, the influence of the Eucharistic Congress held in Dublin in 1932 and the constant complaints from the Protestant churches ‘may have heightened prejudices against them in the Department [Jones, 1992; p.75] Derrig allowed few concessions on the use of supplementary textbooks agreeable to Protestant families. In 1941, as a result of Derrig’s attitude, the Church of Ireland produced its own history textbook, which was widely used in Protestant national schools. In 1950 a Department report admitted, ‘There are undoubtedly some grounds for grievance here because the tone and outlook of many (textbooks) is definitely Catholic.’ The proposed remedy for this situation was for Protestants to publish their own ‘Irish readers for their own schools’, but the financial pressures on the church finances in the 1950s made this an unlikely prospect. [Jones, 1992; p.79]

Protests against the compulsory teaching of the Irish language were consistently made in the 1930s, 40s and 1950s. In November 1934 the Presbytery responded to the move by the newly elected government to swiften the pace of progress in the Irish revival. Derrig had

summoned INTO representatives to a meeting, and in return for teachers placing more emphasis on the language, academic standards demanded in other subjects were lowered. As part of this agreement the English language course in all national schools was reduced to the level of 'low English high Irish.' [Akenson, 2003; p.729] The Presbytery responded to this change with 'grave concern', and a letter was sent to the Minister of Education, Major Myles TD, and the convener of the Presbyterian Church's Free State and Education Committee. [M R P, 6 November 1935] At the next Presbytery meeting in February 1935 the letter to the Minister was acknowledged, and it was reported that other Presbyteries in the Free State had been urged to write in similar terms to the Department by the Church's Education Committee. A meeting between an Inspector from the Department and Dr. Morrow, from the Church's Free State and Education Committee, had clarified the position regarding Presbyterian schools. [M R P, 5 February 1935] At the secondary level the headmaster of the Royal School, Raphoe sought permission from the Board to increase fees, since ' he was likely to suffer the loss of grants for those pupils not taking this subject'. [DPBE, 2 November 1934] The Board felt this was a significant matter, agreed with the proposal for pupils whose parents objected to their children learning Irish and appointed a committee to examine the matter.

GENDER

Religion without limits.

An account of the meetings of the Inishowen Prayer Circle from 'The Hills of Donegal' gives an indication that even in small rural groups, a structured and formal approach was taken at women's religious gatherings. Meeting on a monthly basis, twelve to seventeen women followed a pattern of ' hymn, prayer, reading of Scripture, monthly missionary letter read,

hymn, petitions for prayer read out, silent prayer after each petition, short address by missionary when available, prayer, hymn and benediction.'[WW, Jan 1931] The annual meetings of the association, gave women the opportunity to gather together and renew their insight that 'we are called to do a great work, and it is worthwhile'. Encouragement was given for their work and meetings and they were urged to 'follow Him more closely, depend on Him more entirely, during the coming days and months'. [WW, July 1934] Mrs. Bewglass who wrote the account of the 1934 meeting, later used her own presidential address to encourage women with her theme 'God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power.' [WW, July 1950] Advice given more than two decades later shows a consistent approach to providing a balanced programme, which would 'include a devotional period'. This portion of the meeting 'should not be lengthy and should speak to the needs of the group.' Those whose task it was to lead the devotional section of the meeting had an 'excellent training ground for the exercise of one's growth in grace'. The format 'should be as varied as the people who lead' and 'should be a sharing of something you have found helpful in your own reading and experience'. [WW, Dec 1975]

While many of the branch meetings centred on missionary work overseas, either through visiting speakers, letters, or work for fundraising, Ramelton women had a varied programme of events. Mrs. Florence Scott, wife of the minister in Second Ramelton congregation, gave an account of their meetings for 1940 and 1941, which included support of both domestic and foreign charitable objects. The Zenana mission was supported through a house -to- house collection from members of the congregation and, in addition to this, 'missionary letters and any other correspondence' was read at the beginning of every meeting. Speakers from Church House were welcomed. The 26 members attended meetings once every three weeks. Annual events included a concert, for 'missionary and charitable purposes', which in 1941 raised £28, half of which was set aside 'to buy wool and materials for garments for India and China;

the other half was used to send ‘parcels to each boy in the church who was in any of the services’, a ‘little of the proceeds was used to buy oiled wool for sea-boot stockings’. Charities were also supported, and the Red Cross in Britain, Finland and Greece each received £3, and the Lord Mayor of Coventry’s Air-Raid Relief Fund also received £3. Local distress was also addressed, including ‘British and allied’ seamen who had been shipwrecked in Downings Bay. Food parcels were sent, and a supply of free milk was also made available. The women made pyjamas and socks for the Eire Red Cross, and in ‘response to an appeal on the wireless’, two dozen pairs of socks for men evacuated from Dunkirk, were also dispatched. [WW, April 1941] The practical response to ‘the tragedy occurring within sight of the shore’ [Wills, 2007; p.146] showed that national and international politics, had consequences in the daily lives of Irish women.

The report from the Ramelton women shows a group of women working within a definite structure, with a clear central purpose, and with also the opportunity to respond to local and perceived needs. Mrs. Scott reported that ‘the president opens the meetings with prayer, the minutes of the previous meeting are read and passed, the missionary and any other correspondence is read, and then tea is served.’ This order of business is part of the encouragement and training given to women, through the articles of Women’s Work. Indeed, it could be argued that one of the successes of the branches through out the church was the clear organisational structure provided for women.

Sunday School teaching was a theme that was returned to several times through the years, not only as a way of furthering missionary education and fundraising, but also as a way of encouraging the personal faith of the teacher. ‘ Let no one think that because a Sunday School lesson shall be simple, the preparation should be slight…(the teacher) should, herself, get much more Bible knowledge than she will give out.’ [WW, Summer 1916] The advice given for the ‘Children’s Sunday Hour’, for parents who find ‘occupation on Sundays for the

younger children' a difficulty, involved illustrating Bible texts. The suggestion, 'which should provide these children with pleasant employment and at the same time make them familiar with the words of the Bible' involved the parents in a twelve week course of drawing and supervision. [WW, Oct 1931

The focus of religion for women was family and home, and daily life was the focus of attention. Women, particularly young women were supported in this approach by annual weekend schools that provided Biblical instruction, and opportunities to meet women from other areas. Women in Donegal were able to participate in these 'Easter Schools' either through travel to attend, through their local clergy taking part as instructors, as in 1936 when Mr. & Mrs. Bewglass were the leaders at Rostrevor [WW, July 1936], or by attending schools when they took place in Donegal. A report of the 1940 School, which took place in the county, began by telling what exactly it set out to be:

> a time of comradeship, of walks and talks, discussions and sing-songs, laughter and merriment …Above all …a time of spiritual uplift, when, far away from the cares and worries of every day, the glory and wonder of Christ's Resurrection is once again commemorated.

Twenty-four women attended to reflect on the theme 'A Glorious Church', and through group discussion 'we received fresh inspiration through hearing the opinions of others'. The gathering ended as the women 'listened to the lovely music which Handel has set to the immortal words," I know that my Redeemer liveth," we felt again the wonder and the divine majesty of the resurrection.' [WW, July 1940]

The 1945 Easter School was led by Mr. A. E. Scott the minister of Ramelton congregation, who lectured on themes from John's Gospel. 'The question as to whether the ascetic or the social side of religion was the more important provoked very lively discussion and showed some divergence of opinion.' The report concluded on a devotional note: ' I am sure that when…we look back…we will remember affectionately …the happy time we had when Christ came so near to us, strengthening and inspiring us anew. [WW, July 1945] Mr.

William Moran, minister of Convoy was the speaker at the 1961 School, and he described the event as ‘a Christian community for three days.’ There was a note of change in the air, as fewer women attending and new methods of meeting were discussed, but there was a resolute conclusion that the women’s groups were ‘still...an interesting meeting place for those girls who seek to serve intelligently the Church at home and abroad.’ [WW, July 1961]

PUBLIC RELIGION

Presbytery and the emergence of a new authority.

Two cases were brought before Presbytery in the 1930s and 1940s that indicated that a negotiation of boundaries was taking place. One case concerned the use of church premises for evangelical meetings, the other, for recreation. In October 1930 Mr. Thompson appealed against the decision of Raphoe Session not to grant the use of the church hall for a Faith Mission conference. A special meeting was held and Mr. Thompson given the opportunity to present his reasons for appeal. The Presbytery ‘being of the opinion that these reasons were inadequate’, adopted a Finding that reminded both parties in the dispute that in a recent Visitation the Presbytery had urged ‘minister and Session the advisability of establishing a regular prayer meeting in a convenient centre or centres’. [M R P, 7 October 1930] The Presbytery in upholding the decision the Kirk Session made clear its desire to support the authority of the Church at the local level in opposition to a lay evangelical movement. The Raphoe Session, had in fact, stated that ‘they were quite willing to arrange for a prayer meeting at any time for members of the Church and that a prayer meeting would be conducted by the minister during the winter months’. They had decided however, that they could not ‘sanction the use of the Church Building by organisations not connected with the Presbyterian Church.’ Raphoe Session had further asked ‘for the cooperation of all their members in the work of the Church and they ask that through the use of the Means of Grace

the Kingdom of Christ may be advanced amongst us'. [Raphoe Kirk Session Minutes, 22 June 1930]

The Raphoe decision of 1930 indicted that the Presbyterian Church was not allying itself to an evangelical body like the Faith Mission, nor giving up the task of evangelism to another organisation. The 1949 decision in Ballindrait indicated that the Church would not let itself be restricted by those who wanted the activities of the church to be only evangelical, or indeed limited to what had been understood as church activity or 'evangelical pietism' [Holmes, 2006; p.360]. Ballindrait Kirk Session had met on 6 December 1949 to consider a request from members of the congregation for use of the church hall for playing badminton. The Kirk Session, who had refused the request by three votes to two, explained that they had refused the use of church premises because 'the playing of the game was not for the spiritual good of young people' that the use of the premises for such a purpose would 'bring undesirable people' to the church and that 'it was a waste of time'. The Presbytery considered the case and unanimously agreed 'that the Kirk Session of Ballindrait be directed to rescind their resolution…and grant the use of the hall to the young people of the congregation for the playing of badminton.' While the decision was clear, no reason for overturning the Kirk Session was given by the Presbytery.

One area of church work where the Presbytery could not exercise authority was in enforcing support of missions. In Raphoe the 1929 Visitation commented that Presbytery 'deplores the lack of interest in the missionary objects of the church in a congregation of the standing of Raphoe as evidenced in the totally inadequate amount of the Mission Collections'. [M R P, 23 May 1929]. Raphoe was not alone in this. In St Johnston congregation, Visited in 1930, the Presbytery expressed ' regret they can in no wise commend the interest shown by the congregation in the Mission of the Church, there being only 30 contributions out of only 135 holders'. The Presbytery urged the congregation to support the

‘work of giving wings to the Gospel’ and hoped for ‘a marked improvement in this direction’. [M R P, 22 May 1930] A decade later the Presbytery found itself in the same situation, when ‘it urged upon the people the support of the church’s missionary work’ and the ‘desirability of maintaining a lively interest in our work abroad, especially in view of the liberal endowments which the congregation is fortunate in possession’. [M R P, 16 May 1940]

While Laggan Presbyterians discussed local relationships and international support, boundaries of a different nature were being negotiated at national level. In September, 1939 De Valera announced the intention of his government that the Free State would remain neutral in any forthcoming war. Laggan Presbyterians had used their political influence, but had remained in the excluded area of Ulster against their wishes. They had been successful in maintaining their schools and congregational life in a society that was, at best, tolerant of their religious practices. Such was their determination, that when opportunities for influence arose, they were grasped and used to greatest potential.

REVOLUTION IN THE LAGGAN: 1945-1973.

Introduction

In his traditional St. Patrick's Day speech in 1943 President Eamon de Valera described Ireland as a country 'whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youth and the laughter of comely maidens'. [Kinealy, 2004; p.235] The decades from the 1930s to the 1970s were dominated by deValera. The Eire government used the post-war dislocation of the British Isles as an opportunity to develop Ireland's autonomy. The External Relations Act was repealed in 1948, which ended the nominal role of the British monarch in the external affairs of Ireland. In the same year the coalition government passed the Republic of Ireland Act, which declared the country a republic and ended its political association with Britain. This 'republicanism of Irish society went hand in hand with the cultivation of a more Catholic and Gaelic identity'. [Girvin, 2003; p.137]

These political developments in the Republic brought tensions with Northern Ireland, where the Unionist government used its relationship built up with Britain during the Second World War to secure special citizen status and preferential trading terms. [Bardon, 2001; p.587] Economic growth in the Republic was slow, marked by emigration and shortages. The two parts of Ireland developed at markedly different rates, the 'Republic's real shame was not that it was not growing economically, but that it was growing more slowly than its neighbours'. [Whyte, 2003; p.285] In the social sphere the two parts of Ireland were developing in different ways. It has been commented that these years in the Republic were marked by what had been called 'clericalism', the ' tendency for the influence of the catholic

church to be, if not objectively greater than in previous years, at any rate more visible'. [Whyte, 2003; p.284]

Life in the Border regions was now marked by the interplay of economic and social policies between the Republic and Northern Ireland. The IRA engaged in a Border campaign in the years 1957 to 1962, the futility of which brought a 'growing recognition of the immaturity of the official Irish attitude to partition'. [Ferriter, 2004; p.464] The existence of the Border, IRA violence, and the Unionist response to it, left a lasting impression on those who negotiated life on the edges of two political jurisdictions. One personal reflection from the 1950s records:

> Rather than 'cops and robbers' or 'cowboys and indians', it was 'RUC and IRA' we played at break-times in the woods around…school. And we waved imaginary red torches and stopped imaginary cars, pretending to be B's' [Stephenson, 2005; p.89]

A recent study of the Border has remarked 'most Irish people tended to identify themselves politically and culturally, and were identified as such by others, by their attitude to the Border.' [Logue, 1999; p.8]

This section will examine the Presbyterian community of the Laggan in the post war period. By the end of the 1930s and the declaration of the Emergency, Laggan Presbyterians found themselves on a frontier between a country at war and one that was neutral in the conflict. This community that had a political self-understanding in terms of unionism, was now without doubt excluded from Northern Ireland. Laggan Presbyterians had again become, after a period of 300 years, planters in a new country.

De Valera steered the Free State through the Second World War as a neutral power, although there was much tacit co-operation with British and American authorities. Irish neutrality deprived these powers of the use of strategically important sea and airports, and emphasised the divergence of between the Republic and Northern Ireland, which was heavily involved in the war effort. Neutrality led to the blocking of Ireland's entry to the United

Nations by means of a Soviet veto until 1955. In 1948 deValera called a general election one year early to pre-empt growing dissatisfaction as unemployment increased, emigration remained at about 30,000 people per year and increases in pay fell far behind spiralling prices. Fianna Fail lost seats and ended their sixteen years in office. The new coalition government proposed a maternity welfare scheme, similar to that available in Britain. The scheme was opposed by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, as an intrusion upon the rights of parents, and in 1951 Noel Browne, the minister involved, was forced to resign. In 1948 the government declared the Free State a republic, thus cutting the states links with the United Kingdom and further alienating unionists. The Ireland Act in the UK guaranteed Northern Ireland's status as part of the UK unless the Stormont parliament decreed otherwise. In 1956 the IRA launched a fresh offensive in Northern Ireland. The census of the same year showed the population of the Republic at an all time low despite a high birth rate, highlighting the twin problems of a severe economic slump and massive emigration.

In 1957 Fianna Fail was returned to power and Sean Lemass was appointed Tanaiste. The following year T. K. Wittaker published a report on economic development that proposed a new way forward based on export-driven development financed by foreign investment instead of traditional protectionism. De Valera resigned in 1959 and was replaced by Lemass, who introduced Wittaker's plans, resulting in the arrest of emigration and growth in the economy. In 1963 the first comprehensive schools were introduced, which combined academic and technical training, beginning a process of educational reform, leading in 1966 to the introduction of free secondary education. The previous year saw a meeting between Lemass and Terence O'Neill, the prime minister of Northern Ireland, signalling a new relationship between the two parts of Ireland. O'Neill had been elected in 1963, indicating a new approach to economic and social problems in Northern Ireland. Development was

focused in the east of the province, leaving the chiefly Catholic and Nationalist population neglected and the subject of sectarian discrimination.

In 1968 a series of marches organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association encountered aggressive counter-demonstrations by loyalists and the police force. International attention was brought to bear on Northern Ireland after a march in Derry in October. In 1969 the protests continued and the Northern Ireland Prime Minister James Chichester -Clark, was forced to call in the British Army to support the police force. The British government forced a series of moderate reforms, but Nationalists remained dissatisfied. In 1970 two members of the Fianna Fail government were implicated in a gun-running plot and, although the charge was not proved, they were forced to resign from office by Taoiseach, Jack Lynch. In 1971 internment with out trial was introduced in Northern Ireland, which deepened resentment in the Nationalist community. A banned Civil Rights march took place in Derry, on 30 January 1972 resulting in thirteen unarmed marchers being shot by members of the Parachute Regiment. Direct rule was imposed on Northern Ireland in March, by which time the IRA campaign was in operation. The following year brought formal membership of the European Economic Community for both the Republic and Northern Ireland. Negotiations involving the main political parties in Northern Ireland the UK and Republic governments resulted in the Sunningdale Agreement, providing for the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland, which included power- sharing between Unionist and Nationalist political parties, and an all Ireland dimension in the form of a North-South Council of Ireland. The Irish government removed the territorial claim on a thirty-two county Ireland, recognising the status of Northern Ireland with the UK, unless the majority of its people voted otherwise. The first inter-church meeting was held at Ballymascanlon, Co. Louth, in the same year.

The post-War years brought a rapid period of change for Donegal. New patterns of life evolved when the Rural Electrification scheme made domestic electricity available. In 1950 local government action was taken to ban the importation of English Sunday newspapers, and the structural havoc caused by Hurricane Debbie at Christmas 1961 took years to undo. The 1960s brought further social changes marked by the opening of the Fiesta Ballroom in Letterkenny. While the social changes were notable, political developments were more dramatic. In 1967 the Donegal Progressive Party was formed, which changed the dynamics of local politics. Reflecting the political situation in Northern Ireland, the Irish Army set up field hospitals for refugees from Northern Ireland in 1969 and the Presbytery wrote to the Minister of Justice requesting increased Garda protection. In 1970 local government minister Neil Blaney was dismissed because of alleged gun running activities for the IRA, and local Orange Demonstrations were cancelled. In 1972 a Presbytery delegation met with the Taoaisch regarding disturbances affecting Presbyterians

The Presbytery continued to supervise the congregations under its care in the same way as previously, but there were changes in church life too. In 1944 the Presbytery of Raphoe introduced their Scholarship Scheme to provide secondary places at the Royal School. The campaign against the teaching of the Irish language in schools continued, and further changes occurred in education with the first of a number of National Schools operating under joint Presbyterian and Church of Ireland management being opened. In January 1962 the first meeting of the new Donegal Presbytery was held which brought together in one Presbytery congregations, which had previously been members of three different Presbyteries. In 1967 Presbytery support was given for the formation of a new secondary school to provide for the needs of he Protestant population under the comprehensive scheme and the Regional College was opened in Letterkenny in 1973. Women were elected elders for the first time in Donegal in 1976, and a new church was opened in Donoughmore in 1977.

POLITICS

The State of the Presbytery: Relationships and Politics.

One historian of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has observed of the post-war period: 'The process of church extension has continued since the second world war with the establishment of nearly forty new congregations'. [Holmes, 1985; p. 158] Of these forty new congregations, only one was in the Republic of Ireland, built in 1956 in Malahide, a suburb of north Dublin, developing in tandem with the airport and associated services. [O'Neill, 1990; p.88] In Donegal, the situation could not have been more different. Emigration, 'on a scale startling by international standards' [Ferriter, 2004; p.463], combined with the lack of sustainable industry and the unremitting drudgery of rural life, to bring about a dramatic change in the county. By 1956 the population in Donegal had fallen to 122,061, which represented a fall of 9, 464 in five years. This was 'the second highest drop, in percentage terms, in the Republic of Ireland.' [Devenney, 2000; p.131] In just under a century the population of the county had halved. The Presbyterian population did not escape this mass exodus.

In the regular Visitations carried out by the Presbytery, comments reflect the difficulty encountered by congregations due to the changing economic conditions. In 1946, the relatively wealthy congregation of Newtowncunningham was congratulated for the state of its financial affairs,' notwithstanding considerable property to maintain and not inconsiderable loss of liberal supporters through death and removals'. [M R P, 21 May 1946] The effects of members moving from the area could be seen in attendance even at the half -yearly Communion services. In 1950 the Visitation of Ballindrait congregation remarked on the attendance at the sacrament was only half that of the total possible. This, they supposed 'may be accounted for by old age and by young people at work elsewhere.'[M R P 16 May 1950] The Visitation of Raphoe congregation in 1956 noted 'with regret the decline in families

connected with the congregation'. In a little over ten years, family numbers had fallen from 140 to 115, with associated financial implications for the congregation. The following year the Visitation of Convoy congregation noted financial concerns, accepting that 'people give according to their means, it is hoped that more of the young people who are wage earners in any form, will give their help readily in supporting their congregation financially'. [M R P, 22 May 1957] By 1958 the financial situation in Ballindrait had reached the stage where consideration was being given to the retention of the church farm, and Presbytery advised the committee 'to take steps to make the farm profitable either by sale or otherwise.' [M R P, 22 May 1958]

In the 1960s Presbytery found that numbers continued to decline. In April 1962 Ballyshannon reported a loss of families, and in the same year Donoughmore congregation reported a loss of ten families in eight years. [MDP, 7 November 1962] By the end of the decade losses continued to weaken congregational life. In Kilmacrennan sixteen families had moved in ten years and in Ballindrait the numbers attending the Sunday School had declined from twenty six to twelve. It was not until 1972 that the Presbytery encouraged members of congregations to address issues of declining numbers. In May, the Presbytery encouraged the Milford congregation to 'co-operate with local efforts of find employment.' [M D P, 18 May 1972] In the following year the Visitation of Ramelton brought further encouragement for the congregation to engage in the life of the community. It was noted 'the part which the congregation plays in the life of the community as a whole, some members providing useful and appreciated leadership'. This community involvement 'spills over into church activities in which a growing sense of co-operation is evident'. The congregation was called upon 'to do their utmost to provide local employment.' [M D P, 29 May 1973] The Presbytery noted the building of a factory by an American company in Letterkenny, and hoped for development of the tourist industry. The Presbytery had agreed the previous year to send a

delegate to the Western Development Committee, meeting in Galway, which sought to address issues of employment and economic development for the predominantly rural west of Ireland. [MDP, 4 October 1972] In 1975 the Presbytery Visiting the neighbouring congregation in the town commented, 'Especially to be commended is the witness to the community by many people in the sphere of Social Service.' [MDP, 28 May 1975]

The Visitation of Ballylennon in congregation, in November 1976 also gave the Presbytery occasion for positive comment, this time on numbers and congregational life. In the previous sixteen years, forty-six fewer people were now associated with the congregation. Numbers in Sunday school had fallen from fifty-nine in 1960, to twelve in 1973, increasing to twenty-two in 1976. Congregational property, finances and organisations were in good condition, which led the Presbytery to conclude 'a splendid spirit of harmony and fellowship prevails within the congregation…' [MDP, 23 November 1976]

In addition to congregational membership, the Presbytery were concerned with the financial arrangements for ministers. The extension of British welfare provision to Northern Ireland in the post war period demonstrated the widening economic and employment opportunities in the two states. 'Economic failings …became the hallmark if the 1950s', writes Ferriter. [Ferriter, 2004; p.466] It was only slowly through the 1960s that the economic situation of the country improved, though there was a feeling that the urban-rural divide was being exacerbated by the policy followed by Lemmas of opening industrial outlets and marginalizing rural dwellers. The Presbytery was concerned that clergy should not fall behind the financial settlements of their colleagues in Northern Ireland. This was expressed formally in March 1974 when the Presbytery set up a subcommittee to 'consider the question of procuring more liberal grants from the Union Commission and other ways of making congregations in the Republic more attractive to prospective candidates'. [MDP, 27 March 1974] Discussions had taken place in the winter of 1970 and spring of 1971 regarding a

scheme of remuneration based on size of congregation and seniority. These ideas were later rejected in favour of a scheme that provided for ministerial expenses to be borne by congregations, and the introduction of grants for children's education and family allowances. [MDP,4 November 1970] A special meeting of congregational representatives and treasurers was held in the spring of 1971 to discuss ministerial remuneration with the aim of providing incomes that 'should be such as would give a reasonable and sufficient living standard'. [MDP,3 March 1971;] In May 1950 the Presbytery had noted 'the changed value of money' in urging generosity to increase a minister's stipend [MRP, 16 May 1950] One year later a lengthy discussion took place regarding 'the high cost of living and the absence of medical and educational services'. [MRP, 15 March 1951] By 1954 congregations were being urged to pay a 'realistic stipend'. [MRP, 25 May 1954]. In the 1960s the focus in supporting clerical incomes changed to the payment of travelling expenses, as a system of minimum stipends had already been introduced by the General Assembly. Discussion took place about the fairest way of assessing congregations for these payments to ministers for expenses incurred in the conduct of their duties. [MDP, 5 March 1969]

Discussions within the General Assembly in the mid 1950s, in the light of post-war development and the movement of population from rural areas, led to a proposal for the thirty existing Presbyteries to be regrouped into twenty one. The controlling principle would be 'regrouping, in such manner that a Presbytery shall consist, as far as possible, of at least 20 congregations and not more than 40'. [G A Reports, 1958;p. 121] The proposals for Co. Donegal would result in the Letterkenny and Raphoe Presbyteries being united, with the addition of Crossroads congregation from the Derry Presbytery and Stranorlar congregation from the Donegal Presbytery. The discussion of these proposals took place in the Raphoe Presbytery in November 1958, and were 'unanimously approved'. [M R P, 4 November 1958] By the following July arrangements had been made for the amalgamation to take place

formally from 1 January 1960. In October the Raphoe Presbytery discussed the possibility of additional congregations from the existing Donegal Presbytery, joining the new united Presbytery. This invitation, was augmented by the Assembly committee to include nine other congregations including Sligo, Boyle, Ballina, and Killala, among others. These proposals were abandoned in May 1961, and the original proposal, slightly altered was agreed in November 1961, to take effect from 1 January 1962.

A service of inauguration for the new Presbytery was held in Raphoe on Sunday, 31 December 1961. The local press reporting the proceedings remarked, 'Notwithstanding the very inclement weather the church was filled to capacity, the large majority of the congregations concerned being represented.' [S W N, 6 January 1962] The service, which included a 'suitable sermon from John 14.6' and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, was presided over by the moderator designate. After a reading of a 'summary of the proceedings which at Presbytery and Assembly levels led to the union' the congregation stood while Mr. A. J. Weir, minister of Letterkenny, 'sought in prayer the blessing of Almighty God'. All who could remain were entertained to tea by the ladies of Raphoe congregation.

The first meeting of the new Presbytery took place on 2 January 1962, when it was announced that 453 people had participated in the inauguration service communion. In the following few weeks a series of visits and pulpit exchanges were arranged, involving both ministers and elders, and meetings for Sunday School teachers. Interest in the new Presbytery remained high as at the Presbytery Communion service in Ramelton in June. 450 people participated. [MDP, 27 June 1962]

Following the amalgamation of Presbyteries, the General Assembly reorganised the composition of Synods. Discussions of new Synods began at a time when political storms raged as a result of events in Fethard on Sea in May, 1957, where Protestant businesses were boycotted, with the support of the parish priest, as a result of the Protestant partner in a mixed

marriage sending her children to a Protestant school. The protest resulted in Protestants driving long distances from all over the country to support the local businessmen, with Orangemen travelling from Northern Ireland also to give their support to their beleaguered co-religionists. The dispute was eventually halted when de Valera, recently returned as prime minister, spoke out against it. [Megahey, 2000; p.119] The Assembly's State of Religion and Evangelisation Committee discussed the position of Presbyterians in the Republic and concluded:

> there is nothing but praise for restraint shown under provocation, for the quiet courage of those in border areas and for the forces of law and order that carry out their duties in face of disadvantage and difficulty.

In the particular case of the Fathard on Sea boycott, the Committee asked if it was 'incidental or experimental?' They recognised that the general situation was one of 'good neighbourliness' but regarded this as fragile: '…it exists today in an atmosphere of growing caution, if not suspicion. Your friends by day could be your country's enemies in the night.' [G A Reports, 1958; p.25] The following year a conference entitled ' Presbyterians in the Republic' discussed a broad range of issues, and on the question of church organisation remarked:

> we strongly consider that the best way to provide for ...regular consultation and fellowship…while remaining actively and loyally within the structure of our larger church, would be by reorganising the Presbyteries that lie within the Republic into one Synod, instead of being parts of three as at present. [G A Reports, 1959; p.135]

Discussions continued and in 1960 the Committee further reported to the General Assembly that 'our concern is that Presbyterians in the Republic should have some effective means of working out together the general problems and vocation with which they are faced through living in different political conditions from the great bulk of our church…' [G A Reports, 1960; p.99] Following the consolidation of the new Presbytery bounds, the new Synod

groupings were introduced, so that, forty years after the Partition of Ireland, the church structures reflected the two political jurisdictions created.

Within a few years the Presbytery were again asked to consider new structures, this time being asked to review internal groupings of congregations. Prompted by the Assembly's Commission on the Union of Congregations, a survey was undertaken of numbers of families connected with congregations. An initial survey indicated a 'steady decrease in the numbers of families' over a ten-year period, a trend which 'seemed likely to continue'. [M D P, 5 November 1965] Further information was gathered by questionnaire from each congregation and a report was presented in February 1966. The most significant conclusion pointed to 'the prospects for the next 25 years are a decline in numbers of families of the nature of 15%-25%…and that at any time a minimum of ten ministers will be needed to do the work of Presbytery'. The Presbytery envisaged three courses of action: the 'looking into the situation' of congregations of less than 50 families; the formation of larger groupings of congregations; and 'exploring the various suggestions for encouraging our people to stay on the land'. [M D P, 1 February 1966] Further consideration by subcommittee sought information on loan schemes to purchase land for enlarging farms and educational grants for secondary school education [M D P, 5 October 1966] A later, and more hopeful report, felt that 'there could be an increase in immigrants to Ireland from England and the Continent' and 'tourism was also an expanding industry with a hopeful future'. It was concluded that long-term decisions should not be made, but that 'opportunities for re-grouping and re-deployment could be dealt with as they arose.' A suggestion for a ' scarcity of ministers and diminishing congregations', was a regrouping of five or six congregations, with two ministers and a lay-assistant.[M D P, 7 December 1966] Discussions in 1967 resulted in a resolution which 'rejected any rigid scheme for coping with the future',…because 'there is a chance of development beginning... and congregations now small might grow again later'. [M D P, 14 December 1967] Pressure

from central authorities was thus resisted, and none of the congregations was faced with closure, at least from pressures from within the denomination.

The decades of the 1930s and 1940s had been disappointing for Irish church relations. The negotiations between the General Assembly and the Church of Ireland on church union collapsed in 1935, and those with the Methodists, which had begin in 1905, in 1947. [Barkley, 1990] In the following decades however, joint schemes were established for the sharing of property and co-operative projects were initiated in areas where church membership was limited. The Presbytery had unanimously supported legislation to allow ownership of property by joint trustees, to make these projects possible [M R P, 14 December 1967]. Services to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, beginning in 1969, were held in Letterkenny, Ballyshannon, Raphoe, Ramelton, Convoy, Fannet, Milford, and Donegal. These services involved either worship by joint congregations, or pulpit exchanges by clergy. Church of Ireland and Methodist congregations were involved [M D P, 4 February 1969] Despite improving relations, it was still the case that the Moderator of the Donegal Presbytery specifically asked for permission to attend the enthronement of the new Bishop of Derry and Raphoe in 1970 [M D P, 3 February 1970] Fewer services took place in 1970, and in 1972, in the context of civil unrest in Northern Ireland it was agreed that 'in view of the present troubled times, the matter of the holding of an Evangelistic Campaign at Presbytery level in conjunction with other Protestant denominations might be considered'. [M D P, 1 February 1972] The matter was referred to a subcommittee, which did not take the suggestion further.

New relationships between the churches were most evident in joint educational ventures. Local clergy were involved in schools where, for example in Raphoe Vocational School, numbers of Protestant children were a small percentage of the total student roll. Co-operation was therefore necessary. In December, 1968 a special meeting of the Presbytery Standing

Commission was held to consider a programme for use in opening daily worship in the School. The programme, which consisted of prepared prayers and Bible readings, 'was fully gone into'. Interim approval was given, pending submission to the full meeting of Presbytery in March. [M D P, 13 December 1968]. When the Presbytery met, it commented that 'the introduction of modern hymns could be of some difficulty'. If the matter arose, additional consideration would have to be given. [M D P, 4 February 1969]

It was, however, concerning the building of a new school in Convoy, that the most protracted discussions took place, in order to arrive at an arrangement which was suitable to Presbytery and the local Church of Ireland authorities. Discussions ranged over several issues concerning the provision of land, but the most intense negotiations took place regarding the appointment of staff, the denominational membership of staff, and the church membership of the principal. The initial proposal to build a new school in Convoy was brought to the September 1953 meeting of Presbytery, and it was not until November 1956 that a formula of agreement had been reached between the two partners in the project. The chief stumbling block in the negotiations had concerned the appointment of the principal of the school. Final discussions rested on the description of the post-holder. The Presbytery supported the phrase 'suitable Protestant', while the Church of Ireland proposed that 'a vacancy shall be filled by such applicant as in the opinion of the Joint Managers may be best qualified to promote the educational and spiritual welfare of the pupils.' [M R P, 13 September 1956] The following month the Church of Ireland rector of Convoy wrote to agree to the Presbytery's wording, and a subcommittee from Convoy congregation was set up to take charge of practical matters arising. A less contentious project followed in November 1958, when it was agreed that a film projector, 'for the whole Protestant community' be purchased and kept in the Royal School, Raphoe by the headmaster. [M R P, 4 November

1958] Training evenings were held in February, with good attendances recorded from Protestant churches throughout the country.

The Public Face of the Presbytery: Moderators, Politics, and defensive engagement.

The visits to the Laggan of the Moderator of the General Assembly, both on a scheduled basis and for special occasions, demonstrate that 'politics and ceremonial are not separate subjects' and that 'ritual is not the mask of force, but is itself a type of power'. [Cannadine, 1987; p.3] Just as in Northern Ireland where the Unionist government used ceremonies to 'make their view of society authoritative' [McIntosh, 1999; p.103] so the Presbytery used public occasions to authenticate their position locally, and nationally, by the participation of the principle public representative of the General Assembly. The declining minority represented itself as worthy of respect through its most able public figures.

The visit of Dr. Andrew Gibson, Moderator of the General Assembly to the Royal School, Raphoe in February, 1945 was a particularly satisfying visit. Dr. Gibson, whose family was from the area, had received part of his early education at the school, and had also served on the teaching staff, before ordination and service overseas. During his visit, Dr. Gibson was congratulated 'on his brilliant career and …his present exalted position' by the Chairman of the Board of Governors. Local representatives of the Presbyterian and Church of Ireland churches remarked on his presence as a 'unique occasion'. For his part Dr. Gibson returned the compliment in his remarks by 'warmly congratulating the staff and the very large number of pupils attending the school and on the excellent results of the pupils' examinations'. There were practical outcomes from the visit also. Dr. Gibson presented 'a substantial sum of money to the school prize fund' and consented to become the President of the newly formed Past Pupils' Union. [L S, 10 February 1945]

Thirty years later the visit of Dr. A. J. Weir to the Presbytery in October 1976, sounded a completely different note. Dr. Weir, who had previously been the minister of Letterkenny congregation for ten years, spoke in the context of the political violence in Northern Ireland. His concern was to distinguish the role of the church in the political turmoil that was engulfing Northern Ireland:

> While it could be said that there is much misunderstanding and misrepresentation concerning the conflict in Northern Ireland, the verdict must remain on all our churches that we have basically refused to follow Him.

Dr. Weir also had a critical comment for those who had perhaps, too easily criticised church leaders in Northern Ireland: 'It is not enough, however, to call on Christians in Northern Ireland to live up to their beliefs if those elsewhere are really doing no better though their situation may not show them up so plainly.' [L S, 20 October 1976] Just as the critical comments of Dr. Weir illustrated a growing difference of experience and thought between Presbyterians in Donegal and those in Northern Ireland, the visit of the Moderator in 1975 was conducted in terms that might have been acceptable to an ambassador from a foreign country. In addition to the traditional conducting of services in congregations throughout the Presbytery, and visiting hospitals and Protestant schools, Dr. Lundie visited the County Council offices in Lifford. The Moderator was met by the County Manager and County Secretary, and also two county councillors. The visit also made arrangements for 'informal talks' to take place. Included on the itinerary was a visit to Convoy church which had been vandalised, and Donoughmore church, gutted by fire, the result of an electrical fault, earlier in the year. [S W N, 25 October 1975]

Moderatorial visits on the occasions of particular celebrations had given more powerful opportunities to express the values of Laggan Presbyterians to the wider community. The opening of new National Schools at Alt in 1961 and in Convoy in 1966 had demonstrated the

successful and beneficial participation of the Presbyterian community in the structures of the state, and at the same time, maintaining their particular ethos as a Protestant community in a society which was largely dominated by ethos of the Roman Catholic Church.

Joseph Brennan, Parliamentary Secretary of State at the Ministry of Finance, formally opened the new school at Alt, on 30th June 1961. The new school, replacing one built in 1943, was located just across the road from Alt Presbyterian Church. Opening devotions were conducted by the Moderator of the Raphoe Presbytery and then Dr. A. A. Park, Moderator of the General Assembly, watched by the seventeen pupils of the school, and several hundred well-wishers, 'impressively dedicated the school'. The minister of the congregation Mr. John Sproule welcomed Dr. Park, not only because the 'Office of Moderator was highly esteemed and respected', but also because of his Donegal connections, being born in Newtowncunningham Manse, where his father was minister. The generosity of the local congregation, their hard work in fundraising, and the benefiting from the wealth of extended family in the United States were praised. Dr. Park was careful to recognise the congregation as part of the greater Presbyterian Church:

> He brought them the greetings of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and although they in Alt might consider themselves a very small congregation, he would like to remind them that every church, no matter how small, was just as important as the churches with the big congregations.

He also recognised the contribution of the Government: ' Presbyterians of that …minority…community had received very generous treatment and they were glad to acknowledge it that afternoon.' Finally, he quietly stated the purpose of the school in producing 'God fearing men and women of strong character, and diligent in everything they did.' [S W N, 5 July 1961]

The opening of the new school in Convoy, which had such protracted discussion at the planning stage, took place in April 1966. Again, Joseph Brennan represented the government,

this time in his office as minister of Posts and Telegraphs. The Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. S. J. Park, a Dublin based minister, joined 'practically all the clergymen of the Diocese of Raphoe and ministers of the Donegal Presbytery, all of whom had received invitations.' The official opening of the school was proceed by a service in the Presbyterian Church, 'at which there was a huge attendance'. The minister of Raphoe, Mr. R. McC Bell, who had been involved in the arrangements for the management of the school preached on the text from Proverbs 'Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' He spoke of the importance of education from a religious perspective and also acknowledged, 'we churchmen, ministers or managers and our trustees bodies have the co-operation of a government Department, and this co-operation we acknowledge and appreciate.' Mr. Brennan and Mr. O'Sullivan, were not present at the service, but joined the congregation at the school. Mr. Brennan described the school as 'a gem in the village of Convoy', and expressed the hope that 'the children of the new school would grow up to be useful and good citizens and would further the prosperity and Christian outlook of the country.' Dr. C. J. Tyndall, Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, spoke of education as a 'mutual responsibility…the two churches getting together in the common purpose of the education of their children'. Dr. Park said 'the co-education of the children at the school would bring about a better understanding between them'. Commenting on the principle of larger schools the Moderator was more cautious saying, 'there are certain places where it would not be a good thing to have a central school '. He supported calls for more widely available secondary education and remarked 'they still had a long way to go.' In addition to the clerical speakers at the occasion, Mr. W. Buchanan, a County Councillor, and a member of a neighbouring congregation, was asked to speak, as well as a local T.D. [S W N, 30 April 1966] The opening of a new school in Raphoe in 1977 gave the opportunity for the Moderator, Dr. Patterson to join with Dr. Robert Eames, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, to congratulate ' the hard work of

the parent's committee and also the Department of Education in Dublin'. Dr. Patterson spoke of his pride in being ' a Donegal man' and Dr. Eames remarked that 'there has been a stabilising of the Protestant population…seen in church circles, business circles and in developments such as this '. [L S, 12 October 1977]

Two further events celebrated the contribution of the Presbyterian community to Donegal, one in the past, and the other indicating a belief in a confident future. In June 1974 the tercentenary celebrations of Raheneey congregation took place. The weeklong celebration, which had been several years in preparation, gave an opportunity for noting the 'neighbourliness, moderation and good citizenship' of the Presbyterian community, which had 'in recent years become increasingly involved in the life and organisation of the local communities.' [D D, 21June1974] The congregation organised an exhibition of historical artefacts, and a number of events made explicit the relationship of the congregation to larger bodies and movements in Irish history. Professor J. M. Barkley from the Presbyterian College in Belfast gave a lecture, the minister of the congregation Mr. C. Marshall spoke on the history of Presbyterianism in Donegal, and Mr. B. S. Schlenther of the University of Wales addressed the topic 'The Presbyterian Influence in the Development of the USA'. The 300 years anniversary service was conducted by the Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr. G. Temple Lundie, and a service was broadcast on national radio. The events were fully recorded by the denomination's magazine the Presbyterian Herald in July 1974.

While celebrating historical events was of interest to a broad section of the community, the opening of a new church building was a statement in the 'Belief in the future' for the Presbyterians of the Laggan. Donoughmore church which had burned down as the result of an electrical fault, was rebuilt and reopened in September 1977. The new building, designed by one of Ireland's leading church architects of the day, Liam McCormick [Barrett, 2003;p. 603], 'displays a continuity with the past, and at the same time, provides an inspiring modern

setting for worship'. [L S, 7 September 1977] The opening and dedication service was an entirely Presbyterian occasion, with the local Presbytery represented along with the Synod of Dublin. The Moderator of the General Assembly was the chief guest, a particular pleasure since Dr. Patterson was a 'Donegal native'. In his comments Dr. Patterson remarked on the significance of the building of a new church in the context of 'declining membership through removal and inter-church marriages'. He said, 'In building this lovely church you are saying in a very tangible way that there is a future. You have invested in the future in terms of giving and working and planning.' He continued to affirm their decision when he said 'I see many hopeful signs…in the acceptance of our people that this is their country and they have a place and a part in it.' This was 'no easy position for a tiny minority to reach, no matter how tolerant and understanding the majority may be. It is easy to feel unimportant.'

Dr. Patterson provided a theological basis for the new building in terms of 'the pre-determining purpose of the living God.' With his comments the Moderator successfully tied church, place, and future together, and affirmed the people who had made a decision to maintain continuity with the past with confidence in the future. ' You have accepted that this is where God wants you to be—that here with this building as your centre of worship and fellowship, you will be fulfilling God's purpose. You have accepted that this is where God wants you to be and for this time.' [S W N, 10 September 1977]

Dr. J. H. Bewglass, Clerk of the Presbytery and minister of Ballindrait congregation, joined with the Donegal Historical Society in November, 1969 to mark the birthplace of James Porter. Porter had been born in Ballindrait in 1753, studied divinity in Glasgow and became minister of Greyabbey in Co. Down in 1773. He became involved with the United Irishmen, was captured at the outbreak of the 1798 Rebellion and on the testimony of an informer was hanged in front of his own meetinghouse. His notoriety was something of an embarrassment to later Presbyterians loyal to both Crown and status quo. Leckey had

provided an apology for him as something of a martyr for the ordinary man, ‘ so deep was his sympathy with his oppressed countrymen…’ when writing his history of the ‘ loyal Lagganeers’ [Lecky, 1905; p.71]. In providing the address for the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the ‘ ’98 Minister’, Dr. Bewglass regarded Porter as ‘the man still remembered for his efforts towards the bettering of the conditions of his fellow man’. The defence of Porter in Presbyterian eyes was continued at the unveiling as it was asserted that ‘the general opinion was that he was not an active member of the (United Irishmen) organisation.’ Dr. Bewglass concluded his remarks, ‘May these markers serve to perpetuate the memory of a good and brave man, and be a source of inspiration to those who behold them.’ [S W N, 1 November 1969] The honouring of a Presbyterian of note for rebellion and disobedience to the authority of the crown was deeply out of step with the Unionist sympathies of the majority of the Presbyterian population of Northern Ireland, but one that could be accommodated by the more nuanced community of the Laggan.

It had been observed that by the 1950s ‘ex-unionists were …a politically negligible minority’.[McDowell, 1997; p.194] The truth of this judgement is borne out by a reading of the statements and resolution of the Presbytery in these post war decades. Influence, if it existed at all, was at the level of personal contacts, and persistence in application for posts or funds. When Mr. John Sproule, minister of Donoughmore congregation, complimented Mr. Joseph Brennan T. D., at that time Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Finance, on the completion of the new school building at Alt, he commented that he had known Mr. Brennan for nine years as a member of the Donegal Vocational Education Committee, and had a lengthy correspondence with him. He thanked him for his ‘personal interest and work’ that had led to the completion of the project. [S W N, 5 July 1961] Mr. Sproule had pursued those in power for five years in order to bring completion to the project, which otherwise would have experienced even further delays. It was, in fact, with the retirement of Mr.

Sproule from the Vocational Educational Committee that the Presbytery commented on its failure to receive an invitation to the opening of a school in Gweedore [M D P, 6 February 1973], and questioned the role it was to play, and the representation to which it was entitled to, in local government functions [MD P, 7 March 1973].

The greatest participation in politics by Presbyterians in the Laggan was through involvement in the Orange Order and the Donegal Progressive Party. A comparison of major Orange events over the period shows a significant, though diminishing participation by clergy, and a general support from the Protestant population of the Laggan.

The first Orange District demonstration for over thirty years had been held in Raphoe in July 1947. Two seventeen carriage trains left Londonderry on the morning of the 12 July, to arrive at Raphoe, stopping on the way at customs at Strabane and Lifford. 'The great procession through Raphoe consisted of 37 bands and lodges who had travelled by special trains, while hundreds of other brethren arrived by bus.' [S W N, 19 July 1947] Orange brethren received a warm welcome from the people of Raphoe, although they were prohibited from displaying decorations, which included the Union Jack – 'the unfurling of which was not permitted in Eire'. After a parade through the town the hosts and visitors attended a service that was held in a field half a mile away. The platform party included the Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven. C. J. Homan, and the minister of the Presbyterian Church, Mr. W. F. Shepherd. The gathering sang the National Anthem in honour of the engagement of Princess Elizabeth to Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, and listened to an address from Mr. J. G. MacManaway, who said, 'Where our faith is concerned we can always say there is no Border. We are always with you in everything connected with our spiritual heritage.' The purpose of the day was

> to remember those who keep in honour the memory of those who by their bravery, endurance and sacrifice handed down the gift of spiritual freedom which we enjoy today. If it had not been for them and for what they did there would be no Protestant Church today.

The speaker acknowledged that there were those 'whose ultimate aim and object was to undo the glorious victory which they celebrated. They knew that their final aim was the elimination of their own faith from this land.' The members were told they would be 'fools and they would be traitors to their own faith if they did not remember what history had to teach about this …' They were urged to remember that 'Ulster was the heart, home and cradle of the Protestant faith in the British Commonwealth.' Other members of Presbytery were involved in similar gatherings. Mr. John Sproule, District Master of Castlederg, led the proceedings there. He reported, 'the Order was flourishing in the District', with numbers increasing by 110 on the previous year. 'The most encouraging feature was that the young people were being attracted to the Order as never before.' [L S, 15 July1947]

Almost twenty years later Raphoe was again to witness significant Loyal Order celebration. The Golden jubilee of the Raphoe Royal Arch Chapter was marked by a service in the Presbyterian Church 'which was attended by all the members of the Chapter and many friends from a distance.'[S W N, 15 May 1965] The service was conducted by the Minster of the congregation, and additional speakers included those who held office in both the Chapter, and were members of the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Bewglass, recently retired from the parish ministry, was congratulated on the award of honorary D. D., by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland.

The close relationship between the Protestant Churches and the Loyal Orders was reiterated at a gathering in St. Johnston for the unfurling and dedication of a new banner for the local Royal Black Preceptory. Mr. Malcolm McSparron, minister of Monreagh congregation, opened the meeting with prayer, and the banner was dedicated by Mr. John Brown, a minister from Co. Derry. The speaker for the occasion was Mr. Joseph Burns, M. P. for North Derry. He commented:

> When we come over the Border we find that the most loyal people in the Republic are the Protestant people. They are people who never at any time have started any difficulties, because they believe that they should be loyal to the country in which they live.

Mr. Burns was followed at the podium by Senator J. E. N. Barnhill, veteran Border politician who recalled the 'grave tragedy' of exclusion from Northern Ireland. He counselled those present to further the interests of their Protestant churches:

> Let them work for them, subscribe to them, and do everything in their power to make them flourishing, because it was of the utmost importance that the Protestant churches of Donegal should be kept in a flourishing state.

Senator Barnhill also counselled participation in local affairs: ' I do not want you to be aggressive and I would urge you to obey the laws of the land, but you should express your opinions, and not compromise for the sake of compromise.' Mr. W. C. Patterson, a Protestant member of the County Council, also commented on the loyalty and law- abiding nature of the Protestant people of Donegal. Mr. W. Buchanan, called on the Institution to:

> hold their demonstration there and show , in a practical way, that they were encouraging them, and were rewarding the people of Donegal for the way they had endeavoured to maintain and uphold the great traditions of the Orange Order and the Royal Black Institution on the other side of the Border.

John Brown concluded that members in Northern Ireland 'might perhaps take a lesson from the members in Donegal, who had always been so true and faithful'. [S W N, 19 August 1967]

Law and order was definitely the matter uppermost in Protestant minds in St. Johnston in July 1972. The St. Johnston Orange Lodge had returned from the District parade in Northern Ireland, had unfurled their banner and the sixty-strong Lodge were marching from the railway station to the Orange Hall when they were attacked by about thirty men, throwing stones. The attackers managed to break the poles supporting the banner, and the district Master, Robert John Fleming, was knocked unconscious, only to be brought to safety by his two teenage

sons. The parade eventually reached the Orange Hall, a few hundred yards away, and 'an uneasy peace returned to the village'. [D D, 21 July 1972] After midnight violence again occurred, with petrol bombs thrown at the Orange Hall and at the police patrol car. The disruption of the evening also included the hijacking of the fire engine from Letterkenny, the attack of car belonging to a Protestant family living in the main street, and shots being fired resulting in three people being treated in hospital. The following Thursday the Irish Army had to be brought from Letterkenny to restore order following attacks on a Masonic Hall, the Presbyterian Hall, and a timber yard owned by Mr. Fleming.

The incident brought condemnation from a variety of sources. The Provisional IRA contacted Mr. Fleming 'condemning the violence and said that none of their men had been involved'. The North West Republic Executive denied any Republican organisation involvement, and called upon 'all Irish people to behave with dignity, calmness and restraint in the present situation'. Mr. Paddy Harte, a T. D. living in Raphoe, commented that 'conflict from Northern Ireland can easily engulf all on each side of the Border.' He continued 'The Donegal people do not want sectarian trouble, and I would appeal to all to remain calm. This is a time for cool clear thinking, and moderate temperament.' [D D, 21 July 1972] It was the context of political violence that had led the Donegal Orange District to cancel the Orange parade in Rossnowlagh in 1970 and 1971. [Devenney, 2000; p.160] The Presbytery in their response to the violence thanked the Garda ' for their role in St. Johnston on 12th July'. [M D P, 4 October 1972]

It was not sectarian political violence but tax that led to the setting up of the Donegal Progressive Party, in June 1967. The Party was formed to comply with new electoral legislation introduced by Neill Blaney, a Donegal T.D., as Minister for Local Government, in an effort to curb the power of non-party members of the Dail. The Donegal Progressive Party had a strong Presbyterian representation in the first office holders: Mr. John Sproule,

chairman, Mr. R. McC. Bell vice chairman, and Mr. T. A. Morrow, a Raphoe solicitor, secretary. [Harte, 2005; p.16]. The first meeting of the Party in Letterkenny addressed the question of the heavy rates on the Western Seaboard counties. Mr. W. Buchanan, a serving member of the County Council, pointed out that 'In this county the burden was hitting the farmers, business people, tenants of houses and cottages. When high transport charges and other drawbacks of the area were taken into account, this became absolutely intolerable.' Archdeacon L. W. Crooks of Letterkenny supported the Party in the 'need for progressive thinking and the need for people to take a keener interest in the affairs affecting the whole county.' [D D, 23 June 1967]

In the June election the Party fielded four candidates, with outgoing Councillors Robert Anderson and Kitchener Baxter joining W. Buchanan and W.C. Patterson. Their election manifesto was based on 'taking National Politics out of Local Government; the transfer of essential services from local charge; and the equalisation of Rates.' The Party were careful to emphasise that membership was:

> open to all electors who are prepared to recognise its objects, which include the exercising by democratic and constitutional methods, an influence in local affairs, taxation…and the general well-being of the community, with a view to enhancing the prosperity of the country, and the protection of the rights of citizens under the Constitution.' [S W N, 3 June 1967]

The election, in which fifty-five candidates stood for twenty-eight seats, brought 'Disaster to the Progressive Party.' One local paper declared that the Party's election showing was 'a calamity at the polls which is bound to be reflected in the standard of public administration in the county for the next three years'. [S W N, 8 July 1967] The three non- elected candidates had received the following votes: Buchanan 1271; Anderson 1094; Baxter 607. Patterson who was elected received 1548. Senator Patrick McGowan, who received the greatest number of votes, received 2026.

At the first meeting of the newly elected Council W. C. Patterson was elected Vice-Chairman. Mr. Harte proposed his nomination, on the grounds that 'Mr. Patterson was the sole surviving member of the Donegal Progressive Party which had received 4500 first preferences in the election…(and) some representation should be given to this section of the community.' While Mr. Patterson was successful in gaining office in the Council, he was not successful in seeking a nomination to any of the Council Subcommittees. He argued that:

> they should keep politics out of the local committees and the Committee on Agriculture in particular. The supporters of his Party were some of the most progressive farmers in the country and a fair minded and responsible section of the community and they deserved formal recognition on the committees [L S, 19 July 1967]

Despite his plea, no nomination was allowed, and Fianna Fail, which held the majority of Council seats, controlled the appointments.

The condition of cross-Border relations in the early 1970s can be judged by the remarks made by a judge sitting at Donegal Circuit Court in January 1972, when he commented, ' I express the hope that with the coming of the Common Market, the sight of the Union Jack will not outrage or enrage onlookers to the extent of causing damage which costs the ratepayers £1351. People must learn to grow up…' [D D, 21 January 1972] The judge's remarks related to a number of compensation claims made for damages caused in public disturbances that had political or sectarian motivations. Incidents included the destruction by fire of Carrigans Memorial Hall, which was used by the local Orange Lodge, damage to baled hay on Protestant owned farms and other property incidents. While there was general animosity in some community relations in January 1972, a Civil Rights demonstration in Londonderry, and the events surrounding it, was to change the political situation on both sides of the Border for years to come.

The events of Bloody Sunday, in Londonderry, 30 January 1972 centred on an illegal Civil Rights Association mass demonstration against internment. The weeks before had been

full of violent protests. Security policy carried out by the Parachute Regiment left thirteen men dead and several wounded. The resulting security and political consequences were enormous: throughout Northern Ireland there were 'angry and violent protests.' [Bardon, 2001; p.688] The Republic declared a national day of mourning, and on the day of the funeral 'In practically every Catholic Church Requiem Mass was offered up for the repose of the souls of the victims, and at each the celebrant spoke on the tragedy, chiefly in exhortation to observe the dictates of charity and resist all feelings of hate and revenge.' [D D, 4 February 1972] In Donegal marches of mourning took place in many towns and villages, and factories, shops and places of work closed.

In the County Council chamber on the day following Bloody Sunday the Councillors 'met and adjourned for a week as a mark of respect and sympathy with the thirteen young Derrymen, murdered by British forces on Sunday'. Before the Council meeting a public demonstration of 1000 people handed in a telegram to ' An Taoisheach, Mr. Jack Lynch urging him to take appropriate action to have these mass murders by the British forces in the Six Counties stopped.' The debate in the Council began as 'the Council members stood and offered prayers for those killed.' Mr. Patterson, as the sole representative of the minority community in the Council, expressed 'profound shock at the tragic events in Derry' and went on to comment on the long-standing nature of the problem. He said ' the problem has been put by many people as a problem of religion – this is not really so- it is a purely political problem than can be remedied only by a political solution, whatever that may be.' He urged:

> …it is the people of Ireland who know the problem and it is only the Irish people who can solve it, Irish people must be united and it is our duty as representatives for the people to help this unity to be brought about.' [D D, 4 February 1972]

In some regards, the sole member of the Donegal Progressive Party holding public office was giving the political version of the Presbytery's resolution, quoted in the press coverage of the funerals:

> The Presbytery learned with horror of the deaths and injuries in Londonderry….(and) extend their sympathy to all who have been injured and bereaved in the troubles in Northern Ireland ,and especially to those in the most recent events across the Border.' [L S, 9 February 1972]

The General Assembly responded to the political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s at several levels. There were direct comments on political statements, visits to political leaders, and also major reports on political philosophies. In 1966 a report on Religious Discrimination in Ireland was considered, and in 1971 on Radical Change, Reform and Revolution. In 1974 a report that had taken two years to prepare was presented on 'The Aim, Ideals and Methods of Irish Republicanism, and the attitudes of Irish Presbyterians to it.' The following year consideration was given to 'Loyalists and Ireland', and in 1977 to the report on 'Pluralism in Ireland '. These reports, representing ' discontinuity with past interpretations' [Mitchell, 2006; p.214] offer a rethinking of the political loyalties of the Presbyterian Church, and in many ways can be seen as the denomination's effort to come to terms, not only with the rapidly changing and disintegrating nature of the political state, but also with fact and myth, in the history of the church.

In Donegal the Presbytery considered these reports. In 1966 the report on Religious Discrimination was 'considered at length and in private'. [MDP, 5 November 1966]. The 1971 Report on Radical Change, Reform and Revolution prompted the Presbytery to comment, ' a changed society comes through changed lives, our evangelism needs to be freed from its concern for traditionally Presbyterian families and become a full proclamation of the Gospel to the whole people of Ireland'. [M D P, 1 December 1971] The Presbytery met in November 1974 to discuss the report on Irish Republicanism, the resulting discussion leading to a comment 'that the matters raised in the document should be discussed in Church courts was questioned'. [M D P, 5 November 1974] The Report on Loyalism was not discussed, and the Report on Pluralism in Ireland led to a 'lively discussion…', with resolutions on

integrated housing and support of the institution of marriage being supported. [M D P, 6 December 1977]

There were also practical responses to political violence in the Border area. In August 1969, only five days after British troops arrived in Londonderry to assist the police to maintain law and order in the city, St. Johnston Kirk Session met to consider a request for use of church premises. The request had come from the local Assistance Officer, who was making a survey of the halls in the area, with a view to supplying 'accommodation for refugees if rioting should breakout in Northern Ireland'. The Kirk Session gave the request 'full discussion' and gave permission for the church hall to be used as 'temporary accommodation for refugees if the need should arise'. The Session did stipulate a number of conditions, and qualified their decision as 'not in any sense representing a political judgement, but is made only on humanitarian grounds'. The conditions were straightforward and largely practical, 'that the hall be used in the event of real necessity and only for genuine refugees', that there should be adequate provision for the 'care and welfare of such refugees by some competent organisation' and that the County Council should 'make good any damage to the Congregation's property'. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minute Book, 1969]. As events progressed in Northern Ireland, the anticipated refugee problem did not arise.

The record of political comments on contemporary events, and actions to engage with them, like the political agenda of the Donegal Progressive Party, show the truth of one judgement on Irish politics of the time 'that the parish pump remained crucial…'[Ferriter, 2004; p.484]. The focus of the Presbytery was not in Dublin, nor in Belfast, but on its own boundaries, and in the interests of its members. The Presbytery used its relationships with those in power to make their case for their own members, leaving others to supervise their own interests.

The Presbytery was careful to ensure that no false impression was given. In responding to a report on ‘Discrimination against minorities’ in 1965 the Presbytery remarked, ‘ In the opinion of Presbytery we did not suffer as a minority church from discriminationatory practices in connection with any local or central government regulations.’ [M D P, 5 November 1965].

As the political situation in Northern Ireland continued to deteriorate, incidents involving nuisance and vandalism to Protestant-owned farms close to the Border increased. In October 1969 the Presbytery wrote to the Minister of Justice, seeking additional Garda protection for members in these difficult circumstances. [M D P, 1 October 1969]. Concerns regarding stone throwing at ‘ Presbyterian homes and property’ and the ‘delay in dealing with the outrages by the Garda’ were raised in March, 1970, were left in the hands of the Moderator and Clerk to pursue. [M D P, 4 March 1970] At a meeting in December 1971 concerns were again raised about ‘recent disturbing happenings in East Donegal affecting some of our people and I. R. A. activities’. One minister considered that ‘adequate protection was not available’ and urged the Presbytery ‘to take some action in connection with the situation by way of issuing a statement or making representation in government quarters’. The Presbytery decided ‘that no action be taken’ and that individual cases of difficulty should be dealt with ‘as seen fit by the persons and ministers concerned ’. [M D P, 1 December 1971]. The situation arising from Bloody Sunday, and the escalation of violence in Northern Ireland, did indeed stir the Presbytery to use its connections with those in government. In February, 1972 a delegation of one minister and one elder, were given permission to convey Presbytery’s views on ‘widespread intimidation by the I. R. A.’ surrounding the national days of mourning to the Taoisheach, Mr. Jack Lynch. While supporting the delegation, they were left to make their own arrangements and to communicate with the press themselves. [M D P, 1 February 1972] The following month the minister involved reported on a useful meeting with the Taoiseach.

He reported a ‘sympathetic hearing’ and an assurance that the points raised would be referred to the Minister for Justice. [M D P, 1 March 1972] A similar approach to fires at farms was taken in November 1978, when a resolution urging ‘the responsible authorities to do all in their power to protect property and apprehend those who may have been responsible’ was passed. The Clerk was instructed to send the resolution to the Garda and public representatives, and ministers were asked to read it at Sunday services. A reply received from the Taoiseach was felt to be unsatisfactory in ‘ruling out the possibility that the fires might have been malicious, and in asserting that a call for restraint was unnecessary’. The Presbytery decided to enlist the help of the Church and Government Committee of the General Board of the General Assembly [M D P, 6 February 1979] A meeting with the Minister for Justice was held in May, 1979 when a deputation of three were ‘cordially received’. [M D P, 19 May 1979]

The Presbytery did not comment on the atrocities that were taking place as a result of the political situation in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the bombings that took place in Monaghan and Dublin in 1974, thought to be the result of Loyalist paramilitary activity, were not commented on. Only one exception to this practice occurred, in relation to an attack on an Orange Hall close to the Border at Tullyvallen, Markethill in Co. Armagh. In September 1975 sympathy was expressed to the bereaved relatives and the ministers and congregations concerned when six members of the Presbyterian congregation were killed by I. R. A. gunmen. The Clerk was instructed to write to the Newry Presbytery, to convey sympathy. [M D P, 3 September 1975]

The period from the end of the Emergency, to the declaration of Direct Rule in Northern Ireland in March 1972, was a period of reorganisation and re alignment for the Presbyterian community in the Laggan. Those who remained after the political upheaval of the 1920s, the consolidation of the new state in the 1930s, and the declaration of the Republic of Ireland in 1948, had additionally to contend with economic disadvantage compared with their Northern

Ireland neighbours. Faced with these challenges, a new and strengthened Protestant community was formed, with new structures being created within the Church, and new alliances created between churches. A new sense of identity began to emerge, which found its heritage in the Presbyterianism of Ulster, and its home among the citizens of the Republic. As in the Plantation of the seventeenth century, 'the strength of Irish Presbyterianism…lay in the fact that it had a coherent organization.' [Gillespie, 1989; p.169] In addition, it had access to political expressions of the Protestant community through the Orange Order and the Donegal Progressive Party. Previous generations of Laggan Presbyterians had found comfort, first in Unionism, and then in the existence of Northern Ireland. The political upheaval of the late 1960s and the 1970s brought profound change. Now, the Border with Northern Ireland, for so long a source of frustration, became a source of comfort. In the words of one Laggan Presbyterian, ' I do know that the border was never a limitation or a hindrance to me…it was there to protect us and keep us safe from the bombs and shootings…' [McCausland, 2005; 59]

The Gathering Storm of Mixed Marriages.

Ferriter comments 'From 1946 to 1961 the Protestant population fell almost five times faster than the overall population.' While explanations of this dramatic statistic vary, one factor which is common to most, is the 'Ne Temere decree and the unpredictability and inconsistency of Church rulings in this regard…' [Ferriter, 2004; p.582]. The firm hold and traditional policy followed by Archbishop John McQuaid ensured that as well as a deliberate discouragement of ecumenism, there was a strict adherence to the decree (1908), which bound the Protestant partner in a mixed marriage to ensure that the children would be brought up in the Roman Catholic Church. The Tilson case, which arose because the Protestant partner in a marriage wished to revoke his promise to raise his children as Catholic, ended in

the High Court. Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy made a ruling in 1951 that gave legal standing to the undertaking required by the Roman Catholic Church at the time of marriage. The judgement illustrated the 'all-pervasiveness of the Catholic ethos at that time' [Fuller, 2004; p.18], and the events in Fethard on Sea, in May, 1957, where the failure of a mixed marriage led to the boycott of Protestant businesses, prompted the General Assembly to resolve in June 1958 to arrange a 'special conference of Presbyterians in the Republic to consider some of the problems specially affecting them'. [G A Reports, 1958; p.117]

Calls for such discussions did not arise in Donegal until much later. One explanation for this is the separate lives lived out, at least socially, by the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. Personal reminiscences from members of the Protestant community record a social life centred on church halls and some times, Orange Lodge events. Post-war social life consisted of ' relations and members of the Presbyterian Church. Socials were held in the church hall for Protestants only.' [Glenn, 2005; 32] Another participant later reflected that Protestant social functions were 'jealously protected' [Patterson, 2005] A similar situation was found among Presbyterians in Co. Monaghan, were young Protestants 'travelled long distances to Protestant halls all over the country to meet others of the same religious persuasion…Mixed marriages were rare, and, thinking about my primary school friends, all of them married Protestants.' [Quill, 2005; p.76]

The society of Protestant halls was not to continue. The changes that were affecting Irish society generally, characterised as an insatiable 'appetite for Anglo- American culture' [Ferriter, 2004; p.603] were felt in Donegal also. There were also internal pressures that caused difficulty. In Raphoe 'general pandemonium and confusion with several people arguing and fighting and girls screaming was how a witness at Raphoe Court, described a row in a local dance hall.' [D D, 18 February 1972] The 'dance hall' was the local parish hall, and the defendants, argued their solicitor, 'were basically very respectable people who had been

regular patrons of the hall and who had never given any trouble before.' Better facilities in dance halls in Letterkenny, Lifford, Donegal and other market towns, the ease of travel, the greater availability of alcohol, and difficulty of crossing the Border from Northern Ireland, all had their effects. By the mid 1970s congregations regarded mixed marriages as a communal problem. The Elder's Day Conference in May 1975 had discussed the topic of 'Inter- Church Marriages', with the lectures given by the professor of Practical Theology at Assembly's College, Belfast [M D P 28 May, 1975] The Moderator of Presbytery in 1978 considered the growing occurrence of mixed marriage to be of such significance that 'he dealt at length with his concern about the problems attached to mixed marriages.' [M D P, 1 February 1978] A committee was set up in April 1978 to prepare a pamphlet on mixed marriages, to be distributed to congregations. The Committee reported:

> It is sad that religion which ought to give stability and direction to a marriage can be a disruptive element in it. The tragic thing is that it is all so unnecessary. The problem would cease if the Roman Catholic Church changed its attitude and its legislation and honoured in practice the freedom of conscience it would appear to uphold in print. [M D P, 7 November 1978]

The Presbytery 'was full of praise for the report', including its unyielding tone and the unselfcritical approach taken throughout.

EDUCATION

Reform in the National Schools.

Landmark changes took place in the provision of National Schools in 1965, and in 1975. The first of these decisions regarded an initiative regarding the closure or amalgamation of small schools. In relation to Presbyterian schools the Presbytery was whole hearted in its resolution ' that the Presbytery of Donegal, having in mind the educational welfare of the children under its care, concur with the Department of Education's policy of amalgamating one-teacher

schools, except in remote areas.' [M D P, 5 November 1965]. In the following year decisions were taken about the closure of small national schools, and the individual arrangements for pupils involved. The closure of Drumbeg National School was reported in October 1966, and arrangements for children to travel to schools free of cost in Raphoe were outlined. The Presbytery agreed that 'the arrangement was working most satisfactorily'. [M D P, 5 October 1966] Not all closures were harmonious. In St. Johnston the closure of a church school was greeted with disquiet. In January 1975 discussion took place at a Kirk Session meeting where the members felt ' that the parents should have been consulted before a final decision by the Department of Education be allowed to have been taken'. Unhappiness was also expressed over the 'transfer of furniture from St. Johnston School to Monreagh without our permission'. At a meeting the following month the feeling was expressed that 'the school at St. Johnston was the best school as the facilities at Monreagh were far from standard'. [St Johnston Kirk Session Minute Book, 20 January 1975] The minister who had facilitated the closure and transfer, Dr. Bewglass, who had been invited to the meeting to ' explain his reasons leading up to his decision in the closing of St. Johnston National School', stated that 'he had misread (the parents) feeling in the matter and wished to apologise', and gave an undertaking to consult a local solicitor. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minute Book, 6 February 1975] While there was no further action on the closure of St. Johnston school, further amalgamations of neighbouring schools brought property issues to the fore. Following further consultation with the solicitor, it became clear that the landowner, the Duke of Abercorn, not the congregation, had the right to appoint the manager of the school. In the case of Ardagh, Drumbeg and Castletown schools, the landowner had appointed the minister of Ballylennon congregation as manager, but the congregation had no claim to a 'Presbyterian school'. [St. Johnston Kirk Session Minute Book; 28 March 1979]

The second landmark change occurred in 1975 with the introduction of Boards of Management, composed of parent and teacher representatives, together with church nominees. The Government was able to move forward with these reforms after the Roman Catholic hierarchy declared itself in favour of closer co-operation with parents in 1969. The government introduced specific proposals four years later and in 1975 the new Boards were introduced, which replaced the 'single manager…who was an authority figure within one of the religious denominations'. [Akenson, 2003; p.752] The Donegal Presbytery first discussed these proposals in September 1975 seeking clarification not on the principle of the proposals, but on their implementation. As a result of discussion it was decided to consult with congregational committees of congregations 'closely related to schools concerned', and to consult with representatives of the Church of Ireland regarding schools where 'joint-manager' arrangements could be put in place. Two months later, local Boards had been approved and were in place, with interim arrangements made in the case of teachers having to be employed. [M D P, 4 November 1975]

The introduction of these changes was readily achieved since lay participation was an integral part of Presbyterian polity. By contrast, there was considerable 'opposition to amalgamation of schools by Catholic clergy' on the basis that few parish priests were willing to share control of schools and because of the ' moral dangers of educating boys and girls together'. [Akenson, 1996;p. 537]. The introduction of the new management structures in the 1970s introduced 'a significant change in the culture of the national school'. [Fuller, 2002; p.161] Within the Presbyterian schools the change amounted to a recognition of the role which parents and staff had previously performed informally. Within Roman Catholic managed schools, the changes of the 1960s and 1970s marked 'the end of conformity which had typified Catholicism in the 1950s'. With the inclusion of parents and staff on Boards of

Management, and curricular reforms introduced in 1971, the ‘ethos of education had changed fundamentally…’ [Fuller, 2002; p.162]

The Language question in a new era.

Opposition to the teaching of Irish remained firm and in the 1940s received a fresh impetus following the School Attendance Bill introduced by Dirrig. The Bill which was eventually referred to the President, Douglas Hyde, himself a Protestant, was found to be repugnant to the constitution and later dropped. The measure would have prohibited Protestants sending their children outside the State to be educated, since it would have required that each child on returning home had to pass a state test, which would have included an examination in the Irish language. [Akenson, 2003; p.739] The Presbytery passed a resolution ‘expressing concern at the amount of Irish being taught in National Schools and the teaching of subjects through the medium of Irish…’ The resolution as well as being passed on to church bodies, was also sent to the Belfast Telegraph and the Irish Independent, ‘for publication’. [M R P, 7 March 1943] The Presbytery was not prepared to let the matter rest and resolved in August 1944 to send the same resolution ‘to whoever would be the head of the new government in Eire after the forthcoming election’. [M R P, 18 March 1944]

The question of teaching taking place through the medium of Irish was ‘a cornerstone of the revival policy’ [Kelly, 2002; p.40], and also a matter of deep concern to those opposed to the compulsory teaching of Irish. In 1945 ‘a totally unfounded rumour was spread in the Convoy district’ that all subjects in the Royal School would be taught through the medium of Irish. This rumour had reached the headmaster who reported to the Board that it ‘would have an adverse effect on the school’ and the secretary was asked to contact the clergy of the area to urge them to ‘take every opportunity of urging all concerned that there would be no change whatever in the method of teaching’. [DPBE, 2 February 1945]

The new decade again saw the Presbytery making representations to the Minister of Education regarding the teaching of the Irish language. A special meeting of the Raphoe and Letterkenny Presbyteries was held in June 1950 with the purpose of drawing up resolutions for the General Assembly regarding their concerns about the current situation in schools. Their concerns were focused in three areas: 'overloading the programme with Irish'; the suggestions that the language should be ' taught only in the lower classes', and 'teaching through the medium of Irish'. The meeting resolved to contact other Presbyteries in the Republic, and to make arrangements to have the resolution brought to the meeting of the General Assembly, meeting in Belfast the following week. [M R P Minutes, 2 June 1950] At the meeting arranged, representatives from Letterkenny, Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan, Baillieborough and Dublin Presbyteries were present. Dr. Irwin, minister of Lucan congregation in Dublin and a former Moderator, suggested that a better course of action could be pursued through the Assembly Committee than through a resolution, and arrangements were made for the Committee to meet, with a view to interviewing the Minister of Education. [M R P, 8 June 1950] The meeting with the Minister did not take place until 15 March 1951, when three representatives of the 'Border Presbyteries', together with Dr. Irwin, discussed their concerns in Marlborough House. The deputation 'received a courteous hearing' and were assured that 'the teaching of Irish one hour each day in the first and higher standards' would meet the Department's requirements. [M R P, 15 May 1951] The meeting was described by Dr. Irwin as ' two hours of free, frank and friendly discussion' that arrived at a 'fairly satisfactory conclusion'. [G A Minutes, 1951; 58]

The period of the 1960s has been described as 'a transitional epoch' in the language movement. At this time research on the educational consequences of Irish teaching in the curriculum, together with 'and awareness of educational issues and wider social and attituditional change' brought a willingness to reconsider the position of the language in

schools. In the 1961 general election campaign James Dillon, leader of the Fine Gael party made it clear that on entering government it would abolish compulsory Irish in schools. [Kelly, 2002; p.38] Within the Presbyterian community there was a wide recognition that the compulsory teaching of Irish had contributed to a view that education was ' one of our disabilities and a cause of some emigration'. [G A Reports, 1959; p.137] The General Assembly Committee on 'Presbyterians in the Republic' sympathised on the 'stage and extent of having Irish in the curriculum' and 'deplore the frequent Roman Catholic reference in much of the available instruments for teaching the language.' At the same time, they urged a more sympathetic view of the language 'for its own sake', and suggested a 'Summer school under general Protestant auspices 'as a way forward. [G A Reports, 1959; p.137] It was, in fact, in 1959 that the Royal School reported a student 'gaining honours in Irish' for the first time in the history of the School [DPBE, 10 September 1959]. Students from the Royal School attended Irish language summer courses in the Gaeltacht for the first time in 1961. [DPBE, 2 September 1961]

The necessity to pass the Irish language paper in order to complete the Leaving, Intermediate and Group Certificates was dropped in 1973, representing a decade of 'substantial rethinking of the Irish Language revival policy'. [Kelly, 2002; p.38] From the vantage point of the new century the Irish language policies of the Free State and the 1950s have been described as 'the politics of impossibilism', ' indicating a complete blindness to the world beyond nationalism'. [O Drisceoil, 1999; p.192] While the government of the new Irish state affirmed an educational system in which religious denominationalism was affirmed, it also maintained that 'cultural pluralism (was) abridged'. [Akenson, 2003; p.739]

Education, Free and Protestant.

The decade of the 1960s have been called ‘almost years of revolution’ [Akenson, 2003; p.732] The appointment of Patrick Hilary as Minister of Education, brought a new view of education, which was centred on meeting the economic and social needs of the country. A Commission of twenty social scientists appointed by Hilary to study Irish education reported in 1965 in the two volume Investment In Education, a report which viewed education not from a ‘theo-philosophical viewpoint but as a social and economic activity.’ The report served as the background for ‘the most important policy innovation of the decade’ [Fuller, 2002; p.153] led by the new Minister for Education, Donal O Malley. Beginning in 1967, free post primary education up to intermediate certificate level would be available for all children in academic secondary schools. Before leaving office Hillery had announced a new scheme for providing schools where post primary provision was lacking. These ‘comprehensive schools’ would meet the need for increasing the school leaving age, and the increasing numbers of children remaining in education. [Akenson, 2003; p.733]

The first shot in what was to become know as the community schools debate was fired in 1968 by Sean O’Connor, an assistant secretary in the Department of Education, who wrote, ‘ No one wants to push the religious out of education: that would be disastrous…But I want them in as partners, not always as masters.’ There evolved a feeling that new schools that the government promised would be community led or multidenominational, and that management would not be confined to any religious group. It emerged in the 1970s that ‘the critical factor in the provision of second level education was not whether boys and girls should sit together in the same classroom so much as who should decide the philosophy and the ethos of the establishment’. [O’Flaherty, 1999; p.59]

The linking of education with economic development, the policy of amalgamation of small schools, the introduction of free secondary education, and the scheme of comprehensive schools, created a ‘spirit of innovation’. [Akenson, 2003; p.733] These

developments meant ‘the ethos of education had changed fundamentally’ [Fuller, 2002; p.162], and brought about a set of circumstances which Protestant educators were quick to grasp. The Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland churches had set up a Joint-Committee in 1966, following the education initiatives set in motion by the State, and reported to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland. The Synod report called for a reduction in the number of schools, more specialised teaching staff, and improved buildings and equipment. The country would soon see some of the forty-four Protestant schools in existence in 1961 close their doors. [Akenson, 1969; p.175]

Discussions about possible changes in Donegal took place in September 1966, when the Donegal Protestant Board of Education met to discuss issues that had been raised at a meeting earlier in the month. Under the auspices of the Secondary Education Committee, representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Church of Ireland churches met, under the chairmanship of Dr. Richard Gordon Perdue, Bishop of Cork. The meeting agreed to set up an executive committee with the ‘aim of formulating a plan or plans for Protestant Secondary Education in the County and the plans to be put to the Minister of Education’. [LS, 21 September 1966] The Donegal Protestant Board were asked ‘to consider the matter very carefully’ as it might mean ‘the closing down of the Royal School and Prior School in Lifford’. [DPBE, 24 September 1966] The Board did not receive a full report on the matter until December 1969, when the chairman reported that the executive committee set up in September, 1966 had pursued the matter of a Comprehensive School with the Department of Education and the Department ‘had set in motion their plans for a Protestant Comprehensive School’. A site had been identified and approved by the Department, made available by Senator Sheldon. The discussion progressed to the ‘major matter for consideration’ that was ‘the method of appointment of the Board of Management, who would have control of the running of the School including appointment of full time teachers’. The model of boards for

other areas would not be satisfactory as there was no majority Protestant denomination involved, and a new scheme would have to be adopted if 'embarrassment and difficulties ' were to be avoided. The Board decided to propose that a reconstituted Board should be appointed, composed of equal numbers from the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland, with the chairmanship rotating as agreed intervals. It was agreed to consult other bodies and the Board of Prior School. [DPBE, 9 December 1969]

Support for the establishing of a Comprehensive school in East Donegal had already been given by the Presbytery [M D P, 14 December 1967] and the General Assembly had given support to the work of the Secondary Education Committee in 1966. [G A Reports 1966, p.113] Co-operation between the Donegal Protestant Board and the Prior School had been established in 1947 when it had been decided to set school fees at similar levels. The numbers of pupils attending the Prior School, a secondary school under Church of Ireland management, established in 1880, had fallen to fifty nine in 1966, and in 1969 the school Board decided not to place admission advertisements in the Diocesan magazine. [Moriarty, 1999; p.26] By the spring of 1971 joint school trips with Raphoe were taking place and by June the Prior School buildings were advertised for sale.

Arrangements for the amalgamation of the two school boards were to proceed in a harmonious manner. In January 1971 an informal meeting of the two boards was held to discuss the appointment of a chairman of the new school board of management. [DPBE, 23 January 1971] The same day a formal meeting of the Donegal Protestant Board responded to press reports that the Donegal Vocational Education Committee had appointed Deputy N. Blaney as its representative on the Board, rather than the expected Chief Executive Office. Mr. Blaney's appointment was controversial because he had been dismissed as Minister of Agriculture in May 1970 due to allegations of illegal arms importation for use by IRA units active in Northern Ireland. Blaney was charged with the offence and tried, but was not called

to give evidence at the nationally observed 'Arms Trial'. He was expelled from the Fianna Fail party in 1972, after which he continued as an independent TD. [Devenney, 2000; p.159] The Donegal Protestant Board agreed that their member, Mr. McNulty, should discuss the matter with the Minister of Education [DPBE, 23 January 1971] In April the Board unanimously resolved 'to refuse to close this school and hand over pupils to a Comprehensive School unless the scheme of Management were brought in line with the Cork Scheme'. [DPBE, 3 April 1971] and appointed a deputation to consult with the Minister of Education. The meeting took place quickly and at their meeting on 24 April, the two school boards were able to make their nominations to the new school board, which had been agreed with the Minister to follow the 'Cork Scheme'. There had been some unease about the meaning of the terms 'appoint' and 'nominate', and recognition that the Minister could not control directly the Vocational Education Committee in their decisions, and they decided to proceed. They had been successful in gaining the model that they set out for, and concluded 'they might fare worse in certain circumstances 'and 'it would be up to (the Board's representatives) to act in the interests of the school at all times'. [DPBE, 24 April 1971]

The first meeting of the new Donegal Protestant Board of Education took place in July 1971, comprised of four representative form the Diocesan Council, four from the Presbyterian General Assembly, one from the Methodist Conference and one representing other Protestant Denominations. With the Board of the Comprehensive school in place, and the new building ready to open for the new school year, the work of the Donegal Protestant Board was focused on the provision of boarding facilities for pupils attending the new Comprehensive School. [DPBE, 14 July 1971] As the new term began, fifty-one boarders were expected in a newly remodelled Royal School House, and the Board began fundraising to pay substantial renovation costs. Initially enrolment for the boarding facilities was slower than expected, explained by the headmaster as 'a social problem…as parents here had no

tradition of sending children to Boarding Schools'. [DPBE, 9 September 1972]. However in the first ten years of boarding provision, numbers of pupils boarding were to rise to 119 in 1981 [DPBE, 19 September 1981]

It was in the provision of scholarships that there was a clear relationship between the Donegal Protestant Board of Education and the Presbytery, first of Raphoe, and the reorganised Presbytery of Donegal. In May 1944 the Presbytery of Raphoe discussed the 'question of financial assistance of Presbyterian children whose circumstances would warrant it…' [M R P, 18 May 1944] The Presbytery decided to ask congregations to take up a special collection 'to provide scholarships, tenable at the Royal School, Raphoe, for Presbyterian children …' The following month a Special Meeting was held, where a provisional set of rules was set up for the administration of a Scholarship Scheme. Following consideration of the matter it was decided that a governing body would be set up consisting of the Presbytery of Raphoe, together with the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Royal School, and two or more members of the Letterkenny Presbytery. If funds permitted, it was suggested that ' one Day Scholarship to the value of £10 and one Boarding Scholarship to the value of £30 be given to qualified candidates, to continue for four years, conditional on satisfactory progress being made by the recipients.' [M R P, 20 June 1944] The scheme continued to function and after the formation of the new Presbytery of Donegal; it continued under the title of the Presbytery of Donegal Scholarship Fund. A survey of congregations revealed that 19 of the 25 congregations were willing to contribute to the Fund, and it was decided to aim for the provision of 40 scholarships of £ 20 per annum, for a period of three years [M D P, 16 May 1962] In May 1965 it was reported that 44 candidates would be competing for 22 available scholarships, by examination, in three exam centres. [M D P, 5 May 1965] At the October meeting that year examination results were reported, and a report given that 75 scholarships were then in operation, at a cost of £1,000 [M D P, 5 October 1965] Reporting in February

1967 the Scholarship Fund Committee commented, ' the decision of the Minister of Education to assist in secondary education…was to be welcomed.' but still envisaged a role for the Fund in the future. [M D P, 7 February 1967] By 1975 the Fund was still in operation, providing 26 new awards, although at the reduced rate of £15 each. [M D P, 4 November 1975]

The second most significant decision made by the Donegal Protestant Board after proceeding with the Comprehensive School, was taken in May 1974. The Board considered a request on behalf of three Roman Catholic children for places in the Royal School House for the forthcoming school year. The members of the Board had been informed of the request in advance of the meeting and one member had raised an objection to the children being offered places. The basis of the objection lay in the fact that the monies raised for the renovation of the House had been 'subscribed by Protestants on the strength of the boarding establishment was to be for Protestant children'. In the discussion that followed, the proposal that 'Roman Catholics be not accepted as Boarders' was defeated, and it was acknowledged that there had been 'no exclusive tradition attached to Raphoe'. The Board unanimously agreed 'that in future…no Protestant applicants can be refused by reason of a Roman Catholic having been accepted.'[DPBE, 4 May 1974] This policy was re-affirmed in September, 1975 when preference was also established for those 'who had to travel more than 15 miles' [DPBE, 6 September 1975] A further, and controlling policy was established in 1977, that boarding accommodation in the future 'would require to be worked out in conjunction with the position at the Comprehensive School…' [DPBE, 30 April 1977]. From this point it was clear, that the driving force in education provision lay not with the Donegal Protestant Board of Education, but with the Board of Management of the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, a board which worked under the schemes and funding of the Minister

of Education. Within a relatively short period, the independence of the Protestant Board had been surrendered for the improved educational provision provided by the state.

Issues of religious ethos had been under consideration by the Board for some time. By the 1920s the school staff were 'giving a course of instruction' in religious education. [DPBE, 2 May 1924] The system seemed to work satisfactorily and in the 1940s, in response to questions by Board members about the provision of religious education, the Headmaster's report was 'considered very satisfactory'. [DPBE, 3 November 1944] The first provision for Roman Catholic pupils at the School was not made until 1952 when a temporary assistant teacher was asked to give 'religious instruction to Roman Catholic pupils at the school for 1½ hours each week.' [DPBE, 8 November 1952] Following an application for use of school premises, the Board confirmed its Protestant ethos and decided that ' there should be no Sunday games on the sports field'. [DPBE, 1 November 1958] Surprisingly, the conduct of the Board itself is mentioned only in 1961, when it was unanimously agreed that 'this meeting and all future meetings of the Board, be opened with a prayer'. [DPBE, 2 September 1961] The new life of the Royal School as boarding accommodation for the Royal and Prior School brought new opportunities to establish the religious ethos of the House. In September 1971 it was suggested that evening prayers might be held. This question was 'left for future thought and discussion', but the matter was not raised again. [DPBE, 11 September 1971]

In supporting the establishment of the Royal and Prior School the Presbytery had high hopes of furthering educational provision. Reporting to the Presbytery in October, 1971 Mr. R. McC. Bell, minister of Raphoe and closely associated with the Royal School had expressed the hope that

> The new school should afford the opportunity to many …to avail of secondary school education and remove the stigma on Co. Donegal that, in proportion to numbers, the Protestants had the lowest participation in secondary education of any county in Ireland. [L S, 22 October 1971]

A discussion of the arrangements for the new school that also took place in October 1971 was at the Donegal Vocational Education Committee. Here also the importance of extending the educational provision in east Donegal was stressed. The discussion touched on the question of religious affiliation of the school, with the Department of Education pointing out that 'the department had never referred to any comprehensive school by the name of a religious denomination'. Some members of the Donegal committee questioned their representation on the Board of the new school, but the chairman pointed out that the important matter was 'not a question of representation, but that there should be co-operation between the two existing schools in Raphoe in order that every child in the area would get the utmost benefit'. [D D, 1 October 1971]

The official opening of the new School, a year after the doors had opened to the first pupils, was a happy affair. The remarks of the Chairman of the Board Mr. McNulty, expressed gratitude to the Government for making the comprehensive scheme available, the Minister of Education expressed congratulations to the community for their foresight in taking up the scheme, and the Moderator of the General Assembly conferred the blessing of the Presbyterian Church on the School. There was, however, a subtext to the remarks:

> There will be no discrimination in creed, class, colour or politics' and [he] assured the audience that the Board would 'strive to provide a first class education for all sections of the community and hope that the pupils will become worthy citizens.

The school would indeed cater for everyone, provided there would be adequate space for all Protestant children who applied. Mr. Faulkner, Minister of Education, congratulated those who had participated in the new scheme, which he acknowledged was 'still in its initial stages', and which was an 'indication of the happy relationship which existed in that part of the county between the Protestant Churches and successive governments.' Dr. Lynas, Moderator of the General Assembly, expressed thanks to the Eire Government on behalf of the Protestant people of East Donegal, and remarked 'there is no finer people than the Protestants of East Donegal'. [S W N, 23 September 1972] That the occasion followed the

format of any other school opening was beyond doubt. But what was also beyond question was that this was a major triumph for the Protestant community, which was such a minority community in the State. The occasion was evidence that the Government's treatment had been 'scrupulously fair' [Atkinson, 1969; p.176], that there had been a move on the part of the government to ' the democratisation of education' [Fuller, 2002; p.160] and that the Protestant community had the ability, and the confidence, to take advantage of the new era that had begun.

GENDER

Towards Full Partnership.

The problems of bringing children to public worship were explored in an article in 1967, were the writer's view that 'children should not be somehow forced or trained (please tell me how!) to conform to our arbitrary standards of church behaviour', was balanced by embarrassment and disruption caused by 'childish interruptions'. [WW, June 1967] Women were urged to express their faith in their home life 'for the home is still woman's natural sphere of influence'. Through their efforts they could 'combine Church and Home' by teaching the value of prayer, the importance of the Bible, and encouraging attendance at Church and Sunday School. All this was to be done in such a way that 'our children (will not) look on religion as a stern rule for life, but a living, loving faith in Jesus Christ'. The Christian home ' is the best school in which to learn the principles of unselfishness, devotion to duty, and corporate responsibility', values that took on national importance for 'it is only as homes are Christian that nations will become Christian'. [WW, Jan 1940]

An article in Woman's Work 1967 responded to the increasing number of women working outside the home and reported on interviews with three women with different working patterns. There is no comment on the decisions each of the women interviewed made in

relation to family responsibilities and when the question is asked ‘why do you choose to work or not work?’ the three responses are reported in a straightforward way: ‘ She claimed that she was not a housewife by nature, and found it more satisfying to have a job, ‘I do it…because it is what I am best at’; and for the full time at home mother who ‘stressed the importance of a settled, happy home life for children (who felt) they were happier in the security of knowing that mum was at home’. The writer leaves the women with a question ‘Are children happier “because mum is there” or are there more ways of making a home than by staying in it all day?’ and encourages discussion at church groups. [WW, Sept 1967]

One area of the work of women that experienced considerable change during the period was that of minister’s wives. These were ‘the group of Protestant women who were expected to live up to the highest ideal of perfect balance between home and church work’. [Brozyna, 1999; p.139] Of the many clergy wives who worked among the women of the congregations three in particular provide insights into the lives of Laggan women.

The sudden death of Mrs. S.J. Parker of Newtowncunningham in January 1940, when she was collecting copies of Women’s Work for distribution, gave opportunity to remark on the particular qualities she displayed which were valued by other women. In her obituary in Woman’s Work, she was described as a woman with ‘a cultured, well-stored mind with a deep insight into many subjects.’ Her greatest interest was ‘in the working of the Kingdom of God’ and in her ‘own quiet way did her share of that work’. Mrs. Parker had represented local women in central committees over an extended period, and during this time ‘she took no active part in speaking or presiding’. She had a particular interest in missionaries, and she regarded it as a ‘privilege and a pleasure’ to provide hospitality for any deputations visiting the Presbytery. Mrs. Parker was portrayed as a woman of quiet and devotional service, able through her position as minister’s wife to travel to meetings, and relieve local women of the

burden of providing hospitality to visitors in their own homes, which may not have been considered to be of an acceptable standard for these esteemed visitors. [WW, April 1940]

Mrs. Kathleen Bewglass, wife of Mr. J.H. Bewglass, minister of Ballindrait and Ballylennon congregations, had a position with a national profile among the women of the Presbyterian Church. As editor of Woman's Work for 24 years she had a detailed knowledge of women's groups at home as well as missionary personnel overseas. Her period of editorship from 1938 to 1962 spanned war years and periods of difficulty between the two states in Ireland, not to mention industrial unrest. In addition to her business efficiency, 'her friendly disposition and wise counsel were greatly appreciated and much sought'.[WW, Sept 1977] The Donegal Presbyterial Committee's Appreciation for Mrs. Bewglass repeated much of the information given in Woman's Work, but added significantly that 'she was interested in everyone and in all aspects of the church's witness.' [Donegal Presbyterial Committee Minute Book, 23 September 1977].

Mrs. Florence Scott, wife of Mr. A. E. Scott, a minister in Ramelton, served the women of the church in a number of capacities at local and county levels. She lived in Ramelton from the summer of 1930, until her death in the spring of 2000. During that time, as well as serving as president of the various congregational women's groups, she attended regional meetings and held office at that level. She was also a member of the Donegal Protestant Board of Education, and was a member of Amnesty International and heritage and development associations. Her education and interests permitted her to be a representative for church women in many facets of their community, and for them, as minister's wife she was a woman with 'a strong sense of duty and responsibility…(and a) support, a companion to her husband, a homemaker, a mother…' [Presbytery of Donegal News Sheet, June 2000]

Accounts of the life of a minister's wife in the Republic betray a sense of isolation and of religious vocation. Isolation was a feeling strongly expressed as the minister's wife found it

‘difficult for those of us who live in Eire to realise that we are part of a large Protestant church body having its headquarters in Belfast.’ Neighbours are of ‘a different religious faith’, and a time in hospital can be ‘trying and lonely’. The manse can receive a number of ‘callers...generally in need of money’ and there are ‘itinerants who knock at the door daily’. There is also the ‘great grief of country congregations in Eire (at the) exodus of the young people’ seeking work elsewhere. One of the advantages of living in a manse is that ‘is a fine place for the upbringing of children’ and should there be visitors to the area they may be invited to the manse, ‘where they may get an insight into Irish home life’. [WW, Jan 1964] Mrs. Bell, writing from Raphoe manse mentions that involvement of the women of the church is not limited to church organisations, but includes nursing and rehabilitation services not funded by the State, and in school matters. Television and education had made their impact, as well as emigration for work, and still ‘the women who serve our Church in this part of Ireland’ have much to teach other women. [WW, Sept 1970]

Women involved in church groups in Donegal had many opportunities within their own congregations to give time, effort and skill to the work of the Church. As the structures and organisation of women’s groups developed, so did opportunities for women to meet with those outside their immediate area, and outside their own denomination.

The network of women’s groups with in the Presbytery area was strengthened by the work of the Presbyterial Committee. The Committee, comprised of one representative from each congregation, and minister’s wives, met regularly throughout the year to organise major events in the Presbytery area, and ensure that projects and fundraising were placed before women’s groups in congregations. In addition to the regular business of branch meetings, a ‘Get Together’ was arranged each year, which provided an opportunity for women to meet, have a meal, and to listen to a visiting speaker on missions, or attend a communion service arranged for the occasion. At the Get Together held in St. Ernan’s, Donegal in 1971, fifty-

three women were present, gathered from eighteen branches of women's groups. Two new ministers wives were welcomed, and the visiting speaker was the editor of Woman's Work. After speaking about the production of the magazine the women divided into groups for discussion on the questions: ' what we thought of Woman's Work? What articles we thought good, what we would like more of, what we would like changed, and what we would like introduced.' [Donegal Presbyterian Minute Book, 15 Oct 1971]

The annual Rally organised by the Presbyterial Committee tended to be of a more traditional nature, as for example the first gathering of women under the re organised women's groups as the Presbyterian Woman's Association. The service took place in Trinity Church, Letterkenny, where about 130 women were present, representing twenty of the twenty-three branches in the Presbytery. The speaker on this occasion was Sandra Dunlop, who spoke about the work in the Home Advice Centre in Belfast, which was supported through group funds. The second speaker was a nurse from Malawi, who spoke about ' the good work going on, but also reminded us of the difficulties due to shortage of staff, drugs, dressings and even beds.' Women were able to meet the speakers, and each other, as tea was served in the church hall afterwards, which 'provided an opportunity for all present to meet and have a chat…' [Donegal Presbyterial Minute Book, 27 May 1971]

The women of the Presbyterian Church were able to meet with women of other denominations through participation in the Woman's World Day of Prayer. This international movement first received attention in Woman's Work in 1934, and within a few years meetings were held where women from the Laggan could attend. In 1939 a meeting was held in Strabane and the meeting in 1945 included women from Lifford, Ballindrait and Raphoe, with Mrs. Bewglass leading the prayers. [WW, April 1945] A gathering took place in Lifford in 1952 and three years later meetings were held in Donegal, Dunfanaghy and for the first time in St. Johnston. [WW, April 1955] By the early 1960s a number of services were held,

the occasion in Raphoe attended by over seventy women. Tea was served after the service, giving ‘an opportunity for friendly chat’. [WW, April 1961] The service became part of the established pattern of meetings for women, so that in 1970, Mrs. Bell of Raphoe could report over 100 women attended, travelling up to ten miles. [WW, Sept 1970] In 1974 the service was again held in Raphoe, and arrangements for leading the service and hospitability afterwards were again made by the Raphoe women. [Raphoe PWA Minute Book, 21 January 1974] While the interdenominational event was becoming a matter or routine in east Donegal, the political situation in Northern Ireland had made the event there a matter of front-page news. When the service took place in Strabane, ‘300 people of all denominations attended’, the service had a particular significance as ‘it was the first time that the service was held in a Roman Catholic Church in Strabane’ and members of Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy attended. [S W N, 13 March 1976]

In 1973 ‘ the most contentious decision concerning women’ [McCaughan, 1990; 125] was taken by the General Assembly. When the ordination of women to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was discussed at the Donegal Presbytery, the proposal was supported by eleven votes to six. [M D P, 6 February 1973] The first woman to be ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Ruth Patterson, has reflected that the journey to full recognition in the church ‘has never been particularly easy for the women’. [Patterson, 2000; p.32] The women of the Laggan, along with their sisters throughout the church had enlarged their sphere of operation to include the full scope of service within the church. Two years later Rev. Dr. A. J. Weir, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Church addressed the Central Committee of the PWA on the ‘Role of Women’ in the Church. He spoke from his own formative experience in the Church, where his parents served as missionaries in China. In that context he said ‘men and women worked together as missionary colleagues in one field of work’. He found the situation in Ireland to

be ‘rather strange and unnatural’. The work of women in supporting mission and outreach at home and abroad had been significant, but now was the time to move to ‘full partnership’. It was time for ‘women’s role in the Church to be a full church member, responsible just as much as men for everything that’s going on or should be going on.’ [WW, March 1975] The work of women in supporting the ‘sphere’ of missionaries overseas, had grown and extended to become a ‘space’ that was equal to that of men.

CONCLUSION

In 1880, a traveller returning to Manorcunningham after a long absence, remarked that much remained unchanged. The church he attended in his youth was 'unattractive…half filled with honest, hardworking people…still adhering to the old habit of learning by heart the Psalms of David, Proverbs of Solomon, Prophecies of Isaiah and the Sermon on the Mount.' [White, 1975; p.178] If the same traveller had returned less than a century later, he would have seen a different sight: a church in much-improved repair, and a people taken up with quite different activities. In 1955 for example, the congregation were busy organising a dance for church funds, though Kirk Session permission had not been given. The Session met on two occasions to discuss the event, unwilling to give permission to hold it, and yet unwilling to refuse the proceeds of the dance for church purposes. [Second Ray Kirk Session Minutes, 13 & 16 March 1955] Church life in the Laggan had indeed changed. Presbyterians were no longer limited in their activities to meeting for prayer and Sunday worship, and many were no longer as frequent in their attendance as they, or their parents, had been. But the church was still at the centre of their community, and for many it still marked the boundary of their community life.

'Being Catholic or Protestant has been fundamental to what Irish people have done and said over the past two hundred years.'[Inglis, 2005; p. 59] The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the experience of a minority religious community during almost a century of fundamental social and political change in modern Ireland. This narrative of adaptation, resolve, engagement and expansion on the part of the Laggan Presbyterian community has shown that being Presbyterian in the various political formations that the country passed through during this period, had been a dynamic experience.

The record of involvement of the Presbyterian community in political matters was impressive. Yet the received opinion, both popular and scholarly, has been that members of the minority religious community had not involved themselves in political discussions in a meaningful way since the creation of an independent Ireland in 1922. It has been acknowledged that Protestants had been active in their support of the union with Great Britain and vociferous opponents of Home Rule. This involvement in community politics was first expressed in relation to the Boundary Commission, and then in petitions and Presbytery interventions in relation to economic activity and border customs tariffs. Presbyterians used connections with political parties, and involvement in local government, to ensure that their voice, however diminished, was heard.

The life of the Presbyterian community's expression of faith was also marked by change. A review of the Visitation Findings of the Presbytery shows that there was a move from the enforcement of the functions of religious office bearers and Kirk Session and Congregational Committee duties, to an encouragement of those who had been called to office to remain efficient and dutiful in their work. Encouragement was focused too on the inclusion of youth activities and organisations for women within the life of the congregations. The activities of Kirk Sessions also moved from enforcing discipline to extending pastoral care to members of the church. The introduction of musical instruments in public worship, different patterns of participation in the Lord's Supper, and a drift from family worship at home, marked the appearance of a less formal and more personal expression of religious devotion. The religion of Dr. John Kinnear, so representative of the local church at the beginning of the period, had all but disappeared by the 1970s. The discussion of forms of worship and disagreements about music were not repeated. Changes in public worship were accepted and innovations remained, largely unchanged, throughout the following decades. Kirk Sessions were now called upon to decide on issues that involved the role they played in the community through

use of church premises. Discussions centred, not on baptism or communion, but on Irish dancing lessons, ecumenical carol services, and young people's activities.

The involvement of Presbyterians in education had been fundamental to their community. Clergy had played a vital role in the support and management of schools since the introduction of the National School system in 1831. The church's concern for education did not diminish over the period, and indeed the Presbytery, as well as individual congregations, took an active interest in the welfare of schools, and their pupils. In addition to a concern for the integrity of education provided in schools, there was a cultural concern as well: the compulsory teaching of the Irish language introduced by the new state in 1922 met with major opposition, and constant monoriting from church authorities. Education was also the task that united the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland, in the creation and management of schools. This co-operation, which sometimes exposed fault lines in the relationship between the two Churches, bore fruit particularly in the use of new opportunities provided by innovative thinking on the part of the government in the creation of community schools. The Church's involvement in education provided it with an avenue to the heart of the community, providing not only management, but also scholarships, an especially sought after provision. Friendships made among pupils at national school, and through the provision of boarding places in the Raphoe Royal and Prior School, strengthened the web of relationships connecting Protestant families through the County.

The women of the Presbyterian community of the Laggan enjoyed an expansion of their sphere of influence during the period. As well as the institutional changes that permitted the ordination of women as Ruling Elders, and later ministers, provided a place for women in the governing structures of Kirk Sessions and Presbytery, as well as the General Assembly. By their work in local groups, women exerted an important influence in the support of missionary projects overseas, which had an enabling and educational effect on those at home.

Women's gatherings in congregations provided places of friendship, training and devotion. Minister's wives were particularly involved in this sphere, sometimes helped by their husbands. Gatherings of women from a number of congregations, for education or for support, played an important part in the strengthening of relationships between women in the Laggan Presbyterian community.

The question remains: is the experience of the Laggan Presbyterian community during this period more than a footnote in the history of Irish political and cultural development? The fact that two historians who are most sensitive to the nuanced history of the Protestant community in Ireland have indicated that the Presbyterian community in the border counties are an exception to the general experience of the Protestant community in the country indicates that there is a case to be investigated. [Brown, 1996; p. 251; Edwards, 1970; p. 287] The research included in this study provides fresh insights into religious, cultural and educational history, as well as on the development of political loyalties. For example, the distinction made by Lecky in his influential history of the Laggan Presbyterian community [1908] of 'an inner' civilised and Protestant Donegal, and 'outer' rugged and Catholic, Donegal could no longer be sustained by the 1970s. Presbyterians had become integrated into the fabric of the new Republic of Ireland that would have been unthinkable to Lecky, yet this transformation at the centre of a community has passed, un-noticed, by historians of modern Ireland [Foster, 2007]. The much-trumpeted 'liberal agenda' [Brady, 2005] of the 1970s may have wrested influence from the grip of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, but the increased participation of Protestant church authority has not attracted comment.

It has been remarked by historians that the social significance of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland decreased in the 1960s, and that this indicated the beginnings of the demise of religion in Ireland. The study of the Presbyterian community in east Donegal shows that far from being a demise in the social presence of church interests, increased community

involvement in education, because of government funding, created an opportunity for the Presbyterian Church to play an expanded role in schools. So, for example, with the creation of the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, the Presbyterian community was better served than it had been previously. The expansion of National School Boards of Management provided opportunities for members of Presbyterian congregations to be involved in school management, when this had not previously been possible. Laggan Presbyterians had been regarded as members of the Free State, and later, citizens of the Irish Republic. There may have been few occasions to exercise their role in the new political realities in the early years, but this was not because of a withdrawal of democratic privileges. As new institutions evolved, new opportunities presented themselves, and Presbyterians were willing, and able, to take them up.

The experience of the Presbyterians of east Donegal illustrates something of the cultural struggle that took place following the creation of an independent Irish state. Irish nationalism had long cherished the notion of a Gaelic nation, which was Irish speaking. Laggan Presbyterians understood the language question as not only a cultural one, but also as a religious one. For them, the compulsory introduction of Irish language teaching in schools amounted to a policy of assimilation. Presbyterians were prepared to play their part in the new country, and set out on a course of integration. This attitude did not form overnight, but evolved over a number of years and a variety of experiences. As new relationships were formed, and adjustments made to new political realities, it became clear that Laggan Presbyterians were prepared to be citizens of this new state, but not at the cost of their religious freedom. This study then, illuminates one religious minority's reaction to a vital aspect of the new Irish state's cultural policy

This study of the decisions, actions and priorities of Laggan Presbyterians indicates that they responded to their circumstances in a distinctive way. They were not part of a

generalised, non-Catholic, population. Indeed, the mechanism of their decision- making, from Kirk Session to Presbytery to General Assembly, wove a path through representative bodies defined by doctrinal standards and marked by confessional statements. Members of the Church of Ireland had a different voice, spoken by different leaders, in different places. Presbyterians and members of the Church of Ireland may have shared opinions on many matters, but they also differed on many matters. They each had their own church structures to service, and their own church property to maintain. When there were joint ventures, things did not always go smoothly. This study of a Presbyterian community shows that there remains a diversity of opinion and approach to be explored by Irish historians. Studies by Edwards regarding attitudes to partition [Edwards, 1999] and Protestant attitudes to politics in Northern Ireland in the 1960s [Edwards, 1970] provide stimulating insights into Protestant opinions, but there is much work to be done to more fully chart the divergences and intricacies of the relationship between these two religious communities.

As a result of this research the vulnerabilities, and the determination, of a minority religious community can be better understood. We can now have an appreciation of the energy that was expended to ensure the continued vigour of the Presbyterian community of the Laggan and the commitment to the future well being of that community. This commitment and the sense of ownership and dedication, pose questions to those who have now inherited leadership. The record of engagement in social, cultural and political questions and issues of the day raises questions of the level of engagement in current community, cultural, religious and social issues.

This research also gives a sense of the relationship that transcended the political border that came to separate Northern Ireland from the rest of the island. We have seen that family ties and economic activity continued in the face of political ferment. We have also seen that bonds of fellowship forged within the Presbyterian Church and nurtured within the

Presbyterian family, through women's groups, education, and the social life of the community, remained strong, even in the face of very great political forces. Politicians and governments were willing to sacrifice religious minority populations for the greater good of the nation, both North and South. Despite the perception of many Laggan Presbyterians that they had been betrayed by their Northern Ireland Unionist brothers in politics and in the church, they remained faithful to their religious faith and culture, used whatever mechanisms that were available to them to defend their religious and social community, and when a changed political culture allowed, made the best of the new opportunities that were presented to them.

This then, is not a story of simple decline, but a more complicated and complex picture. It is true that the size of the community became smaller, but it is also true that the community remained confident and participated in the life of civic society. Presbyterians played a useful and fulfilling role, but it was a different one from a century earlier, because the social and political landscape had changed dramatically. While it is clear that the balance of power within society had changed, it is also clear that the Presbyterian community had successfully negotiated that change, and had created a place in public life and which included respect for their religious expression of faith. Laggan Presbyterians in the 1970s were confident in a new context, with relationships both structured and pragmatic, which engendered respect in their neighbours.

Number of children on Sunday school rolls

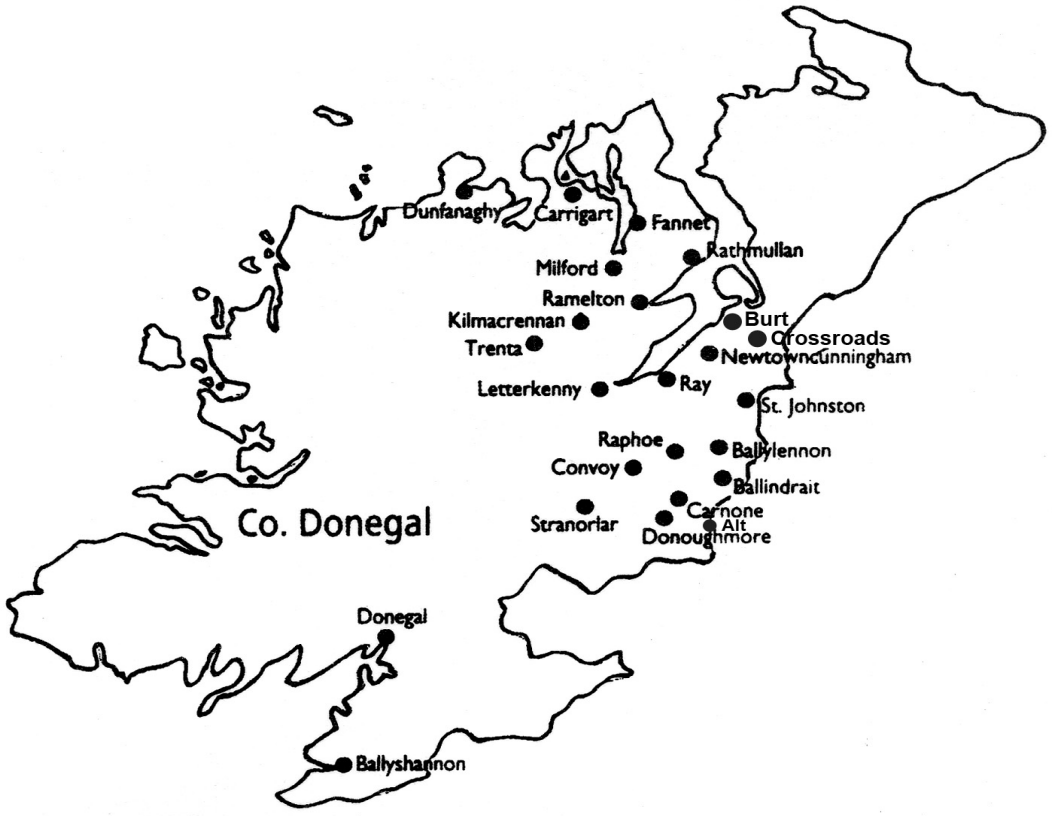
Congregation	1911	1926	1936	1946	1961	1971	1981
Alt	43	40	19	14	30	14	20
Ballindrait	50	37	37	31	25	17	35
Ballylennon	92	72	44	80	59	17	30
Carnone	52	35	32	34	31	16	26
Convoy	160	100	100	60	70	48	68
Donoughmore	120	92	38	40	52	34	55
Newtowncunningham	60	46	35	22	26	38	28
1st Raphoe	85	170	140	100	122	75	105
St. Johnston	140	75	59	28	45	45	35
1st Ray	90	75	27	54	63	42	84
2nd Ray	140	45	38	-	-	-	-
Burt	58	38	25	12	32	26	30
Crossroads	78	57	32	21	21	18	15
2nd Raphoe	90	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stranorlar	96	60	60	50	21	34	42
Total	1497	1287	1161	1081	965	913	948

Number of families contributing financially to Laggan congregations.

Congregation	1911	1926	1936	1946	1961	1971	1981
Alt	65	60	50	37	30	26	30
Ballindrait	77	68	65	60	53	49	38
Ballylennon	88	78	80	75	64	66	68
Carnone	63	56	48	40	44	40	50
Convoy	135	110	100	110	128	107	110
Donoughmore	152	140	105	90	76	73	84
Newtowncunningham	96	86	81	63	65	65	63
1st Raphoe	125	165	156	150	133	153	177
St. Johnston	150	127	118	105	90	84	80
1st Ray	102	91	79	77	61	55	56
2nd Ray	125	108	95	88	76	69	73
Burt	87	74	71	68	52	42	38
Crossroads	59	54	47	39	28	28	30
2nd Raphoe	65	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stranorlar	108	70	66	79	65	56	51
Totals	1497	1287	1161	1081	965	931	948

MAP OF PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS IN THE LAGGAN

Scale 1cm.= 4 miles


Dunfanaghy
Carrigart
Fannet
Rathmullan
Milford
Ramelton
Kilmacrennan
Trenta
Burt
Crossroads
Newtowncunningham
Letterkenny
Ray
St. Johnston
Raphoe
Ballylennon
Convoy
Ballindrait
Co. Donegal
Stranorlar
Carnone
Alt
Donoughmore
Donegal
Ballyshannon

Chronology

National and Political Developments	Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Laggan Presbyterians	County Donegal
1881 Gladstone's second Land Act.	1883: BB formed in Scotland	1880 Rev. John Kinnear elected MP	
1884 Parnellite agreement to press Catholic claims in education			
1885 Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule		1886 Letterkenny Presbytery resolutions against Home Rule; local demonstrations against Home Rule	
1886 Irish hierarchy endorse Home Rule; Lord Randolph Churchill's speech to Loyalists; June: Home Rule Bill defeated; 1892 compulsory attendance at schools introduced	1893 Girl's Brigade begins in Sandymount, Dublin	1891 Donegal Protestant Board of Education established	
1893 Sept: Second Home Rule Bill defeated	1893 Special Assembly in opposition to Home Rule. 1896 General Assembly authorises use of hymns in worship	1893 demonstrations against Home Rule; Women's Demonstration.	
1898 Irish Local Government Act setting up county councils			
1901: accession of Edward VII			St. Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny, opened
1903 Wyndham Land Act			
1905 March: Ulster Unionist Council meets	1905 Sabbath Society opens Bookshop for	1905 discussion regarding attendance at Presbytery meetings;	1906: St. Eunan's College,

	Sunday School materials; 1908 Papal decree Ne Temere	Lecky, The Laggan and Its Presbyterianism published	Letterkenny opened
1910 Carson becomes leader of Irish unionists; Accession of George V		1908 preparations to mark jubilee of 1859 Revival; Lecky, In the Days of the Laggan Presbytery published. 1909 Dr. John Kinnear died; Resolution against appointment of Prof, of Scholastic Philosophy at QUB	1909 Letterkenny to Strabane railway opened
1912: April: Third Home Rule Bill introduced; September: Solemn League and Covenant signed		Sept 1912: local rallies in support of Solemn League and Covenant	
1913: Jan: Home Rule Bill; Jan: Foundation of Ulster Volunteer Force		2 Oct.1913 Carson rally at Raphoe	
1914: April: UVF gun running; Home Rule Bill passes commons; August: UK & Germany go to war		Resolution against re organisation of Presbyteries; 1915 permission for minister to become military chaplain	
1916: Jan ITB Supreme Council decide on early insurrection; April: Irish volunteers & Citizen army seize buildings in central Dublin; May: execution of leaders;	Battle of the Somme	Death of John Lecky	
1918 Dec General Election			
1919 Sinn Fein suppressed; Dail Eireann declared illegal		Ministers return from war service; celebrations to mark return of servicemen	
1920: Black and Tans recruited; Sinn Fein control councils in local elections; Nov:		1920: war memorials dedicated in churches;	

Bloody Sunday; Dec Government of Ireland Act sets up six county parliament		Unionist Association meets; Letterkenny church vandalised	
1921 Craig succeeds Carson as Unionist leader; June Opening of Northern Ireland Parliament; July Truce between IRA and Br. Army; Dec Anglo-Irish Treaty signed		Resolution regarding R E receiving in sufficient attention in day schools; Letterkenny church destroyed by fire	
1922Jan: Treaty approved by Dail Eireann; April Anti-treaty forces seize Four Courts; June attack on Four Courts, civil war follows		Free State troops take over part of Royal School & Convoy church hall; loyalist refugees flee to Derry	Jan 1922: First Garda Siochana replace RIC in Letterkenny
1923 April DeValera suspends republic campaign	1923 first Book of Public Worship published		Drumboe (republican) Martyrs executed in Donegal; Major Myles elected TD for first time
1925; Nov. Boundary Commission findings leaked	Trial of Professor Ernest Davy on heresy charge 1926: women ordained as elders	1924 equal result in voting regarding ordination of women to eldership; memorial sent to Boundary Commission; Orange Parade in Raphoe stoned by crowd	Border Commission hearings in Derry. 1927 Bishop Patrick O'Donnell ordained Bishop of Raphoe
1931Dec Statute of Westminster (autonomy to dominions)		1926 decision against reorganisation of Presbytery bounds; resolution in support of Sabbath observance; 1929 Death of Rev AG Lecky	1930 County Council offices open
1932 Fianna Fail win election; Land annuities withheld; July 'economic war ' begins;			
1933 Act removing Oath from Constitution; Sept Fine Gail formed; Nov.	1934 Woman's World Day of Prayer supported	1934 letter of protest to Dept. of Education regarding teaching of Irish language; 1935	

Amending Acts reducing power of Crown representative	by Woman's Work	meetings with Dept. of Education officials; resolution against import duty of Bibles & Hymnbooks; Loyalist petition circulated	
1936Dec: Amending Act removes refs to Crown from Constitution			
1937 June DeValera's new constitution approved			
1938 Apr: Anglo-Irish agreement on trade; Treaty ports to be returned; June Douglas Hyde becomes President of Ireland	1938: 47 students for ministry begin their course	1938 Mrs. Bewglass appointed editor of Woman's Work	Lough Swilly returned to Irish control
1939: Sept declaration of Neutrality	1939 Woman's World Day of Prayer held in Strabane	New school opened in Donoughmore, Moderator of GA present	County council orders cowling of public lighting
1941: April & May air raids on Belfast	1942 General Assembly publishes Book of Public Worship	1941 enquiries regarding fuel supplies & exports from Derry; 1942 letter to Minister of Commerce in NI regarding fuel supplies; 1944 resolutions regarding amount of Irish taught in schools	RAF bomber crashes in Donegal with 6airmen killed 1942 First County Manager appointed
1948 Dec Republic of Ireland Act: Eire becomes Republic of Ireland	WCC formed	1944 Presbytery Scholarship Scheme drawn up; 1945 Victory Mission held; District Orange Demonstration held in Raphoe 1948 special meeting regarding stipends	1950: Donegal Co. Council bad importation of English Sunday newspapers
1951 Mar. Ian Paisley founds Free Pres Church; Tilson Case regarding mixed marriage promises; 1957 Fethard on Sea boycott o f Protestant businesses	1950 Mrs. Bewglass President of WAFM	1949 hearing Ballindrait appeal regarding use of premises	1949 Rural Electrification arrives in Donegal

1958 Publication of TK Whitaker's Economic Development		1950 resolutions regarding teaching of Irish; 1951 conference regarding teaching of Irish language& delegation to Minister of Education	1952 New Franciscan church built in Donegal
1959 June DeValera elected President		1953 New school under joint Pres/ Cof I management	1956 Donegal population half that of a previous century
1961 RTE begins broadcasting		1956 time of meetings changed from 2:30 to 8pm; DPBE resolution on no Sunday games on sports field	1957 'B' specials patrol Donegal border; three deaths. Neil Blaney appointed Minister of Local Government;
1963 Terence O'Neill becomes NI Prime Minister; 1965 Investment in Education published; plan for Comprehensive Schools		18 Dec.1961 final meeting of Raphoe Presbytery; 2 Jan 1962 first meeting of Donegal Presbytery	1961 Hurricane Debbie causes structural havoc in Donegal 1962: Fiesta Ballroom opens in Letterkenny
1966June: three murders by UVF; Nov. Jack Lynch replace Lemass as Taoiseach; 1967 Free secondary education introduced	1965 Vatican Council decree on ecumenism 1966Ian Paisley protests outside meeting of General Assembly over resolution of uncharitablenss towards Roman Catholics; Report on Religious Discrimination	1962 approval given for new Synod of Dublin; 1963 500 children attend Sunday School Rally; May 1965 student for ministry licensed; DDs awarded to Revs Bewglass & Scott; reports on decline of numbers and congregational amalgamations	1965 Last rail connection closes
1967 Dec. Lynch & O'Neill meet in Belfast		1965 discussion of Reports of national & International Problems on 'Discrimination against Minorities'	
1968 Oct: Police clash with Derry civil rights march	Magee College incorporated in to New University of Ulster; Tripartite	1966 permission to set up Presbytery Youth Fellowship; appoint reps to Secondary Education Commission for	1967 Donegal Progressive Party established

	Conversations began with Methodist Church & Church of Ireland	Protestant Schools; Special meeting regarding County Plan; 1967 support formation of Royal & Prior School; resolution regarding lecture of RC priest in Assembly's college; 1968 DPBE approves Royal and Prior under Comprehensive scheme	
1969 April: Riots in Derry; July first death; Aug: Bogside under siege		Memorial plaque to Rev. James Porter; 1969 letter to Minister of Justice regarding need of increased Garda protection; approval given for Services for Week of prayer for Christian Unity	1969 Irish Army sets up field hospitals for refugees from N. I.
1970 IRA split; Neil Blaney dismissed from government	RC Hierarchy removed ban on TCD	Moderator permitted to attend enthronement of Bishop of Derry & Raphoe; March: delegates to meet Garda regarding attacks on Protestant homes; 12 July parade at Rossnowlagh cancelled; letters exchanged with VEC regarding Presbyterian representation; Special meeting regarding 'Doctrinal Relations with Roman Catholic Church'	;
1971 First Br. Soldier killed by Provo IRA; Aug Internment in NI	1973 Ballymascanlon Talks ICC & RC 1973 Centenary of Woman's Work 1975 Assembly Report 'Loyalists and Ireland'	12 July parade cancelled; Report 'Radical Change, Reform & Revolution' discussed; Royal School House opens with 53 Boarders; review of clergy remuneration	21 Nov. 1971 Bridget Carr killed on Lifford Bridge
1972 Jan L Bloody Sunday in Derry; March, Stormont suspended; Dec referendum removes 'special position of RC	1976 First women minister ordained	1972 Delegation to meet with Taoaisch J Lynch; resolutions regarding Bloody Sunday disturbances at St. Johnston Orange parade;	1973 Regional College opened in Letterkenny

Church from constitution.		Committee on School management appointed	
1975 Boards of Management replace School Managers in National Schools		1973 Ordination of Women ministers approved; Education Awards scheme approved	
	1977 Assembly Report ‘ Pluralism in Ireland’	1974 Vandalism of Convoy Church; Rathneeny Tercentenary celebrations; resolution regarding shortage of Protestant teachers; Report on Irish Republicanism 1976 first women elders ordained in Donegal Presbytery; 1977 new church at Donoughmore opened	1975 Moderator of general Assembly visits Co. Council

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