Mashriq & Mahjar 4, no. 1 (2017), 90–123
ISSN 2169-4435

Peter G. Bush

PROTESTANT CHRISTIANS OF THE ARABIC-SPEAKING DIASPORA AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

Abstract
Arab Protestants are an understudied group in Canada, and this paper seeks to address that gap by describing the religious transnationalism of Arab Protestants in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The six Arabic-speaking congregations explored have sought to negotiate space for an Arab Protestant identity within a Euro-Canadian denomination. They have done this not by being an enclave separate within the denomination but through engagement with the denomination. In the negotiation process, the Arabic-speaking congregations have been shaped by the Canadian church and the Canadian church has been shaped by the presence of an Arab identity in its midst.

Lighthouse Evangelical Arabic Church, Winnipeg, a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, held its summer conference in August 2015 at the South Beach Resort north of Winnipeg. Outside the meeting room a banner read in English "One Family, Big Vision, Kingdom Focus." While the audience was slow to gather, in the end some eighty adults sat on the 120 chairs set up. The Saturday evening session began with singing and prayer led by a worship leader flown in from the Middle East for the conference. The songs, accompanied by drums, guitar and keyboard, had a distinctive Middle Eastern flavor. Notably, the men along with the women in the audience joined in the singing. Following forty minutes of worship the speaker was introduced. He had come from Kansas City to speak at the gathering. The Saturday evening event took place entirely in Arabic.[1] A group of Arab Protestants gathering at a resort an hour's drive north of Winnipeg for singing, prayer, and spiritual nurture as an expression of their corporate identity is not the usual picture of Arabs in Canada. Many Canadians assume Arabs are monolithically Muslim, with most Arab women wearing hijabs. Arabs, for the purposes of this essay, are

Peter G. Bush is an Independent Scholar and the Teaching Elder at Westwood Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba; Email: peterwwpres@mymts.net

persons who speak Arabic and feel comfortable, "at home," worshipping in the Arabic language. The individuals attending the Presbyterian[2] congregations described in this essay came to Canada from various Arab countries and have diverse ethnic backgrounds, but share the Arabic language in common.

A deep vein of research explores immigration to Canada.[3] Some of that research has interrogated the place of religion in the negotiations[4] immigrants engage in upon their arrival in Canada.[5] Little of that attention has been paid to immigrants from the Arabic speaking world, although recent interest has increased due to a rising number of immigrants arriving from the Middle East and North Africa and the global impact of geo-political events occurring in that part of the world.[6] While some researchers have recognized differences between Muslim and Christian Arabic-speakers, almost no research has explored the experience of Arab Protestant immigrants in Canada.[7] Deanna Ferree Womack in her discussion of Arabic-speaking Protestant congregations in New Jersey notes little scholarly attention has been paid to Arab Protestants in the United States, as well.[8] This essay seeks to address part of that gap in our understanding.

This essay seeks to bring attention to Arab Protestants in Canada through a series of case studies of the six Arabic-speaking congregations in The Presbyterian Church in Canada as of 2015. In paying attention to the ways these congregations have negotiated space for Arabic-language worship and community within a Euro-Canadian[9] denomination, the essay draws out aspects of the Arab Presbyterian identity in Canada. The case studies reveal commonalities among the congregations as well as differences, highlighting that even the Arab Protestant experience is not monolithic. My vocation as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada who spent part of my childhood in the Middle East has given me entry into conversations with the leaders of the Arabic speaking congregations. As a minister I share a ministerial role with the clergy who have been among my primary informants. Having spent time living on the Arab side of the conflicts in the Middle East, although I do not speak Arabic, I am regarded as a friendly observer and questioner.

The congregations in the study are examples of religious transnationalism, migrants who bring religious convictions and practices from their home country and seek to negotiate space for those religious expressions in the host country. The essay opens with a discussion of two approaches used to analyze religious

transnationalism before applying those tools to the histories of the six congregations to understand the space they have created for Arab Protestants within the Presbyterian Church. Making use of congregational observation and analysis,[10] the paper will examine the Arab Presbyterian identity as seen in these congregations. Special attention will be paid to: the corporate spiritual life of these congregations; the multiple levels of family at play; and the influence of these transnational churches on Euro-Canadian congregations' theology and actions regarding the Middle East. Congregational histories were pieced together from data from the official record of the Presbyterian Church, email correspondence, and personal interviews during which notes were taken. Attending worship services in three of the congregations offered insight into the worship life of the community. Invaluable to this project was the opportunity afforded me to be a guest in May 2016 at a two-and-half-day gathering attended by six of the seven pastors serving the Arabic-speaking congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. At the gathering I was able to have a number of one-on-one conversations. Notes were taken throughout the gathering.

RELIGIOUS TRANSNATIONALISM

The opening illustration from the 2015 gathering at South Beach described transnational migrants living "aspects of their social, economic and political lives in at least two settings."[11] The study of transnational migrants' religious life has become an increasingly researched sub-category for, as Afe Adogame and James Spickard note, "Quite simply, people move and they take their religions with them."[12] In many countries there is no longer a national religion to which new arrivals must conform. Religious conviction is portable. Two of models for understanding religious transnationalism, Peggy Levitt's mapping and the categories proposed by Adogame and Spickard, are helpful in the present discussion.

Migrants bring with them the religious practices of their home country to the local context of their host community and in this new place live out the practices of their religion. As Peggy Levitt indicates, this intersection creates a new expression of the religion as it becomes globalized. Levitt proposes a five-level mapping of the "transnational religious field."[13] The first three levels of her mapping are relevant to the present conversation. The first level of religious transnationalism is the individual migrant engaging in personal religious practice through

the rituals and marking the festivals of their faith in their new home either on their own or within the nuclear or extended family. At this level the connections to the religious practice within the home may be enhanced through financial contributions to religious communities in the home country and the giving and receiving of advice between the migrant and the communities they left behind.[14]

The second level in Levitt's mapping queries the organizational systems "in which transnational migrants enact their religious lives."[15] That is the space religious transnationals create in the public sphere to live out their religious practice. These organized spaces give the group a public profile not available when the religious practice is individual or family based. These spaces include physical structures like mosques, temples, and churches. These communities also become visible in civil society when certain religious festivals are recognized by business and government figures and religious leaders are invited to certain public gatherings.[16]

Levitt's third level explores the formal connections and informal networks that link the local religious transnational community or organization with their home-country or home-region counterparts. Through these networks transnational migrant religious groups maintain organizational and intellectual links with their country of origin, receiving news from home, being reminded of the practices of the place they left, and maintaining particular religious understandings. These connections help create a community physically living in one country while being intellectually, ritually, and spiritually fed by ideas and practices from another country. Not all Level 3 connections are this strong. However, even with weaker connections, Levitt's mapping assists in understanding transnational religious communities.[17]

The fourth level of Levitt's model explores the ways in which nation states support and encourage their citizens' religious transnationalism. A form of this is the financial support some home country governments provide so religious institutions are available to their citizens in the host country. The fifth level mapping examines how global institutions enable transnationals to engage in religious life across two or more contexts and the ways those global institutions shape and are shaped by the transnational experience of their members. An example of such a global institution would be the Roman Catholic Church. Neither the fourth or fifth level of mapping apply to the present study. No home country government is aiding these

churches. Further, the Presbyterian church does not have an international presence; Presbyterian denominations are most often national in scope and independent from Presbyterian denominations in other countries.[18]

The first three mapping levels offer a framework for analysis and reflection on how religious transnationalism is experienced in the Arabic-speaking Presbyterian congregations under discussion. In some cases, the nurturing of one level of the relationship may negatively impact the health of another level. For example, the needs of the home community which an individual responds to personally may draw financial support away the religious diaspora community's plans to acquire a physical space for gathering and worship.

In their work on religious transnationalism among the African diaspora, historian of religions Adogame and sociologist Spickard, provide a different way of categorizing the religious transnational experience.[19] First they identify the Ellis Island model. Named for the island in the New York City harbor through which millions of new arrivals to the United States passed, this model argues that immigrants eventually leave behind patterns of life from the Old Country, including religious practices, to become American. This was previously the dominant way of understanding immigration.[20] To this Adogame and Spickard add six patterns.

Religious bi-localism occurs when migrants take religious practices from their home country and maintain them in the host country through the establishment of institutions and social structures. This has been made easier through economical air travel, email, social media, Skype, and YouTube which enables these migrants to more easily connect with the religious community back in the homeland. The migrants, while living in the host community, maintain a vibrant connection with the home country and its practices and religious developments.[21] This dual space parallels aspects of Level 3 on Levitt's mapping.

Transnational religious communities living out this bi-localism engage with the religious life of the host country in a variety of ways. Some, like those in the present study, live out their bi-localism through intentional engagement with religious entities and communities already present in the host country. Maintaining connections with the religious practices of home, the Arabic-speaking congregations focused on in this paper have connected and engaged with the Presbyterian Church in Canada. This form of religious bi-localism receives only

passing attention from Adogame and Spickard. A second form of religious bi-localism leads to what Adogame and Spickard call "religious cacophony."[22] Here a bi-local religious group makes little attempt to engage with the host society or to partner with the religious groups already present in the host community and instead becomes an additional religious presence in the crowded buffet of religious offerings already present in many multi-ethnic nations, like Canada. The unwillingness or inability to engage the wider community threatens the religious enclaves with becoming isolated. In most of the Arab Presbyterian congregations in this study, the leadership aware of this danger have sought to engage the wider culture while remaining distinctively Arab.

To understand Protestant-Arab communities, it is important to consider the movement of people and ideas driven by factors beyond the North Atlantic. Adogame and Spickard's next three patterns do exactly that.[23] Reverse missions, or missionary rebound, describes the phenomenon where parts of the world that once received missionaries are now sending missionaries to the regions from which the first missionaries came.[24] For example, having adopted the missionaries' message, Asian and African Christians have migrated to North America and Europe taking the gospel with them. Some reverse missionaries migrate with the understanding they are missionaries; others arrive in what they perceived to be a Christian country and discover it is not and begin the work of evangelization. South-South religious trade occurs when a religious community in the Global South sends missionaries to another country or region in Global South.[25] Finally, some religious organizations which cross national boundaries find themselves being shaped by their transnational nature. The diverse ethnic and national voices bring unexpected agenda items to the conversation, such as economic inequality and power imbalances. In addressing these challenges the transnational religious organization as a whole is changed.[26]

Finally, Adogame and Spickard propose the transnational imagined community. Deterritorialized migrants from a number of regions find connection in an imagined community. Some migrants' experience of frequently moving from place to place for work or to be free from danger leaves them without a place of stability and belonging, a place to call "home." Joining with others, of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, who share the same unsettled life, they create home in an imagined community. A diaspora community,

sharing dislocation as a common element turns to corporate religious practice to find a place of belonging. Living in hope, the community gathers to worship and to encourage one another in a space of belonging and safety, reminding each other a better world awaits.[27]

The mapping levels described by Levitt and the patterns proposed by Adogame and Spickard are useful tools for describing the experiences of religious transnationals and will be applied in the discussion that follows.

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION FROM CANADA AMONG ARABIC SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Christian churches motivated by Jesus' words (Matthew 28:16–20) calling his followers to bear witness to him to the "ends of the earth" have from earliest days of the church sent missionaries to other countries and diverse ethnic and linguistic groups to teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. During the height of European and North American Christian mission in the nineteenth century, the preaching of the gospel became linked to education and medical work, along with developing "helping" institutions. The growth of mission schools (including post-secondary institutions), mission hospitals, church-based orphanages, and the like date from this time. National Presbyterian denominations do not have a unified transnational structure, meaning overseas mission efforts are rooted in local, regional, and national decision making and guidance. Missionaries from different national Presbyterian denominations may cooperate with one another on the foreign mission field, all the while being responsible to their own denomination.

The Presbyterians of Upper Canada (Ontario) sent their earliest missionary in 1860 to Jerusalem. Finding the mission field overcrowded, Epstein moved to the western edge of the Ottoman Empire in present-day Macedonia. Following the creation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875, which brought together four branches of Presbyterianism in Canada into one entity, there was renewed interest in Palestine and the Rev. Dr. Charles A. Webster went first to Safed, Palestine, and then to Beirut.[28] Over the next forty years Webster was to be followed by more than fifty Canadian missionaries (not all Presbyterian) who served in various parts of the Ottoman Empire. A significant majority of these missionaries were sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and were to spend their entire careers working in present-day Turkey, Syria, and

Lebanon.[29] Their efforts were cut short by World War I and the Armenian Crisis. Following the First World War interest among Canadian Presbyterians for mission to the Middle East dropped dramatically.

While Canadian Presbyterians had little connection with Egypt, some Canadian Methodists did, as demonstrated by Dan Sheffield's work on Herbert E. Randall.[30] American Presbyterians had significant involvement in Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria.[31] While neither of these efforts drew Canadian Presbyterians into Egypt, the leaders of the Canadian church were aware of the American Presbyterian's involvement in the Middle East and were open to welcoming Presbyterians from the Middle East who migrated to Canada.

In the mid-1980s Canadian Presbyterian interest was again drawn to the Middle East when the Rev. Dr. Ted Siverns and his wife Betty served at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut. The Siverns' presence in Beirut and growing interest in the Palestinian question through the late 1990s and into the new century, have made many Canadian Presbyterians aware of the Middle East in a new way. This awareness has included the "discovery" that a number of Arabic speakers from the Middle East are Christians.[32]

ARAB CHRISTIANS IN CANADA

Arabic speakers have been in Canada since 1882, but they remained a relatively small group until the 1990s.[33] Arab immigration to Canada, which averaged less than 5,000 persons a year until 1986, has averaged over 20,000 persons a year since 1989 with nearly 35,000 Arabs arriving in Canada in 2010.[34] In 2010 and 2011 Arabs were the second highest group of immigrant arrivals to Canada, representing just over 12 percent of all immigrants.[35] The Arab population of Canada in 2011 was 750,925, with half of those persons having arrived in Canada in the previous decade.[36]

The Arab community was equally divided between Muslims and Christians in 2001, with just over 150,000 Arab Muslims in Canada and a similar number of Arab Christians. In 2001, only 6 percent of Arabs claimed no religious affiliation, significantly lower than the 17 percent of Canadians overall who described themselves as having no religious affiliation. By 2011, the Arab Muslim population had grown to 364,000 and the Arab Christian population was 225,000. The Christian population was divided between Catholics, the Orthodox

churches, and a variety of Protestant denominations. Protestants accounted for about 11 percent of the Arab Christian community, or approximately 25,000 people.[37]

Determining the number of Arabic-speaking Protestant congregations in Canada is not easy, since there is no single source, or even a few sources, which would provide an answer to the question. An internet search in the summer of 2015 revealed nearly thirty Arabic Protestant congregations in Canada. No claim is being made that those congregations are the total number of Arabic Protestant churches. In addition to the thirty congregations, there are gatherings of Arab Protestants in homes or rented meeting rooms with no visible presence in the public sphere. In these places people gather for Bible study, prayer, and mutual encouragement. In Brandon, Manitoba, for example, a group of Arab Protestant families meets weekly for prayer and study, but their numbers do not justify becoming an organized congregation with a building and a pastor. Their presence is advertised by word of mouth.[38] Such house groups are beyond the scope of this paper to determine their number and to locate.

Six of the approximately thirty Protestant churches are congregations of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The congregations are located in Montreal, two in the Greater Toronto Area (Markham and Mississauga), Hamilton, London, and Winnipeg. Together these congregations provide a religious and cultural home for over 1,000 Arab Protestants in Canada.[39] Not everyone who attends these congregations were Presbyterian when they lived in the Middle East. Some belonged to other branches of Protestantism, and others were Catholic, Orthodox, or Muslim, and after their arrival in Canada found their way into an Arabic-speaking Presbyterian congregation.[40] These congregations are made of Arabic speakers from across the Arab world, drawn together into a particular religious community. While immigrants from Egypt are prominent in a number of the congregations, none of the congregations is made up entirely of one nationality. Congregational leaders of the Canadian Presbyterian congregations seek to create a pan-Arab context for these congregations to be able to function.

The Arab Christian experience of diaspora in North America involves a reversal of minority status. In their home countries Arab Christians in general, and Arab Protestants in particular, are a part of a religious minority while being part of the linguistic and ethnic majority. In coming to North America, which has strong historical ties

to Christianity, the Arab Christian Diaspora is part of a religious majority group, but are part of a linguistic and ethnic minority. This reversal of status is made more difficult to navigate by the commonly held view among many North Americans that all Arabs are Muslim. Some Arab Christians on coming to North America in expectation of finding space in which to freely live their religious practices find they are limited by simplistic North American understandings of the complexity of the Middle East. Thus, the congregations discussed in this essay exist in a complex space.

CHAPEL PLACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARKHAM, ONTARIO

In the mid-1960s a number of Arab Protestant families attended Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto.[41] The women in the group asked a retired Arab pastor to lead a Bible study because they were unable, due to the language barrier, to take advantage of the English study opportunities offered by the church. This Bible study evolved into a worshiping community meeting in the Chapel of Knox Church while the Euro-Canadian congregation met in the main sanctuary. The congregation, largely Lebanese and Syrian, drew urban professionals. In 1976, when Montreal hosted the Olympics, the Christian communities of Montreal invited Christians from all over the world to hold religious events in the city. The Rev. Nagi Said came with a team from Egypt, and following the games he and the team traveled, at the invitation of the Arabic congregation meeting at Knox Church, to Toronto to hold evangelistic meetings before returning to Egypt. Three years later, the congregation invited the Rev. Said to be their minister, an invitation he accepted.[42] Said has become a significant figure among Arabic-speaking Presbyterians in Canada. As the senior minister of the largest Arabic-speaking Presbyterian Church in Canada he is seen as the dean of the Arabic-speaking pastors, as other pastors have been nurtured in their ministry by him.[43]

By the late 1980s the congregation, called Chapel Place Presbyterian Church, was still meeting in the chapel of Knox Church, and had grown to include about 100 households.[44] The congregation decided it needed its own building and, through help from the Canadian Presbyterian Church, bought land in the ever-expanding suburbs of Toronto in Markham, thirty kilometers north of their original location. The land was the site of a former Wesleyan Methodist Church where only the cemetery remained. The new church building

was erected beside the cemetery and the Chapel Place Presbyterian Church opened on 27 October 1991.[45] Using Levitt's mapping, the Level 1 private space of the Bible study had moved into Level 2 as a congregation with a church building, and therefore a public profile. Chapel Place had a space of its own in which to develop a distinct community life. The congregation had its own home and had a place in the public sphere.

Visitors to the cemetery immediately north of Chapel Place Church will notice a significant number of older headstones, some dating back to the first settlement of the community. These stones bear surnames expected in such cemeteries in Canada: English and Scottish names predominate with a few other European names as well. The headstones with death dates within the last twenty years are quite different: few bear European names, the majority of the more recent stones bear Arab and Middle Eastern surnames. The cemetery bears silent witness to the changing character of the faith communities that have occupied that space.[46]

Within a year of the church building opening, the congregation had grown by 30 percent, the location being more accessible to the Arab population present in the suburbs of Toronto. Throughout this period services remained in Arabic. By 2005 there were 225 people in regular attendance; and by 2014 the number had grown to 380 in two worship services each Sunday.[47] The first service on Sunday is in English and second in Arabic, with each service having its own pastor. The pastor for the Arabic service serves as the senior pastor of the organization. The two services have their own youth groups, phone numbers, and websites. In many ways these are two congregations in one building overseen by one leadership structure. The two congregations can be differentiated by their demographics. The English-speaking congregation is made up of teenagers and people in their early twenties and their parents. The teenage and twenty-something core of the congregation function in English at school and work and see no reason why their faith should be expressed in Arabic; they want to worship in the language in which they live their public lives (even if they may speak Arabic at home.) The parents of this core group attend the English service in order to attend church with their families. The Arabic service includes young families with pre-teen children, a few teenagers, and a significant number of adults over age fifty. This group expects to worship in the language that worship has always been in for them: Arabic.[48]

The leadership team at Chapel Place envision a church building with two sanctuaries allowing the Arabic and the English services to take place simultaneously. There would be one Sunday School program for children, offered in English only.[49] No attempt is being made to maintain Arabic as the language of worship for the second generation. The leadership of Chapel Place, pastors and elders, believe they cannot keep Arabic as the language of worship in the second generation because of the ambivalent feelings in the wider Canadian society towards Arabs. Rather the leadership team will maintain an Arab Protestant worldview even as Arabic recedes as the language of worship and ministry. The task of nurturing an Arab Protestant worldview will fall largely to the pastors of the English-speaking worship gathering, for they speak the language of the younger generation and have themselves navigated to an understanding of what it means to be Arab Protestant young people in a Euro- Canadian culture. Through their preaching, small group interactions, and one-on-one connections the pastors help young congregants think through their Arab Protestant identity. The English-speaking congregation's ethos is broadly Protestant rather than specifically Presbyterian. In this it shares a common experience with Euro-Canadian congregations made up of twenty to forty-five-year-olds who are uninterested in maintaining denominational distinctiveness beyond the broad categories of, for example: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox. The question arises: What is the Arab Protestant identity being transmitted? From the sermon preached to the English-speaking congregation and from conversation with the Rev. Nagi Said, the identity is a blending of Christian beliefs and values with Arab cultural practices. The Christian element declares Jesus is lord and savior not just in one's beliefs but also with one's personal and public life. Living out Jesus' lordship includes being people of integrity and compassion; and living by the Biblical moral code. The Arab cultural practice would involve honoring the extended family, showing deference to one's pro-genitors, working hard, and an expectation that men, in particular, will internalize a responsibility for passing on the identity to the next generation.[50]

The English-speaking service maintains a distinctive Arab identity, but consciously seeks to reach beyond the Arabic speaking community to the wider Canadian community. This larger vision is expressed on the English-speaking youth group's Facebook page, "This youth group is in English, so you can invite your friends."[51] Non-Arabs are welcome to be part of the congregation. The Sunday I attended worship at Chapel Place, a man of East Asian ancestry from the

neighborhood attended worship for the first time and was made to feel welcome at the English service.[52] The leaders of the English language worship service want to reach the multi-ethnic neighborhood surrounding the church with the gospel message, a form of what Adogame and Spickard described as reverse mission.[53] Yet the leaders are aware of the need to maintain an Arab style in the worship, seen in the focus of the sermon, the concerns addressed in prayer, and the musical rhythms present in the songs, to nurture the existing congregation.

The Chapel Place congregation is aware of challenges faced by many living in the Middle East where members of the congregation still have relatives. One room at Chapel Place was stacked two meters high with boxes of nonperishable food stuffs and other things which are being collected to fill a shipping container to be sent to Iraq.[54] The congregation is in a bi-local space, living in Canada but deeply connected to the needs of persons in the Middle East. Individuals are responding personally to those needs, Level 1 in Levitt's mapping, but the collection is being managed by the church which has created space in the public sphere inviting non-Arabs to contribute to the effort. This reflects Levitt's second Level. By inviting non-Arab churches to contribute to the effort,[55] Chapel Place is creating space within the denomination for responding to Middle Eastern needs to be part of the wider church's life and work, an engagement which reshapes the Presbyterian Church as a whole.

ARABIC PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONTREAL, QUEBEC

A group of Arab Protestants in Montreal began meeting in 1978 at Cote Des Neiges Presbyterian Church. This group included people from across the theological spectrum of Protestantism, as the stretch from Presbyterians with their practice of infant baptism to the Baptist practice of adult baptism only proved too difficult to maintain. In 1985 a group of Lebanese with Baptist backgrounds left the congregation to start their own church.[56] Small Arab Protestant communities are likely to choose de-emphasizing denominational distinctiveness in order to survive. For some, being able to worship in Arabic as Protestants is more important than maintaining one's specific brand of Protestantism. As the community grows so does the ability of the community to support more than one Protestant church and the denominational approaches become more important.

In 1993, the Presbyterian congregation with twenty-one members was officially recognized by The Presbyterian Church in Canada fifteen years after the worship gatherings started. Being officially recognized as a congregation gave the congregation a vote in the regional governing body, the Presbytery of Montreal, and the right to send representatives to the national policy making body of the Canadian Presbyterian Church on a rotational basis. By 2004 the congregation had not grown beyond that size when a new pastor was called to the congregation. Two new practices were adopted under the Rev. Samy Said's ministry. First, the congregation invested in bringing in the "Better Life" praise team from Egypt to connect with the Arab community in Montreal. The musical style was from the Arab world. The message was coming from Egypt to Arabs living in Canada, it was not coming from Canadian voices. The second practice was the development of annual retreats for the spiritual benefit of the congregation. Speakers, often from the Middle East, articulate the faith in the language and idiom from the home country. These gatherings become opportunities to have fellowship and build connection with Arab Protestants in a context celebrating that tradition and its values. Both practices were rooted in maintaining a distinctively Arab identity, creating space for Arab Protestants to gather for worship in Arabic and to be Arab. The increased activity at Montreal Arabic Presbyterian Church and enhanced connection with the Middle East coincided with the influx of immigration from Egypt and Syria in particular. Through the generosity of non-Arab Presbyterians in Montreal, the congregation was able to offer housing to new arrivals in a manse that was no longer needed by the church.[57]

The Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal purchased the former Fabreville Presbyterian Church building in the Westmount neighborhood of Montreal in 2010, after the Fabreville congregation closed.[58] An Arabic- speaking congregation took over a building that once housed an English-speaking Euro-Canadian congregation. In acquiring an existing church building, the congregation reshaped culturally recognized sacred space through its distinctive Arab identity. The congregation now had a space in which to practice its distinctive identity. The congregation's history as told on the "About Us" page on their website, attributes the recent developments in the congregation to three things: the proclamation of the gospel in an Arab idiom, the deepening of the congregation's spiritual life, and service to the immigrant community.[59] The first and third items reinforce the congregation's bi-local status, firmly rooted in Montreal, with history

and a building, while continuing to connect with speakers, worship leaders and singers from the Arab world. The congregation had grown by 2014 to 120 people in worship on Sundays, meeting in the former Fabreville Presbyterian Church, in Westmount, Montreal.[60] The congregation is made up of Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqis, Lebanese, and Palestinians along with others.

ALMANARAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

Two connected processes lead to the creation of Almanarah Presbyterian Church in Mississauga.[61] The increased immigration from the Middle East drew the attention of leaders within the Presbyterian Church; they were particularly aware of Presbyterians from Egypt and Syria. Second, Sherif Garas, who had been worshiping at Chapel Place Church under the ministry of the Rev. Nagi Said before attending Knox College, the denomination's theological college in Toronto, graduated with a Master of Divinity in the summer of 2002.[62] Garas, originally from Egypt and fluent in Arabic, had been theologically trained in Canada and was comfortable working in both contexts. He is an able cultural translator, translating Canadian Presbyterianism to Arabic-speaking immigrants and translating Middle Eastern Christian practice to the Canadian denomination.

Unlike Chapel Place and the Montreal congregation which arose from the grassroots as groups of Arabic-speaking Protestants who started to gather for worship without the support and oversight of a Euro-Canadian denomination, Almanarah was planned and supported by the Presbyterian Church from its beginning. The first two congregations sought to join the denomination as existing congregations, with Almanarah the Presbyterian Church in Canada was intentionally funding the start of an Arabic-speaking congregation thereby opening the door to other presbyteries in Canada asking for such support to start Arabic-speaking congregations. Garas was ordained in 2002 and appointed by the denomination to start a congregation in the Mississauga-Oakville region. A prayer meeting gathered in the Garas' home until in March 2003, when the first Sunday morning service took place in rented space. Quite quickly the community expressed a desire for Friday night programming, not just for youth but for the whole family. Garas suggests for Christians coming from Muslim countries, they were used to having gatherings for spiritual encouragement on Fridays as well as Sundays, Friday

being the Muslim holy day and usually a non-working day and Sunday being the Christian holy day and often a working day in parts of the Muslim world. For the Almanarah congregation the Friday night program has become a central part of their congregational life. Some twelve years after the start of the congregation, Friday has morphed into Cafe Night, there is a gathering for adults, along with programming for children, Junior High aged youth, and High School aged youth. While the adult programming is often in Arabic, the youth programming is in English.[63] The Friday night gatherings arise from the rhythm of Arab life and identity, creating a distinct space for the Arabic Protestants of Mississauga.

The community understands the need to find a balance within the religious bi-localism of being connected to a distant homeland while living in a new country. About twice a year the congregation invites outside speakers who are part of the unofficial Arab Protestant network in North America to lead retreats or conferences. For example, in the summer of 2015, the congregation hosted a couple from Jordan who spoke on marriage relationships. Garas, while clear Almanarah is an Arabic-speaking congregation, does not believe isolation from the Euro-Canadian denomination will be to be benefit of Almanarah.[64]

Over half the congregation of the Almanarah congregation is Egyptian with Iraqis, Jordanians, Lebanese, and Syrians composing most of the remaining half. The congregation's members come from a variety of denominational backgrounds: Baptist, Orthodox, Maronite, Catholic, Pentecostal, and so on. Few have Presbyterian roots. More than once there has been conflict between church members who have wanted to develop policies and practices at odds with Canadian Presbyterian policy and practice. Conflicts have arisen over baptism, similar to conflicts in Montreal, as those with Baptist backgrounds opposed the baptism of infants as practiced in Presbyterianism. Further conflict has arisen over the selection of elders, who, within the Presbyterian tradition, serve together with the pastor(s) as the leadership team of the congregation. While those within the Presbyterian tradition agree on the importance of elders, there is not agreement among the various national Presbyterian denominations on how elders are to be selected, on how many elders is the correct number for a congregation to have, and on the qualifications and characteristics that qualify a person to be an elder. Not only has the selecting of elders been conflict-laden, so has agreeing on the powers individual elders have. These fault-lines have led to people leaving the congregation in hopes of finding a congregation more conducive to their desired

practices and approaches.[65] Almanarah is Arab Protestant space existing inside the larger space of a Euro-Canadian denomination, a denomination that provided the resources for Almanarah to exist. This multi-layered relationship circumscribes the shape Almanarah is allowed to take and the ways in which it can express its Arab identity. Engagement with and support from the Euro-Canadian church limits the freedom of Almanarah, while Almanarah and the other Arabic-speaking congregations, as will be argued later in this essay, have shaped the Canadian Presbyterian Church.[66]

Garns' experience led him to suggest newly started Arabic-speaking congregations within the Canadian Presbyterian Church be linked with an existing Euro-Canadian congregation. The congregations would remain distinct entities but through the linking the Euro-Canadian congregation would be able to help the Arabic-speaking congregation in a number of ways. First, it would have physical space for the newly started congregation to gather, both on Sundays and Friday nights. As can be seen in the previous examples as well, the search for space is a challenge for many new congregations. Second, the administrative structures of the Euro-Canadian congregation would provide the new congregation with administrative supports as it developed, allowing the new congregation time to develop those administrative systems. Third, the Euro-Canadian congregation's English-speaking church services would be a place second generation Arab Christians could attend, since many second-generation young adults prefer to worship in English. Arab Protestant parents would be able to direct their children, who no longer wanted to attend an Arabic speaking service, to a place that would be somewhat understanding of their Arab identity. Fourth, the connection would shape the Euro-Canadian congregation into an advocate on behalf of the Arabic church. Through this relationship, the Arabic-speaking church would learn some of the ways of the Euro-Canadian church through a lived interaction with the mentoring congregation. Garas' model would lead to a blended space in which Arabs and Euro-Canadians engaged in a joint project: the development of an Arabic congregation as part of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

ALMANARAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, LONDON, ONTARIO

The next three congregational histories share the influence of the Rev. Sherif Garas and his vision in common. Through his connections with Arab Protestants across Canada and the mobility of the Arabic-

speaking community in Canada, Garas became aware of clusters of Arab Presbyterians in London and Hamilton, Ontario and in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In each case Garas' suggestions regarding finding a mentoring congregation were attempted.[67]

In 2004, a London, Ontario group of Arab Protestants started meeting in each other's homes for prayer and Bible study. The group was independent of any denominational links. The vision of the group was "to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the thousands who are living in London and who had not received Christ's message (in Arabic or English languages)."[68] This vision statement, a vision for outreach to all in London regardless of ethnicity or nationality, is an example of the missionary rebound: Christians from a part of the world that once received missionaries from North America, coming to North America with a goal of reaching North Americans with the gospel message. A pastor, William Khalil, originally from Egypt who had been in Canada with his family for seven years, was invited to lead the congregation in 2008.[69]

The group, still meeting in homes, had grown to forty-five by late 2008. St. George's Presbyterian Church invited the group to use St. George's building for Sunday gatherings. By the end of 2009 attendance had grown to eighty, drawing on immigrants from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.[70] The connection with St. George's encouraged the congregation to build ties to the Presbytery of London of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, seeking to become an officially recognized Presbyterian congregation. Presbyteries, regional committee structures, are the judicatory bodies charged with the oversight of congregations and ministers within the Presbyterian Church. A mentored relationship was developed and an advisory committee of Presbytery worked alongside leaders from Almanarah, London. Difficulties arose in the relationship when professional education requirements of the denomination took Pastor Khalil away from the congregation a couple of days a week for two years. Further the advisory committee pushed hard at imposing a Canadian Presbyterian administrative structure on Almanarah. The absence of the pastor and a feeling that the church was being shaped into a Euro-Canadian congregation led to a decline in attendance.[71] Despite these challenges, the congregation forged ahead with attaining official recognition as a congregation of the Presbytery of London, the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In June 2010 the congregation purchased a building from a non-denominational congregation that was moving to a new location.[72] The congregation has focused on youth through music, drama, Vacation Bible School, and weekly youth group programming. This focus has led them to explore simultaneous translation for those who have a limited or non-existent knowledge of Arabic. This congregation is distinct from most of the others in this study as it has acted with great openness to English-speaking culture. The majority of the speakers brought in for retreats and seminars have been of European background. The music played by the worship band is from the contemporary Christian music scene in North America. The leader of the youth programming is a Euro-Canadian with theatre arts training.[73]

Almanarah, London, more than any other congregation in this study articulates a desire to reach beyond the Arabic-speaking community with the gospel. This missionary rebound approach leads to a shedding of Arab Protestant distinctiveness in an effort to remove those things that might prevent non-Middle Eastern people hearing the message of the gospel. This decision presents a challenge. Many Arab Protestants, while agreeing with the missionary impulse, still desire a space in which they can live out their Arab Protestant identity. Pastor Khalil has suggested that part of the decline in attendance has been because the space has not been Arab enough.[74]

ALMANARAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, HAMILTON, ONTARIO

The Hamilton Almanarah Presbyterian Church began in 2011. The Presbytery of Hamilton, having been encouraged by Garas, started an Arabic-speaking congregation in Hamilton with the Egyptian the Rev. Amin Mansour as its pastor. The congregation which worshipped in the chapel of St. John and St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, until the spring of 2016, is made up of Iraqis, Syrians, Egyptians, Sudanese, and Ethiopians. The religious backgrounds represented are equally mixed with Protestants of various kinds joining with Catholics, Orthodox, and even some Muslims. St. John and St. Andrew mentored the fledgling congregation. The congregation's ministry is driven by pastoral care for refugees and new arrivals in Canada who have few resources.[75] As new arrivals to Canada come to the church they bring stories of others who remain in refugee camps and are in need of help. The Almanarah congregation sends money to those still in the camps, advocates for those seeking to come to Canada

as refugees, and provides care and compassion to those in Canada who fear what may happen to loved ones still seeking a permanent, safe home. This social justice action is balanced with evangelistic work which includes giving copies of "The Jesus Film" to Arabic speakers in the community, and using evangelistic methods developed in the Middle East.[76] The church held an Easter dinner to which non-Protestant Arabs were invited to hear the Easter story and ask questions. The congregation has Friday night programming for the whole family and has brought in a speaker from Egypt to encourage the spiritual life of the congregation.[77]

The congregation has run children's programming both in the summertime and as mid-week programming during the school year in partnership with the Euro-Canadian congregation which is hosting them.[78] Hamilton Almanarah has maintained two sets of connections, deeply rooted in Arab culture it has actively engaged with the Euro-Canadian church and by extension Euro-Canadian culture, a form of what Adogame and Spickard describe as religious bi-localism.[79] The partnership with St. John and St. Andrew Church is an engagement with a congregation deeply rooted in the host culture. Such engagement creates space for mutuality in relationship between people from the host community and the diaspora community. Pastor Mansour described the space at St. John and St. Andrew Church as "home;" a space where congregation members were free to be themselves. In such a space an Arab Protestant identity can develop. The English-speaking congregation of St. John and St. Andrew Church was unable to continue as a congregation due to financial constraints and so the building was sold, forcing Almanarah to look for other space in which to gather, leading to concerns the new space will not feel like "home."[80]

LIGHTHOUSE EVANGELICAL ARABIC CHURCH, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Lighthouse Evangelical Arabic Church in Winnipeg also owes its existence to Garas' desire to respond to the newly arriving Arabic-speaking immigrants. Members of Garas' church in Mississauga had moved to Winnipeg for employment reasons but were unable to find a church to their satisfaction. So the families, without the support of any clergy, started a prayer gathering in their homes. Garas contacted Presbyterian Church leaders in Winnipeg in 2012 telling this story and inviting the Presbytery of Winnipeg to support beginning an Arabic-

speaking church. Garas had approached a pastor in Jordan, Ibrahim Zabaneh, who was willing to move to Canada. Zabaneh visited Winnipeg in the summer of 2013 before returning Jordan. He and Garas were convinced a church would grow quickly. Ibrahim Zabaneh, his Syrian partner, and their children arrived in Winnipeg in December 2013 and the next month Lighthouse Church began services in a building rented by Prairie Presbyterian Church. The connection between the congregations has led to an agreement to partner in a church building which will house the two congregations as equals.[81]

The Presbytery of Winnipeg, aware of the difficulties in translating Canadian Presbyterian identity to new immigrant groups and vice versa, appointed a cross-cultural liaison to act as a go-between connecting the structures of the church with Lighthouse church and other first-generation immigrant congregations in Winnipeg. This approach creates a middle ground in which identity issues on both sides of the conversation can be raised and addressed.[82]

Through Zabaneh's connections in the Middle East and Garas' connections with the Arab Protestant network in North America, weekend retreats and workshops have become common practice. The weekend retreats draw across the spectrum of Christian denominations with members of the Coptic Orthodox Church attending. The congregation has also become involved with welcoming refugees from the Syrian crisis, and in seeking to engage Christians in Winnipeg to respond to the crisis. These two practices indicate the two-directional nature of religious bi-localism. Arabs from the Middle East play a role in the life of North American congregations helping nurture an Arab identity in the space being created by the congregation and North American congregations seeking to address geo-political issues in the Middle East.

SOME MARKS OF ARAB PRESBYTERIAN IDENTITY

The discussion that follows points to themes from these case studies, observations of congregations, and conversation with Arab Presbyterian pastors. Using tools of congregational analysis and comparison to Euro-Canadian Presbyterian congregations, an initial foray is taken into describing aspects and trends of an Arab Presbyterian identity.

Corporate Spiritual Life

Two related corporate spiritual practices play significant roles in the above accounts: Arabic music and spiritual retreats. Not all the congregations have developed both practices, but each congregation has developed at least one of these practices.

Music is a bearer of culture and is central to Christian worship. North American contemporary worship music is omnipresent in churches not only in North America but around the world. Many African diaspora congregations sing North American contemporary worship songs in English played with a distinctly African style. Korean diaspora congregations sing North American contemporary worship songs translated into Korean.[83] Arabic-speaking congregations do not fit this pattern. While the English service at Chapel Place and youth-led services at the other congregations use North American contemporary worship music, the Arabic-language services at these congregations make substantial use of songs original written in Arabic and sung to popular and folk music tempos, at times referred to as *baladi* or *maqsum*.[84] The retention of a musical style, as Janice McLean indicates in her study of the worship music of immigrants from the West Indies, is an important way of maintaining a distinct identity within a host culture, marking the group as different from the mainstream community.[85] The congregations in both Winnipeg and Montreal have regularly brought in singers from the Middle East for weekend events which have been attended by both Protestants and Christians from other denominations.[86] Hearing and singing worship music in the musical styles of home roots the hearer, drawing forth emotions and commitments linked to the home community and the worship practices of home. Hearing the music of home even as one is away creates a distinct space within the host community; a space that is Arab.

Congregational singing has been a hallmark of Presbyterian-Reformed worship from the days of John Calvin, as all those gathered for worship would join in singing the psalms. Hymns have been added to psalm singing over time. A gendered pattern of hymn singing has developed over the last twenty-five years as fewer men in Euro-Canadian Presbyterian congregations join in the singing of hymns. Hymns are places in the worship for all present to participate, commonly however in Euro-Canadian congregations women sing the hymns while men are either silent or sing in a whisper. This pattern is notably absent in Arabic-speaking Presbyterian churches where men sing the hymns, so women and men join together as a congregation in

singing.[87] Singing with others, in the language and style of home, plays an important role in maintaining identity. The space in which the language and style of home can be lived, becomes space, even if only for a couple of hours, which is home, no longer part of the host culture.

An informal network of Arab Protestant speakers and singers exists and individuals from this network are invited to lead workshops and retreats in local congregations.[88] Some of the speakers live in the Middle East and others in Europe and North America, yet they travel easily and frequently among both Diaspora communities and countries in the Middle East. Congregations call upon these people for overlapping purposes: enhancing the spiritual life of individuals and the congregation, holding special evangelistic events, and training congregational leaders. Overlaying this goal is a desire to have the spiritual elements delivered by a person who understands the Arab culture and can articulate the spiritual content in an idiom and style familiar to Arab Protestants. The message is inculturated by the speaker who addresses the audience as one who speaks their language both linguistically and culturally. In such a space a distinct identity arises which views the spiritual life of the Christian through a matrix of Arab language and culture. Language and culture shape spiritual practices and the use of speakers from the informal network of Arab Protestants strengthen identity making practices and approaches.

The regular flow of speakers and singers forms a link between home and the diaspora as speakers bring news and advice from other Arab Protestant communities in the Middle East or in diaspora. These connections remind religious transnationals of a larger Arab Protestant community that stretches beyond their local congregation and beyond the Presbyterian Church. This reminder shapes their identity building links rooted in experiences and commitments growing from ties to a place in the world that is at significant physical remove.

Family

The banner at Lighthouse Church, Winnipeg reads: "One Family. Big Vision. Kingdom Focus." The multi-layered phrase "One Family" provides a launching pad for a discussion of "family" in Arabic Presbyterian congregations. These congregations sponsor a large number of conferences, seminars, and study groups with the theme of family. The focus on youth is a further indication of the importance of family to Arab Presbyterians.

This focus on family stands in contrast to much of what would be heard in Euro-Canadian Presbyterian congregations, where family is far less prominent in preaching and teaching. In part this contrast is due to the willingness of Arab Presbyterians to put forward a definition of a family norm. For these congregations a family is generally understood to mean a heterosexual married couple and their offspring. While not denying the existence of divorce, single-parent families, step families, and same- sex families, these are all seen as exceptions to the norm.[89] Many Euro-Canadian congregations, aware of the challenges involved in attempting to define family, steer away from all conversations which might require a definition of family. These Arabic-speaking congregations, having a normative definition of family in operation, are far less hesitant to speak of family and to provide advice as to how family should function. Inevitably there will be conflict between these congregations and the Euro-Canadian denomination; the Arabic-speaking congregations function with a definition of family that the Euro-Canadian congregations no longer see as normative. Until that time comes, it is likely the Arabic-speaking congregations will continue to speak about family with heterosexual married-only-once couples as the assumed bedrock of the family.

A second way family is understood in these congregations is the family includes all who gather to worship. While they may not be related biologically, may not be from the same country, and may have substantially different life experiences, they share in common being Arabs and speaking Arabic, which has a significant effect on their worldview. The entire congregation becomes family. I have observed people who are not related, even from different countries in the Arab World, interact in ways that could best be described as family interactions. This understanding of family is nurtured by congregational leaders.[90]

The banner at the conference described at the start of this paper read: "One Family, Big Vision, Kingdom Focus." The phrase "One Family" suggests this expanded level of family: the Arabic-speaking family. The Presbyterian Arab congregations consist of persons from Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, the Palestinian State, Sudan, Ethiopia, and other Arabic-speaking countries. In order for congregations to function with limited internal conflict the national lines have to be downplayed and a pan-Arab identity of "one family" must be constructed. Awareness of the need for a pan-Arab understanding is evident on the website for Hamilton Almanarah Church where flags of nine Arabic-speaking countries flank the

Canadian flag.[91] Almanarah, Mississauga marks the same goal by having the flags of Arabic-speaking countries across the front of the sanctuary flanking the Canadian flag.[92] The family in view is an institution, built around a Protestant understanding of the Christian faith, the Arabic language, and shared cultural practices crossing the Arab world. Such a family is a transnational imagined community, seeking to build unity among the Arabs in a particular community across national divides using Protestant Christianity as a unifying force.

Engagement with the Religious Community Present in the Host Country

Through an intentional bi-localism these Arabic-speaking churches have maintained a distinctly Arab Protestant identity yet have demonstrated a willingness to engage with an existing denomination in the host culture in the process. Not only have the congregations been shaped in particular ways but so has the thinking and practice of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In both 2003 and 2011, high-level delegations, both including the Moderator of the denomination, visited Israel and the Palestinian State.[93] These visits were driven, at least in part, by an awareness of Arab voices within the denomination. Notably the Rev. Dr. Rick Horst upon his return to Canada became an advocate for a two-state solution, being vocal in his criticism of the Israeli response to the Palestinian question.[94] This attention has shaped the thinking of Canadian Presbyterians regarding the Palestinian–Israeli conflict and led to quite animated debate at the church's General Assembly about the appropriate stance of the church on the question.[95]

Further, the denomination's Church Doctrine Committee in the first decade of the twenty-first century worked on a document on supersessionism, so named for the theological viewpoint that Christianity superseded Judaism and therefore the salvation of the Jews depends on their becoming Christians. The Church Doctrine Committee rejected supersessionism, but in the process raised the question of a Christian response to the state of Israel. An Arab member of the Church Doctrine Committee played an influential role in shaping the committee's report so that while recognizing the right of Israel to exist in peace it did not affirm its borders to be, as suggested by some Christians, "from the River to the Great Sea."[96]

At the 2015 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. Samy Said of the Arabic speaking congregation in Montreal brought a

motion asking all congregations of the denomination to consider sponsoring refugees flowing out of Syria. His motion was passed unanimously as a number of people spoke in favor of the motion.[97]

Rooted in two religious communities, the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Arab Christian Protestant network in the Middle East, Arab Presbyterians have acted to shape the Presbyterian Church in particular ways. These bi-local Christians are not isolated in Canada, they are shaping a mainline denomination's thinking and action, suggesting an eighth pattern of religious transnationalism, one of engagement with religious institutions in the host culture while maintaining a distinct religious-cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

The Arab Presbyterian congregations in Canada either by happenstance or by planned development moved from being personal places of religious transnationalism to having a presence on the public sphere; flowing through Levitt's Level 1 mapping to Level 2. In the process the congregations became public space where Arabic speakers of many different religious backgrounds found a place to express their identity. In these pan-Arab spaces cultural and spiritual values were maintained and nurtured.

Adogame and Spickard proposed models of: Ellis Island assimilation; religious bi-localism; the ghettoization which leads to "religious cacophony" in the public square; missionary rebound; South-to-South religious trade; the international religious organization; and the transnational imagined community. Within those models, the congregations in this study have adopted a form of religious bi-localism. While rejecting the ghettoization that often accompanies religious bi-localism these congregations have remained rooted in a pan-Arab cultural understanding. Committed to a distinctly Arab expression of Presbyterianism, the congregations are open to their youth and young adults, the second generation, worshipping in English and therefore expressing their religious commitments in English. This balance between openness to the Euro-Canadian culture on the one hand and maintaining a distinctly Arab expression of Presbyterianism on the other is not easy, but is important for the organization's survival. Missionary minded congregations, like Almanarah, London, in seeking to proclaim a Christian message to persons of all cultures downplayed cultural distinctives, including Arab distinctives. But a cost was paid as these congregations found

themselves unable to hold on to those Arab Protestants who wished to have a distinctly Arab Christian religious experience. The congregations that have thrived have found ways to welcome others into the congregation without losing their Arab Protestant distinctiveness. Walking between religious bi-localism and missionary rebound requires a finely tuned sense of balance, moving too far one way or the other jeopardizes the need to hold on to members who wish to have a distinctively Arab Christian experience and the need to engage with the wider culture for the congregation to have a future after the first generation (Arabic speakers) are gone. These congregations are creating space for an Arab Protestant identity which is in active engagement with the existing religious structures of the host culture.

NOTES

[1] Peter Bush, notes from The Lighthouse Evangelical Arabic Church Retreat at South Beach Casino, Manitoba, 2 August 2015.

[2] The Presbyterian tradition of Christianity finds its roots in the theological thought of John Calvin of the Reformation Era and brought to Scotland by John Knox, which places the tradition within Protestantism. From Scotland the movement has spread around the world including to North America and the Middle East. Emphasizing covenantal theology, the sovereignty of God, and God's unmerited grace towards human beings, Presbyterians govern themselves through a series of church courts (committees) made up of both ministers and lay leaders (elders). A worshipping community receives recognition as an official congregation from the regional body (the Presbytery) and thereby gains the right to send its minister and one elder to have voting rights within the Presbytery. While the Presbytery oversees the work of congregations and plans new ministry ventures within a specified region, the General Assembly (again made up of ministers and elders) sets policy for the national denomination and provides funding to Presbyteries to launch new ministries. Presbyterians practice infant baptism for the children of church members and adult baptism for converts to the faith who have not been previously baptized.

[3] Howard Adelman et al., eds., *Immigration and Refugee Policy: Australia and Canada Compared*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Alexia Bloch, "Multiculturalism, Meanings of Citizenship, and Post-Soviet Russian Speaking Immigrants in Vancouver, Canada," in *Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity: Critical Cases*, eds. Scott H. Boyd and Mary Ann Walter (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 85–98; Marlene Epp et al., eds., *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Dirk Hoerder,

Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada (Montreal: Queen's University Press, 1999); Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006); Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *Making of a Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540–2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007); Barrington Walker, ed., *The History of Immigration and Racism in Canada: Essential Readings* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2008); Reginald Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1987).

[4] Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (Fall, 1992): 3–41.

[5] Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, *Like our Mountains: A History of Armenians in Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2005); T.D. Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939–1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Frances Swyripa, *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010); Frances Swyripa, "When Churches Emigrate: Some Observations from the Canadian Experience," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 35–36 (2010-2011): 155–66.

[6] Dalia Abdelhady, *The Lebanese Diaspora: The Arab Immigrant Experience in Montreal, New York, and Paris* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Baha Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart in association with the Multiculturalism Directorate, Department of the Secretary of State and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, 1980); Baha Abu-Laban and Sharon Mcirvin Abu-Laban, "Arab-Canadian Youth in Immigrant Family Life," in *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 140–53; Harold B. Barclay, "The Lebanese Muslim Family," in *The Canadian Family*, ed. Karigoudar Ishwaran (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), 92–104; Camilla Gibb and Celia Rothenberg, "Believing Women: Harari and Palestinian Women at Home and in the Canadian Diaspora," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 2 (October 2000): 243–59; Amani Hamdan, "Arab Muslim Women in Canada: The Untold Narratives," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 27, no. 1 (April 2007): 133–54; Martin Cyr Hicks, "The Challenge of lnterculturalism: Insights on the Bouchard-Taylor Commission and Multiculturalism in Quebec," in *Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity: Critical Cases*, eds. Scott H. Boyd and Mary Ann Walter (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 75–84; Zuhair Kashmeri, *The Gulf Within: Canadian Arabs, Racism and the Gulf War* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991); Nene Ernest Khalema and Jenny Wannas-Jones, "Under the Prism of Suspicion: Minority Voices in Canada Post-September 11," *Journal of*

Muslim Minority Affairs 23, no. 1 (April 2003): 25–39; L.E. Sweet, "Reconstructing Lebanese Village Society in a Canadian City," in *Arabic-Speaking Communities in North American Cities*, ed. Barbara Aswad (Staten Island, NY: Center for Migration Studies and Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1974), 39–52.

[7] For example, Baha Abu-Laban in *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* mentions "the absorption of an undetermined number of Syrian immigrants into Canada established Protestant and Catholic churches" (130) even though there had been a distinct Arab Protestant church since in Toronto since the late 1960s. Sharon Mcirvin Abu-Laban and Baha Abu-Laban, "Teens-Between: The Public and Private Spheres of Arab-Canadian Adolescents," in *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 113–28, examined Muslim and Christian ("Catholic, Antiochian Orthodox, and Coptic") youth, but not Protestants. Paul Eid, *Being Arab: Ethnic and Religious Identity Building among Second Generation Youth in Montreal* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007) explores religious views of youth but does not test for differences of views between Muslim and Christian youth, let alone Protestant youth. Ibrahim Hayani, "Arabs in Canada," *Global Research*, 24 November 2014, http://www.globalresearch.ca/arabs-in-canada/5415869 does not note the existence of Arab Protestants in his discussion of the various religions present among Arab Canadians.

[8] Deanna Ferree Womack, "Transnational Christianity and Converging Identities: Arabic Protestant Church in New Jersey," *Mission Studies* 32 (2015): 250–70.

[9] The term Euro-Canadian recognizes that both English and French languages are part of the European heritage in Canada, making Anglo-Canadian an ineffective term. The Arabic speaking congregation in Montreal lives in a context where French is the language of the broader community. The term Euro-Canadian also recognizes that many English-speaking Canadians do not trace their ancestry to Great Britain but to Italy, Poland, the Ukraine, the Netherlands, and other European countries.

[10] Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, eds., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

[11] Peggy Levitt, "'You Know, Abraham Was Really the First Immigrant': Religion and Transnational Migration," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (September 2003): 850.

[12] Afe Adogame and James Spickard, "Introduction," in *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Religious and Social Dynamics in Africa and the New African Diaspora*, eds. Adogame and Spickard (Boston: Brill, 2010), 7–8.

[13] Levitt, "Abraham," 850.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Adogame and Spickard, "Introduction," 7–20.

[20] Ibid., 9–11. See also Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted*, 2nd edition, enlarged, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973).

[21] Adogame and Spickard, "Introduction," 11–13.

[22] Ibid., 13.

[23] Ibid., 13–16.

[24] Adogame and Spickard's description of the model does not reference missionary impulse beyond that present in Christian communities, missing for example the missionary impulse present in Muslim and Buddhist communities, for example, who are sending missionaries to the Global North.

[25] A goal of house church movement in China to send 20,000 missionaries to other parts of the world by 2030 is part of this pattern. See "Nine hundred from Mainland China participate in Inaugural Mission China 2030 Conference," *Lausanne Movement*, accessed 1 November 2015, https://lausanne.org/news-releases/inaugural%C2%ADmission-china-2030-conference?utmsource=Lausanne+Movement&utmcampaign=575ebc9f07-PressReleaseInauguralMissionChina2030&utmmedium=email&utmterm=0d6b9d68377-575ebc9f0771233217.

[26] Adogame and Spickard, "Introduction," 13–26. Even a religious body that does not cross national borders may be reshaped by migrant communities joining it in common religious cause but bringing their cultural understandings and expression to the table.

[27] Ibid., 17–19. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983). See also Edward A. Tiryakian, "The Missing Religious Factor in Imagined Communities," *American Behavioral Scientist* 55 no. 10 (2011): 1395–1414.

[28] "One Covenant of Grace: A Contemporary Theology of Engagement with the Jewish People," *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2010, 331.

[29] Peter Bush, "Responding to A Refugee Crisis in 1915," *Faith Today*, January/February 2016, 44–47; Peter Bush, "The Armenian Crisis and the Chambers family, 1879–1923," *Presbyterian History* 59, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 1–6.

[30] Dan Sheffield, "Herbert E. Randall: A Canadian Holiness Missionary in Egypt and his Quest for More of the Holy Spirit," *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* 2, no. 1 (2011): 1–40.

[31] See Heather J. Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an Age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Stanley H. Skreslet, "American Presbyterians and the Middle East," in *A History of Presbyterian Missions, 1944–2007*, eds. Scott W. Sunquist and Caroline N. Becker (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 2008), 215–33.

[32] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2015, 25, 26.

[33] "A 19-year-old youth landed in Montreal. It was 1882. . . and Abraham Bounader from Zahle, a small town in The Lebanon (then part of Syria) overlooking the fertile Beka' valley, had become Canada's first Arab immigrant. By 1901, there were 2,000 others of Arab origin in Canada, by 1941 this number had grown to about 12,000 persons" (Hayani, "Arabs in Canada"). The Arab population in Canada, as identified by the Canadian Arab Institute, in 2011 was 750,925, 75 percent of whom had arrived in Canada after 1991. "Arab Immigration to Canada Hits Record High," *Canadian Arab Institute*, March 2014, http://www.canadianarabinstitute.org/publications/reports/arab-immigration-canada-hits-record-high/; "750,925 Canadians Hail from Arab Lands," *Canadian Arab Institute*, June 2014, http://www.canadianarabinstitute.org/publications/reports/750925-canadians-hail-arab-lands/.

[34] "Arab Immigration to Canada Hits Record High."

[35] Ibid.

[36] People resident in Canada "who reported Arab (or an origin that originates in the region commonly referred to as the Arab world), either alone or in combination with other ethnic origins." *The Arab Community in Canada: Profiles of Ethnic Communities in Canada* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2007), 9.

[37] Ghina Dajani, "Religion and Marital Status in the Canadian Arab Community," *Canadian Arab Institute*, July 2014, modified January 2015, http://www.canadianarabinstitute.org/publications/reports/religion-and-marital-status-canadian-arab-community/. "Canadians of Arab origin are equally divided among those who report being Muslim or belonging to a Christian religious group. In 2001, 44% of Canadians of Arab origin reported they were Muslim, while another 44% belonged to a Christian faith group. That year, 28% said they were Catholic, 11% belonged to a Christian Orthodox sect, and 5% belonged to a mainline Protestant denomination. Relatively few Canadians of Arab origin have no religious affiliation. In 2001, just 6% said they had no religious affiliation, compared with 17% of the overall population," as quoted in "The Arab Community in Canada," *Statistics Canada*, Census 2001, accessed 12 September 2016, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-621-x/89-621-x2007009-eng.htm.

[38] Rev. R. Glenn Ball, personal conversation, 13 August 2015.

[39] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2015, 758–74.

[40] Author's notes, Gathering of Pastors serving Arabic-speaking Churches of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

[41] The first documented Arabic speaking church in The Presbyterian Church in Canada was a group of Syrians who formed a congregation in 1923 in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. That congregation's history has been lost. *Acts and Proceedings*, 1923, 354.

[42] Nagi Said, personal interview.

[43] Author's notes, Gathering of Pastors serving Arabic-speaking Churches of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

[44] *Acts and Proceedings*, 1989, 692.

[45] *Acts and Proceedings*, 1992, 850.

[46] Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church.

[47] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2006, 693; *Acts and Proceedings*, 2015, 765.

[48] Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church.

[49] Nagi Said, personal interview.

[50] Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church; Nagi Said, personal interview.

[51] Chapel Place Arabic Young Adults, Facebook, accessed August 15, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/Chapel.Place.Arabic.Young.Adult/.

[52] Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church. The man was welcomed at the door as he entered. When the newcomer had found a place to sit one of the pastors made a point of introducing himself to the newcomer. At a point in the service, the congregation was invited to form groups of three or four to discuss a topic. Again, one of the pastors joined the newcomer and invited two others from the congregation to join them. Hospitality and welcome were shown.

[53] Adogame and Spickard, "Introduction," 13–16.

[54] Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church.

[55] Jeff Loach, personal conversation, Creiff Hills, Ontario, 11 April 2016. Mr. Loach's congregation, a predominantly Anglo-Saxon congregation, has donated food stuffs and other things being collected by Chapel Place and destined for the Middle East.

[56] "Church History," *Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal*, accessed 22 October 2015, http://montrealarabicchurch.com/.

[57] "Church History," *Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal*.

[58] Minutes, Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2010, 8.

[59] "Church History," *Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal*.

[60] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2015, 758.

[61] *Almanarah*, the Arabic word for lighthouse, has been adopted as the name of the Presbyterian congregations in Mississauga, London (Ontario), and Hamilton. The congregation in Winnipeg is named Lighthouse.

[62] Sherif Garas, email message to author, 22 October 2015.

[63] Sherif Garas, personal interview, Oshawa, Ontario, 4 June 2012; Sherif Garas, email message to author.

[64] Sherif Garas, email message to author.

[65] Ibid.

[66] This is an example of the negotiation that Cozen et al., "Invention of Ethnicity" describe.

[67] Author's notes, Gathering of Pastors serving Arabic-speaking Churches of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

[68] "Almanarah Presbyterian Church," accessed 22 October 2016, https://www.almanarahpc.com/index.php/layout/2012-06-15-22-08-20.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Author's notes of account provided by William Khalil, Gathering of Pastors serving Arabic-speaking Churches of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Winnipeg, 10 May 2016.

[72] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2011, 314–15.

[73] See "Youth," *Almanarah Presbyterian Church*, accessed 22 October 2015, https://www.almanarahpc.com/youth/.

[74] Author's notes of account provided by William Khalil.

[75] Ibid.

[76] "The Jesus Film" is an explicitly evangelistic movie with a wide distribution in over eighty languages, telling the story of Jesus. The Jesus Film, Directed by John Heyman, John Krish, Peter Sykes; Screenplay adapted from Gospel of Luke by Barnet Bain, Inspirational Films, Warner Bros, 1979.

[77] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2014, 328–29.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Adogame and Spickard, "Introduction," 11–13.

[80] Author's notes of account provided by Amin Mansour, Gathering of Pastors serving Arabic-speaking Churches of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Winnipeg, 11 May 2016.

[81] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2014, 236.

[82] Cross-Cultural Liaison's Report, Presbytery of Winnipeg, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 17 March 2015.

[83] Author's observation in attending church services of the African and Korean Diaspora.

[84] See Womack, 261.

[85] Janice McLean, "Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord: Music and Songs within Pentecostal West Indian Immigrant Religious Communities in Diaspora," *Studies in World Christianity* 13, no. 2 (2007): 127–41.

[86] Author's notes from The Lighthouse Evangelical Arabic Church Retreat at South Beach Casino; Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church; and "Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal," accessed on 22 October 2015, http://montrealarabicchurch.com/.

[87] Author's notes from Lighthouse Evangelical Arabic Church Retreat; Author's notes, worship service, Chapel Place Presbyterian Church.

[88] Various sources including: "Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal," *Arabic Presbyterian Church of Montreal*, accessed 22 October 2015, http://montrealarabicchurch.com/; Sherif Garas, personal email to author, 22 October 2015; and author's notes, Gathering of Pastors serving Arabic-speaking Churches of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

[89] Ibrahim Zabaneh, personal interview, Winnipeg, 15 June 2015; Sherif Garas, personal interview, Vancouver, 2 June 2015.

[90] Sherif Garas, email to author, 22 October 2015; Ibrahim Zabaneh, personal interview.

[91] "Presbykirk.com: Your Choice of Community," *The Presbytery of Hamilton*, accessed 31 October 2015, http://www.presbykirk.com/almanarah.html.

[92] Sherif Garas, email to author.

[93] Mark Lewis travelled to Israel and Palestine in 2003 and Rick Horst in 2011.

[94] *The Presbyterian Record*, March 2011.

[95] The 2012 General Assembly debated the following: "That Christian Zionism be rejected because leaders in the Palestinian Christian community have stated that Christian Zionism is detrimental to a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians and because Christian Zionism is inconsistent with Reformed Doctrine. The Presbyterian Church in Canada reaffirms a one covenant theology recognizing there is One Lord, One Church, One Spirit who makes us one, not different covenants for different people groups." *Acts and Proceedings*, 2012, 29.

[96] The author served on the Church Doctrine Committee at the time and witnessed the rather intense debate. For quote, see: Ezekial 47:19.

[97] *Acts and Proceedings*, 2015, 46.