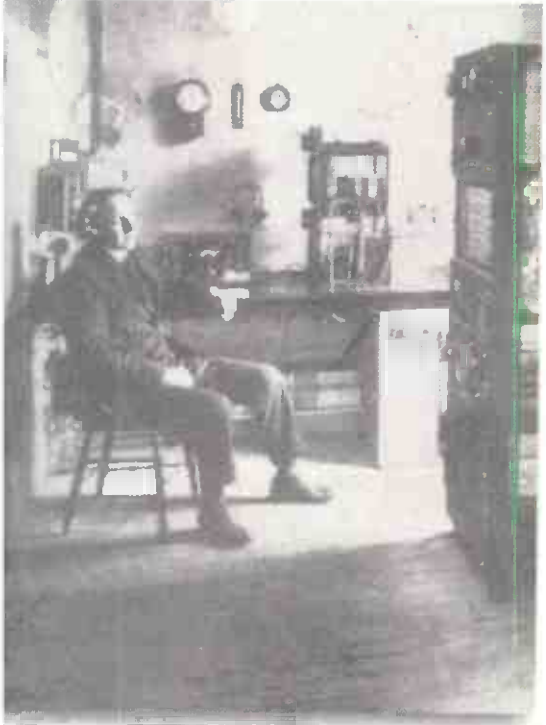


VOWR

*The
Unfolding
Dream*

HECTOR K. SWAIN



THE GOLDEN SOUNDS OF MUSIC.



VOWR
FOUNDED IN 1924
RADIO AT ITS BEST
10,000 WATTS · DIAL 800

VOWR: The Unfolding Dream

Hector K. Swain

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The Unfolding Dream

Hector K. Swain



Creative Publishers
St. John's, Newfoundland
1999

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DEDICATED
To our
GRANDCHILDREN
JENNIFER, BRADLEY,
JILLIAN, KARA, KELLI
ALYSSA, NICOLE

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Know all Men by these Presents:

That Joseph S. Joyce has this day been duly constituted and set apart as a Minister of The Methodist Church, by the laying on of Hands, and by Prayer, after having been found well qualified for that office and work, and having been elected thereto by the Newfoundland CONFERENCE of said Church, under the authority, discipline, and regulations of said Methodist Church; and he is hereby recommended to all whom it may concern as a proper person to conduct the Public Worship of God, to administer the Sacraments and Ordinances, and to feed the flock of Christ, so long as his spirit and practice are such as become the Gospel of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

In Testimony Whereof, we have set our hands and the seal of the Methodist Church; done at Harbor Grace this Twelfth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen



S. A. Huron General Superintendent.

J. S. Saint

President Newfoundland Conference

FOREWORD

When Rev. Joseph Joyce, Minister of Wesley Methodist Church established a radio station with the call letters 8 WMC seventy five years ago, taking advantage of this relatively new invention, to extend the outreach of Wesley Church into the community of broadcasting church services to the sick and shut-ins, little did he realize that his dream in a far expanded version would be dynamically alive in 1999. If he could have seen the modern studio with its space age equipment; if he could have seen a 10,000 watt digital transmitter broadcasting twenty-four hours a day; if he could have seen the station on air twenty-four hours a day; if he could have seen the ecumenical direction of the station grow as he wanted from the beginning; if he could have seen the station supported by eighty-two volunteers; if he could have seen the thousands of listeners who tune in every day; if he could have seen the modern vision in the hearts of board members for expansion; he would not only be grateful but would be astounded by the fact that so many are still committed to his vision.

VOWR is well known, recognized and appreciated today but with the passing of the years the dreamer, Rev. Dr. Joyce, may not be so well known or understood. Rev. Dr. Hector Swain recognized this fact and determined that he would give us a picture of the man behind the dream; a picture painted only sporadically and in very brief references before. So now we have it; a picture of Rev. Dr. Joseph Joyce, a man who was “before his time”; his background; his motivations and his skills as well as a picture of the environment in which he lived and worked together with an account of the development and progress of “Newfoundland’s Pioneer Radio Station.”

At Wesley United Church we are deeply grateful to Rev. Dr. Hector Swain for helping to ensure that the story of this unique and visionary Newfoundlander is perpetuated and

the history of this special venture in broadcasting is being told again, particularly on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee.

Rev. A. G. Elliott,
Senior Minister,
Wesley United Church.

PREFACE

John Masefield, in his book, *Shakespeare and Spiritual Life*, wrote that “Man consists of body, mind, and imagination. His body is faulty, his mind untrustworthy, but his imagination has made him remarkable.” Imagination and intuition captivated the cognition of pioneers of radio as a means of communication. Marconi sent the first wireless signal across the Atlantic in 1901. Others also conducted radio wave experimentations. J.G. Joyce, 1924, experimented with radio mechanics as a means to communicate humanitarian and religious services. Crude as those experiments were, yet the imaginative capabilities were remarkable.

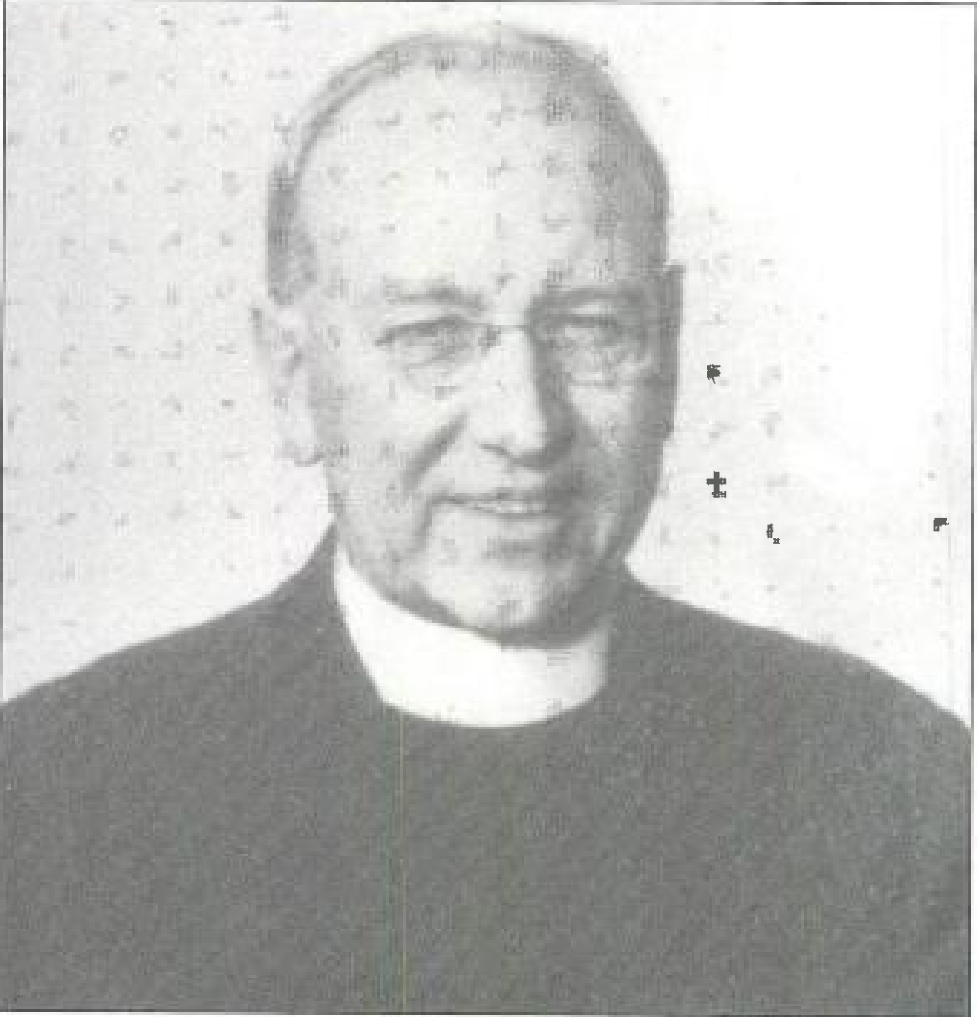
The Colony of Newfoundland, at that time, due to its strategic location, became a perfect target for communications experimentation. Historically, Newfoundland has made a unique contribution to the various forms of communications. Dr. J.G. Joyce, being cognizant of such history, made his mark on it by introducing radio as a means of communicating humanitarian and religious values to Wesley Methodist Church, now Wesley United Church, and Newfoundland and Labrador generally.

Joyce’s imagination attracted the attention of a segment of his congregation whose advanced thinking was compatible with his, while there were others who felt differently. Nevertheless, goodwill, experimentation and faith prevailed. During the ensuing years since 1924, VOWR has been a blessing to many thousands of people provincially and in other parts of the world. Presently the power output of VOWR is 10,000 watts, with a volunteer staff of approximately eighty personnel, it remains on-air twenty four hours daily. It has state-of-the-art equipment and has become one of Newfoundland’s most prominent radio stations. This book is

intended to reflect the unique contribution VOWR has made and is still making to society generally.

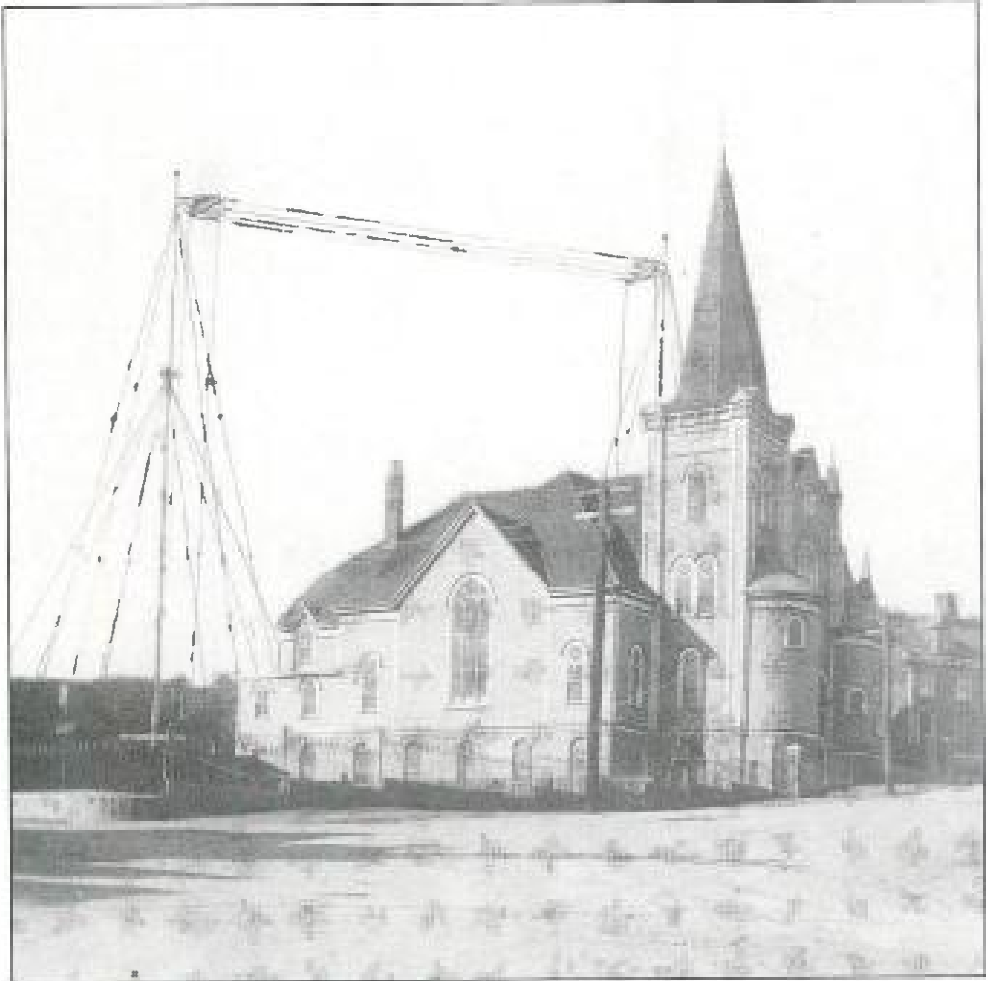
The research and compilation of the material contained within this book have accorded me the opportunity to investigate one of most intellectual persons Newfoundland has ever produced. I would like to think that this book is a tribute to Dr. J.G. Joyce for his unique contribution to radio in this Province. During the conductivity of this research I received the feeling that I have got to know J.G. Joyce very well. Accordingly, I am indebted to the following persons for their help and encouragement: Dr. Douglas Joyce, son of J.G. Joyce, for his providing me with personal documentation on behalf of the Joyce family; The Reverend A.G.Elliott, for reading my manuscript and offering suggestions; my daughter, Sharon, for typing my manuscript and my wife for reading my manuscript and her patience during all aspects of this project.

Hector K. Swain



Permission VOWR archives

**The Reverend Joseph G. Joyce
Founder of VOWR**



Permission VOWR archives

**Wesley United Church
showing early antenna installation (1927)**

INTRODUCTION

Newfoundland, due to its geography, is ideally positioned to facilitate a variety of communications originating on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Accordingly, Marconi, cognizant of this setting chose Signal Hill, Newfoundland as the ideal location to launch his experiment with wireless signals.

Opportunistically, the Reverend Dr. Joyce, capitalized on Marconi's experiment and harnessed his intuitive ability to bring radio communications to the Parishioners of Wesley United (Methodist) Church, St. John's. It was the magnitude and potential of radio communications that prompted Marshall McLuhan to introduce his concept of media globalization.

McLuhan, who is world renowned for his media expertise, and to whom the term, "The Global Village" has been ascribed, entitled one of his books: *The Medium is The Message*. In his own unique style he intimated that the form or structure of any given system of communications affects society more deeply than what it transmits. This thought is succinctly evident in the statement located on the dust cover of his book *The Medium is The Message*, which is: "That society has always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men (women) communicate than by the content of the communication."¹

VOWR or (8WMC which was its original call identification), under its bright visionary pastor inculcated both concepts: methodology and the content. Since its beginning in 1924 to the present these two imperatives have dominated its philosophy. The perspective of Dr. Joyce, and to some extent, with the support of his committees, reminds one of a

1 Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. (New York: Bantam Books, 1967).

quotation heard recently which summarised the visionary's thinking. The source is not recallable at the time of writing but in essence it is as follows: some persons have the inner power and ability to penetrate the deepest consciousness or sublimity, thus activating hidden talents and utilizing same for the benefit of his fellow human beings.

The foundation of commitment, "We serve", which exemplified VOWR since Dr. Joyce's time, has remained constant through the years and his spirit tends to permeate all aspects of structure and programming. While the voice of the founder may be silent, his vision still continues. The words of William Shakespeare — although describing in poetry a different age and setting — are nevertheless applicable to VOWR's wise founder. "Shall I compare thee . . . So long as men can breathe, or eyes see, so long lives this, and gives life to thee."² So long as VOWR lives it will give life to its founder.

The church in the City; the church in the rural areas; the church along the rugged coasts; the testimony of love and inclusiveness, all find expression in a living Saviour, who crosses "The crowded ways of life" through the medium of the message as aired by VOWR. "Radio excites people because it stimulated the ear, that emotive organ, and encouraged fantasy,"³ says Allan Gould. But radio does more than stimulate one's ears, its message brings "Good tidings of great joy"⁴ to all people.

Dr. Joyce had a great concern for people. He stood firmly on Christian values. His primary motive was to reach people with the Christian message of love by the best possible means of communications available to him at that time. This meant harnessing his cognitive resources in making available to his

2 Carol Gillander. *Theme and Image: An Anthology of Poetry/Book 1*. (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1967), p. 150.

3 *The Evening Telegram*, St. John's, NF., July 2, 1989.

4 Luke 2:10.

people and others the newly discovered radio technology. There may have been those among his parishioners, and others within the listening range of his voice, who disapproved of this modern method of Christian outreach. From a Methodist perspective it may have been perceived as being rather worldly. Nevertheless, he wasn't about to compromise his convictions on the overall potentiality of the medium of radio. His persistent Christian witness, foresight and drive changed the minds and hearts of his parishioners. His Church Boards were soon to realize the potentiality of the medium they had within their grasp and became supportive of his endeavours. Consequently, significant achievements germinated slowly. Sometimes the conditions and ideas of the producer can be discerned years before they come to tangible fruition. The producer in this setting was Dr. Joyce. He knew what he wanted and his perspective was clear, but the financial commitment was not favourable. Maybe his courage, vision and commitment were well enunciated in the words of Edmund H. Oliver, "He has represented life and growth... Every minister of the Christian Church and every Christian is something of a frontiersman (a pioneer). In so far as he plumbs the depths of human need and goes out bravely to meet it with a high spirit of faith and courage of adventure . . . he is coming after Christ, 'the pioneer and perfection of faith.' His feet are set upon the path that will shape the future."⁵

Indeed, VOWR under the leadership of Dr. Joyce demonstrated an exemplar role in shaping the future of radio communications in Newfoundland and Labrador. On July 20, 1924, history was made with the first official broadcast from VOWR (8WMC). It was the fourth radio station in North America to use the airwaves for broadcast purposes, just

5 Grace Lane. *A Dream that Walks*, (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1965, p. 44.

twenty-three years after Marconi successfully received the letter "S" on Signal Hill, St. John's. From its crude and humble beginning in 1924, VOWR has increased its power output from 100 watts to 10,000 watts, and has accumulated state-of-the-art equipment. The chapters to follow will clearly portray its significance and growth.

CHAPTER ONE

The Early Historical Setting in which Radio Communications had its Beginning in Newfoundland and Labrador

Advances in science and technology have stimulated an interest in communications. Man, generically, by his very nature, has been referred to as a communicating creature. His technological ingenuity manifested itself in such inventions as the telegraph, telephone, wireless radio communications and others. Consequently the invention of wireless radio communication by Guglielmo Marconi, 1901, began for Newfoundland and Labrador, a communications link which was to have extensive ramifications in its developmental history. Menjie Shulman, an announcer with VOCM radio station, St. John's, stated, "Slowly radio became part of every Newfoundlander's life. In the outports he listened to the radio news. He didn't get his newspaper until three days later. On the radio he got the weather, which he depended on. He got personal messages . . . Radio not only took the place of the newspapers, it was the telephone too. It became as essential as breathing. There were little outports with no electricity but they had battery operated radios and that was their means of communication with the outside world . . . I

don't think it's possible for a person who had lived in a big city to realize what this thing called radio must have meant to a country like Newfoundland. It was not only vital to our well-being; it became the cultural centre of the home."¹

So important, therefore, was the link which the story of radio in Newfoundland and Labrador represented, that it vitally affected the lifestyles of its peoples. Not only had the discovery of radio communications been the biggest, single, epoch-making development that shook the world, it was also instrumental in contributing to the alleviation of isolation, poverty, and ignorance in this colony² (province). Therefore this chapter will describe quite extensively the milieu, the geographical position, the development of radio communications in Newfoundland and Labrador, and its applicability to the needs of the province.

Much of the history of Newfoundland and Labrador may be described as inextricably related to its environment. Its geographical position, in relation to the mainland of North America, and the nearest point to the Old World, Europe, is significant communicably. The island part of the Province is considered to be the tenth largest in the World with its nearest point to the Old World being Ireland at approximately 2640 kilometres distant. It could probably be said that, strategically, Newfoundland forms the key to North America. From a historical perspective, Newfoundland was the oldest of the English colonies, where fishermen braved the cold weather and the treachery of the sea to fish. The waters off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador had a rich abundance of codfish, which, commercially, attracted the early peoples to settle here and populate the island.

1 Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe, *The Birth of Radio in Canada*. (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1982), p. 37.

2 Prior to confederation with Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador belonged to England, hence colony. When confederation with Canada was consummated it became a province.

The Newfoundland portion of the province is roughly triangular in shape: its length and width are each 515 kilometres. Its geographical area is approximately 111,400 km²; and its coastline — which is considered to be one of the largest in the world in relation to its land mass — is estimated to be 9770 kilometres. With Labrador being a part of the Province consisting of a geographical area of approximately 292,700 km², the total combined area of Newfoundland and Labrador is approximately 404,100 km².

The terrain of the Province is rough and uneven consisting of slopes, mountain, low land, rivers, marshes or bogs, and barrens. Probably such a rough and uneven view of the province's land mass might have prompted the intrepid French voyageur, Jacques Cartier, in the year 1534, while sailing through the Strait of Belle Isle, to state "It is the Land God allotted to Cain."³

The climate of Newfoundland and Labrador may be described as extremely variable. Many of the earlier peoples who came experienced cold and uncomfortable winters. Spring brought fog, damp, rainy weather, which often extended well into the month of June. Summers were short, which naturally affected vegetable production, except for such produce as potatoes, cabbage, turnip, carrots, beets, and peas. The vegetable products which required a longer growing season were either imported or unavailable.

The fact that the island portion of the Province is surrounded by water, one would tend to describe the climate as maritime. Nevertheless, in the interior of the island an element of a continental climate might exist. The Labrador portion may be described as having a continental climate. This is due to the fact that the land is much higher than that of Newfoundland and a greater distance from the sea. The

3 J.D. Rogers, *A Historical Geography of Newfoundland*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1931), Vol. V - Part IV, p. 21.

fact that storms generate in the Mainland of Canada and United States and usually follow a west-east, southwest-northeast pattern, causes them to converge to the south of Newfoundland. The cool air which flows in from the east, passing over the frigid Labrador current and proceeding from the north carrying much ice and ice-bergs, accounts for the lateness of spring and extensive fog.

Much of the barren land evidenced in Newfoundland over the past several hundreds of years was once covered with trees. Those trees were cut for sawlogs, fuel for cooking and heating purposes, fish stages⁴ and fish flakes,⁵ and most recently by the paper companies for pulp-wood. At one time the Newfoundland forest contained an abundance of white pine but today they seldom appear. When one sings the "The Ode to Newfoundland,"⁶ and particularly the first line of the first stanza, "When Sunrays crown thy Pine Clad hills,"⁷ there is a tendency to blush, because of their absence.

The Newfoundland and Labrador barrens, marshes, and low growing trees produced a variety of wild fruit. Like the wildlife, as stated above, wild fruit was a necessity to those who undertook the hazards of settling in the Province. Economizing was essential; consequently the wild fruits were picked, preserved, and stored for the long, lean, winter months. Some of the wild fruits which grew profusely were: blueberries, partridge-berries, rasp-berries, squash-berries, bake-apples, (cloudberries) dogberries, marshberries, cran-berries, choke-cherries, black-berries, plum-boys and straw-berries.

4 "Fish stages" were curing facilities for various species of fish. Constructed over the cliffs, out into the water of the harbour to which boats were tied up and catch landed. A make-shift jetty.

5 "Flakes" were huge drying facilities on which salted cod fish, caplin and other varieties of fish were dried in the sun.

6 L.E.F. English, *Historic Newfoundland* (16 ed.), St. John's, Newfoundland, (Government Printing Services, 1983), page 47.

7 Ibid. p. 47.

As intimated earlier the waters of Newfoundland and Labrador, both salt and fresh, produced an abundance of fish in various species. Such abundance of fish enticed the early settlers to come to the Province. Probably this is what spurred Governor Robert Hayman to write the following poem:

“The aire in Newfoundland is wholesome, good.
The fire as sweet as any made of wood:
The Waters very rich, both salt and fresh;
The earth more rich, you know it is no lesse.”⁸

The Province’s fresh water abundance has been described as gigantic. Many of its rivers have been harnessed to drive the wheels of industry. The pulp and paper companies have installed hydro generating stations on several of the largest rivers. The waters of the mighty Churchill River in Labrador surge over the Churchill Falls, 7470 cm. high — 2440 cm. higher than Niagara Falls, taking water to the hugh turbines, generating electricity to Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and the New England States, U.S.A. It is here at Churchill Falls, Labrador that the world’s largest underground powerhouse is built. The capacity of this hydro-electric development is said to be 5.25 million kilowatts.

The magnitude of the Churchill River, and its potential for hydro development totally captivated Joseph R. Smallwood’s attention to a point of ecstasy which resulted in his stating “It was almost a compulsion with me,” said Mr. Smallwood, “and the compulsion was intensified in 1950, when I flew in narrowing circles above the falls in the Jules Timmins plane that was taking me for my first visit to his mining camp at Knob Lake. Winston Churchill was later to say

8 Frances C. Briffett, *The Story of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons (Canada) Ltd., 1954), p. 41.

to them, 'These horses must be harnessed,' and that is how I felt myself."⁹

Although the dynamic water resource of the Mighty Churchill River has great economic potential, nevertheless, one must be cognizant of the principle source of livelihood which brought our ancestors to this land five hundred years ago, namely the fishing industry. The vast resource "fixed the attention of Englishmen on Newfoundland and Labrador, and its valuable fisheries, and prepared the way for other enterprises designed to promote its settlement"¹⁰ Later A.B. Perlin quotes J.D. Rogers as stating, "Codfish, alive or dead, wet or dry, have exercised an all-pervading influence over the destiny of Newfoundland."¹¹ Small communities, coves, inlets, harbours and gulches,¹² were established along the deep bays and coastline of the province, which made communications, at that time, virtually impossible, except by boat. Not only were there small gatherings of people, sometimes four or five families, dotted along the coastline of Newfoundland and Labrador, but many fishermen prosecuted the Bank fishery who seldom made contact with home or the outside world for several months.

During those primitive years there existed an urgent need to expand communications technology. Radios were sparse, telegraph stations were scattered along a rugged coastline, but most communities were ill equipped to avail of these services, while fishing schooners at sea experienced a total communications blackout from these sources. The Captains of these schooners were unable to convey a "mayday" message for help, should they experience difficulties. Their

9 Joseph R. Smallwood, *I Chose Canada*. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1973), p. 444.

10 M. Harvey, *Test-Book of Newfoundland History for use of Schools and Academies*. (London: William Collins, Sons, & Co., Ltd., 1890), p. 45.

11 A.B. Perlin. *The Story of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: By Author, 1959), p. 122.

12 A "Gulch" is a small, deep-sided cove.

only possible contact with home was a newly arrived schooner to the fishing ground or when they would unload their catch of fish at some fishing port. Nevertheless, VOWR was sending out its broadcasts, loud and clear, but few people had the financial means to purchase radios.

J.R. Smallwood said, “Radio was invented for Newfoundland” and Labrador. Cogitatively, he was visualizing the circumstances under which the people of this province existed and the geography with which they had to cope. It was an island in the sea lying across the Gulf of St. Lawrence in a northeasterly direction from the rich resource based Labrador. Its strategic significance to both the North America and Europe is inestimable as a transportational and communications link. Its mountainous terrain of rock formation and lack of fertile soil made it difficult for the people to make a living from farming. Consequently, the rich fishing grounds presented the occupational structure, which had sustained its people until recent years.

To relate, nevertheless, the strategic significance of Newfoundland to the communicational world one might suggest the following:

Firstly, Industrial-Newfoundland’s unique geographical position in the western world provided an important link with the Old and New Worlds. It appeared that the early sailors who visited Newfoundland became excited over what they observed — the immense fish stocks, forests, rivers, and excellent harbours. One would evaluate the stories they conveyed to the Old World as apocryphal or the elastification of the truth. The Reverent M. Harvey mentions some of these quasi-truthful stories, a sample of which is cited as follows: “Sailors and other adventurers who had been there, related stories about rivers which flowed over pebbles of gold, and sands sparkling with precious gems; of vast forests, and lovely flowers, in lands teeming with fertility. Here was a boundless field of human energy. The wildest hopes of

obtaining vast wealth were kindled; and all the adventurous spirits of Europe were eager to undertake voyages to the new land.”¹³

As a result of the enthusiasm of the excited sailors, numerous English, Portuguese, Spanish and French fishing schooners appeared in Newfoundland ports yearly. They wanted to “plunder, or find gold and silver to enrich themselves then to return to their own country to enjoy their wealth.”¹⁴ This metaphorical concept was indeed appropriate to the abundance of fish in the waters of Newfoundland, similar to the Israelites when they camped on the borders of the “Fertile Crescent,” and seeing the rich fertile land they referred to it as “land flowing with milk and honey.”¹⁵

Secondly, Newfoundland being the nearest point of land between Europe and North America; its harbours, particularly St. John’s, became commercial centres. Ships enroute to other parts of North America docked at St. John’s to take on supplies; likewise ships returning to Europe, before sailing the treacherous Atlantic Ocean, would call in port at St. John’s for provisions.

Thirdly, it is significant to note that at least three historical communications inventions have close association with Newfoundland.

(1) The First Trans-Atlantic Cable

On August 5, 1858 the first trans-Atlantic cable, connecting the Old World with the New, was brought ashore at Bay Bulls Arm, Newfoundland. It was said to have been “a day of great rejoicing, marked by an exchange of messages between Queen Victoria and the President Buchanan of the United States.”¹⁶ This first cable functioned well for a period of four

13 M. Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

14 *Ibid.*, p.p. 29-30.

15 Exodus 3:8. R.S.V.

weeks; it then ceased to function. The problem of detecting the break in the cable appeared to be insurmountable, particularly with a shortage of capital to invest in the project. However, the Anglo-American Telegraph Company was formed and the ship named the Great Eastern was hired to lay a new trans-Atlantic cable from Ireland to Heart's Content, Newfoundland, which was successfully completed July 27, 1866. That cable provided a communications link with Europe and North America and has functioned well until its replacement by the wireless invention. It is interesting to note that in those early days a telegraph message across the Atlantic cost five dollars a word.¹⁷ Again, Newfoundland's geographical position played a significant role in trans-Atlantic telegraph communications.

(2) The First Trans-Atlantic Flight

Shortly after the first World War two English officers, Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown, elevated their small airplane off Lester's field, St. John's West, (actually Mount Pearl), on June 14, 1919, and sixteen hours later they brought their small airplane down on a bog at Chifden, Ireland. Alcock and Brown had been waiting for fair weather to take off from Lester's Field since June 1; when the opportunity presented itself they seized it and history was made.

Although Alcock and Brown were the first to accomplish successfully the Atlantic crossing by airplane, several other aviators endeavoured unsuccessfully in the completion of that daring adventure. History, however, states that on May 16, 1919, the Americans attempted such a crossing using seaplanes. Apparently they took off from Trepassey, which is situated on the southern part of the Avalon Peninsula, and one of the three seaplanes arrived at Horta in the Azores.

16 A.B. Perlin. op. cit., p. 83.

17 Ibid., p. 83.

Newfoundland has continued to play a vital role in aviation history since 1919, with several small airline companies initiating operations here. "The great age of flight for Newfoundland," says A.B. Perlin, "began with the construction of what is now Gander (International) Airport in 1936."¹⁸ This resulted from the fact that Britain, Canada and United States had made an agreement in 1935, "to establish regular flying services across the Atlantic." Since then several large airline companies from many countries of the world have been using Gander International Airport on a regular basis. As a result of the importance of Gander as a refuelling point in the western world, it has become known as "The Crossroads of the World."

(3) Trans-Atlantic Wireless Signals

As a result of Newfoundland's geographical position in North America, it became the site of the first trans-Atlantic wireless communications signals. An Italian born scientist, Guglielmo Marconi and his two helpers C.S. Kemp and P.W. Paget arrived in Newfoundland on December 6, 1901, with their communications equipment for assembly on Signal Hill, St. John's. The real purpose of their trip to St. John's, was kept a secret. It was suspected that they were to undertake experimentation in communicating with trans-Atlantic shipping from a shore station. Marconi and his assistants received excellent co-operation from government authorities who offered them land on which to conduct their experiments. As stated above, they chose Signal Hill because of its height and its openness to the sea. It may be interesting to note that Marconi, an Italian, was permitted to use a military building which was a memorial to John Cabot, another Italian who discovered Newfoundland, for his experimentation.

18 Ibid., p. 105.

Following the assembling of their equipment, Marconi waited expectantly in that building on Signal Hill and as Albert Perlin states

Below him the furrowed Atlantic Ocean spread its heaving immensity to the horizon and far beyond. If all went well that day, man would span the lovely reaches of the sea in an instantaneous flash of magic.

Taut as a tow cable between ships in gale force winds, Marconi bent over a crude receiving apparatus. Suddenly it spoke. Thousands of miles away, across the Atlantic, a wireless operation was transmitting fistfuls of dits and dahs. From out of the unintelligible jumble of fading, ocean-hopping sounds the symbols for one better emerged with undeniable clarity.

It was the letter 'S' Marconi and wireless had opened the door to a whole new world of communications, a world in which distance shrank in converse ratio with man's ability to communicate swiftly and surely.

Appropriately, Newfoundland has leaned heavily on wireless telegraphy since that triumphant day on Signal Hill. Its participation in telegraphic communications dates back to 1858, with the first successful attempt to lay a cable between Bay Bulls Arm, (Trinity Bay) and Valencia in Ireland."¹⁹ (Now the site of the historic World Class Gravity Base Station for Hibernia Oil Company).

All did go well that day on December 12, 1901, 12:30 p.m. as Marconi expectantly waited, he heard three faint clicks, and as Paul O'Neill says, "he (Marconi) stiffened with excitement as they sounded several times in his ears."²⁰ To confirm what he heard, Marconi passed the earphones to Kemp, who listened intently for the three dots. They were repeated several times. Marconi describes that monumental moment

19 Ibid., p. 89.

20 O'Neill, Paul, *The Oldest City: The Story of St. John's, Newfoundland*. (Don Mills, Ontario: Meisson Book Co. 1975), p. 201.

in his scientific life as: "Kemp heard the same thing as I did, and I knew then that I was absolutely right in my anticipation. Electric waves which had been sent out from Poldhu had traversed the Atlantic, serenely ignoring the curvature of the earth which so many doubters considered would be a fatal obstacle. I knew then that the day would come on which I should be able to send full messages without wires or cables across the Atlantic was not very far away. Distance had been overcome, and further developments of sending and receiving apparatus were all that was required."²¹

Following a few days recovery from stunning excitement of his scientific success a public announcement was made on December 14, "that the transoceanic wireless has become a reality."²² The news of the invention, as expected, "was greeted with scepticism by another inventor, Thomas Edison."²³ However, a reporter from the *Evening Telegram*, one of Newfoundland's two daily newspapers, carried the following article to which Paul O'Neill referred as "rhapsodized."²⁴ "The very thought of it sets one aghast. The humble genius who received the *Telegram* reporter at the Cochrane Hotel makes no vain-glorious boast about what he had achieved. He is as modest as a schoolboy and one would not think that he is the wizard who wrought this awe-inspiring wonder of science, that rivals the tales of the Arabian Nights and the stories of Jules Verne. It is no wonder that New York stood astounded and refused to believe the news when it was flashed over the wires on Saturday night. Newspapers were sceptical and before sending the report to their printers, wired for confirmation of the news.

21 H. Clayton, *Atlantic Bridgehead*. (London: Granstone Press, 1968) p. 146.

22 Paul O'Neill. op. cit., p. 201.

23 Ibid., p.p. 201-202.

24 Ibid., p. 202.

The citizens of St. John's even doubted the truth of it on Saturday night. They had cast an occasional glance up at Signal hill the past few days while the experiments were going on. They had seen electrically-charged kites whirling in the storm-tossed air over Signal Hill, but did not attach much importance to the matter. . . .

Nowise the less Wednesday the 11th December, 1901 (SIC), will be put down as a memorable day in the history of the world — a day on which one of the greatest achievements of science was accomplished. It will be a proud boast for the people of Newfoundland to weigh in the words of the poet, when looking back on it, 'Magna pars quorum fuimus'. We heartily congratulate Signor Marconi on his success! There is a fascination in imagining him sitting at his table in the building on Signal Hill, with watch in hand, waiting for the hand to point to the moment agreed upon with his friend on the other side of the Atlantic. The hand moves slowly around, the scientist's mind is strung to powerful attention.

Will the dreams of his life — his soul's ambition — be realized? A quiver like an angel's breath breathes over the receiving instruments, and the delicate recorder begins to move, low as the whisper of a dying child at first, but in half a minute gaining strength. The secret of the age was being yielded grudgingly, as it were, to the ear of the high priest of electoral [sic] Science — Signor Marconi. The sounds were now distant, and what ravishing music they made when the three dots of the letter S (... ..) were repeated growing stronger each time.

A new spirit was born to science with a tip of its wing on each side of the ocean. The old Atlantic cable heard the news, quivered and groaned. Telegraph cable stocks slumped on the market on Saturday evening, and there was fever-heat excitement among businessmen.²⁵

Scepticism, quivering, and groaning did not retard that magnificent invention which made its debut on Signal Hill that windy, cold day in December, 1901. It was the beginning of a communications system that would affect the lives of peoples throughout the world and Newfoundland played a key role in its invention. The stage was now set in preparation for what Marshall McLuhan referred to as the "Global Village."

Yet another first for Newfoundland, in the field of communications occurred on July 25, 1920, when radio contact was maintained with the S.S. *Victorian* during the whole of her trans-Atlantic cruise. On this occasion the human voice was transmitted rather than the Morse Code. There was "a second receiver in the Canadian Marconi Office in the Board of Trade Building, St. John's, operated by the office assistant, Daisey Myrick, (which) also picked up the S.S. *Victorian* broadcast."²⁶ Although this was not the first time that the human voice was transmitted over the air waves, yet from a commercial or public perspective it was a significant advance in radio communications. These were the mere beginnings of a communications network which would impact holistically on the world. Certainly from a Newfoundland and Labrador perspective it opened up an isolated area which heretofore suffered from ghastly deprivation, illiteracy, disease, and starvation from which human structure squeaked, groaned, stiffened and decayed. It is the writer's opinion that radio communications presented to the peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador the possibilities for a brighter tomorrow; may be the words of former Premier, Brian Peckford, could be applied in retrospect to radio communications in this province when he stated "Some day the sun will shine and have not will be no more."²⁷ Since the incep-

25 *Evening Telegram*, St. John's, Newfoundland, December 16, 1901.

26 Paul O'Neill, op. cit., p. 205.

tion of radio communications, Newfoundland and Labrador have greatly profited socially, educationally, medically, economically, religiously and psychologically.

The fact that Newfoundland and Labrador were honoured by several 'firsts' in the communications field — "Heart's Content as the terminal point of the first Atlantic Cable (1866), Marconi's successful radio exchange with Cornwall from Signal Hill above St. John's (1901), the triumphant trans-Atlantic flight of Alcock and Brown (June, 1919)²⁸, and the human voice transmission to and from the S.S. *Victorian* by radio (1920), attests to her significant importance to the Old and New World.

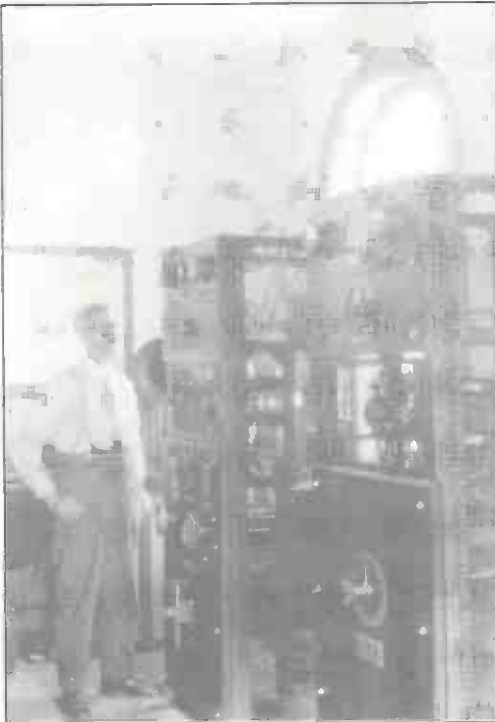
27 Brian Peckford, *Speech delivered regarding the development of Hibernia*, 1989.

28 S. Chadwick, *St. John's, Newfoundland Island into Province*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 59.



Permission VOWR archives

Dr. J.G. Joyce at the original 8-YMC console



Permission VOWR archives

Wm. Atwill standing by the second transmitter (1927)

An interesting note on the back of this photograph indicates that the photographer rested his camera on the stove and had Mr. Atwill stand still for a two-minute time exposure.

CHAPTER 2

The Development of Radio Generally

The Honourable Joseph R. Smallwood, former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, proudly and eloquently declared, “Radio was invented by God especially for Newfoundland, and having done it for Newfoundland, He graciously allowed it to be used in other parts of the World.”¹ Mr. Smallwood in his own inimitable style of writing and speaking had an exceptional flair for play on words. He had an exceptional command of the English language, and a hypnotic influence over his audience. Typical of his dynamism is the quotation with which I introduced this chapter.

While Mr. Smallwood’s play on words may appear to be cunning, the meaning he was endeavouring to portray was, “It was meant for a remote and isolated people who never met,”² and what was good for Newfoundland and Labrador could certainly make its mark on the world.

When the early scientists were devoting numerous years and superior intelligence to their hypothesis, they were not thinking of Mr. Smallwood, Newfoundland and Labrador or Canada. They were intensely devoted to applying scientific

1 Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

knowledge and experimentation to prove or disprove their hypothesis. Among those scientists whose experiments and inventions were directly related to radio were: Michael Faraday, James Clerk Maxwell, Heinrich Hertz, Edward Branly, Guglielmo Marconi and Reginald Aubrey Fessenden.

To identify each of those scientists with radio communications it will be necessary to present a brief account of their involvement.

Michael Faraday invented the first dynamo, and from his scientific data and discovery of electromagnetic induction emanated numerous industrial electric machinery. His experimentation led to modern day dynamos and generators. The data collected during Faraday's experimentation spurred other scientists to related investigation.

James Clerk Maxwell, an eminent Scottish Physicist, conducting research and experimentation in the field of electricity and magnetism, basing "his own study and research on that of Faraday's developed the theory of the electro-magnetic field on a mathematical basis and made possible a much greater understanding of the phenomena in this field. He was led to the conclusion that electricity and magnetic energy travel in transverse waves and that light waves are in reality waves of this nature, i.e., electric and magnetic."³ Consequently, he built the first generator, a machine which makes electricity.

Heinrich Hertz, a German Physicist, who supported Maxwell's electromagnetic theory continued experimentation and produced electromagnetic waves which became known as hertzian waves or radio waves. He demonstrated that such waves were long, transverse, and travelled at the rate of light and they can be reflected, refracted and polarized like light. Hertz's experimentation led to the development of telegraph

3 *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Third Edition, 1 Vol. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 1335.

and radio communications. Therefore units of frequency measured in cycles per second are given to his name: Hertz.

Edward Branly, a French Physicist, developed a coherer for the purpose of detecting radio waves. Marconi apparently used Branly's research in developing his system of wireless telegraphy.

Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian Physicist, correlated and improved on the work of Hertz and Branly and other scientists and developed wireless telegraphy. He transmitted radio signals across the English Channel in 1899, and on December 12, 1901, as further wireless experimentation pursued he was successful in transmitting signals across the Atlantic from Poldhu, Cornwall, England, to Signal Hill, St. John's, Newfoundland. This being the first trans-Atlantic wireless signal to be transmitted to North America, it brought great excitement and fame to Marconi and to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, an American Physicist and engineer, conducted research in electricity with special emphasis on radio. At a very early age, he dreamed of transmitting "the sound of the human voice without wires. First he perfected a new means of sending Morse Code . . . He quickly learned not to talk about sending speech because people would only laugh. However, it was his real goal, and on December 23, 1900, he successfully transmitted the sound of a human voice between two 50 foot towers on Cable Island in the middle of the Potomac River near Washington . . . At Christmas time in 1906, Fessenden beamed the first radio broadcast to the astonished crews in ships of the United States Fruit Company in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. The show was a mixture of carols, violin playing, and bible readings, all performed by Fessenden."⁴

4 Ormond Raby, *Radio's First Voice: The Story of Reginald Fessenden*, (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1970), dust cover.

Following his death, the New York - Herald - Tribune said, "It sometimes happens, even in science, that one man can be right against the world. Professor Fessenden was that man."⁵

On his tomb stone was inscribed the words:

His mind illumined the past
And the future
And wrought greatly
for the past.⁶

Below the inscription are the following words:

"I am yesterday and I know tomorrow."⁷

Such scientists, as those already mentioned, were the prime contributors to the invention of radio. Much has transacted since those early days, equipment has become more sophisticated, power improved, and reception extended to all parts of the world. The invention which made its debut on Signal Hill, St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1901, was later to become one of the world's greatest unifying forces. Its potential was soon realized by scientists of various countries as they endeavoured to improve on its power output by inventing the vacuum tube, 1904, and soon powerful radio transmitting stations were established; the first of which was XWA, Montreal, Canada, 1919, operated by the Marconi Wireless Company, and purported to be the oldest radio station in the world. A few months later KDKA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1920, commenced radio broadcasting.⁸ Since radio broadcasting has been established, many other stations were started in Canada and throughout the world.

5 Ibid., dust cover.

6 Ibid., p. 158.

7 Ibid., p. 158.

8 Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe, op. cit., p. 11.

Mr. Smallwood's rhetorical sentence presented earlier may have been stated in jest, but radio appears to be the most singular (media) contributor to the unity of the Canadian peoples, and, indeed, much of the world. McNeil and Wolfe refer to such a possibility when they state, "All of Canada was joined together by radio for the first time on July 1, 1927, in order to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation . . . Our Saskatchewan farmer described the Jubilee broadcast as "A miracle" which only a poet could adequately describe . . . Poet Wilson MacDonald responded with these mortal lines:

A silence there, expectant, meaning,
And Then a voice clear-pitched and tense;
A million bearers, forward-leaning,
Were in the thrall of eloquence.
A pause, a hush, a wonder growing;
A prophet's vision understood;
In that strange spell of his bestowing,
They dreamed, with him, of Brotherhood.⁹

Probably the immortal words inscribed on Reginald Aubrey Fessenden's tombstone, "I am yesterday and I know tomorrow,"¹⁰ are befitting the famous scientist and inventor, Guglielmo Marconi, whose invention successfully transmitted "wireless" signals across the Atlantic Ocean and received at Signal Hill, St. John's, Newfoundland, on December 12, 1901, thus contributing significantly to the future development of radio communications in Newfoundland and around the world.

Extreme jubilation permeated the atmosphere at St. John's, Newfoundland, as "on Saturday, December 14, the inventor announced his news to the world that transoceanic

9 Ibid., p. 15.

10 Ormond Raby, op. cit., p. 158.

wireless had become a reality. On Tuesday, a distinguished party of citizens assembled on Signal Hill where Governor Boyle, Prime Minister Bond, and others heard for themselves the Morse signals flashing from Cornwall . . . On Wednesday Marconi was invited to a public luncheon at Government House, where he was guest of honour. After toasts and congratulation he departed with some government officials for Cape Spear, a few miles from St. John's."¹¹ The reporter of *The Evening Telegram* felt the vibration of the jubilation and rhetorically, as if in poetic expression, stated, "A new spirit was born to science with a tip of its wing on each side of the ocean."¹²

Emanating from this momentous leap in communications experimentation arose significant quivers and groans within the Anglo-American Telegraph Company, to make Alexander Mackay, its manager, contemplate monopoly rights and to alert government to the possibility of cold shouldering Marconi. Following the public luncheon at Government House and his visit to Cape Spear, where Marconi envisaged the establishing a communicational station, he was confronted with a "letter threatening a court injunction, restraining him from receiving any more telegraph messages from outside Newfoundland."¹³ Naturally, such drastic action stifled Marconi's enthusiasm which eventually resulted in his leaving the province for Nova Scotia where is established a permanent wireless station.

Unfortunately, the Marconi scenario has repeated itself on several occasions in Newfoundland. Glorious opportunities have been within our grasp but we have failed to avail of their presence.

11 Paul O'Neill, *op. cit.*, p.p. 201-203.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 202.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Radio was here to stay. Following 1901, scientific investigation was pursued resulting in radio transmitters being constructed in various parts of the country. In Newfoundland, however, very little radio history was recorded, from the time of Marconi's successful reception of the wireless signals, to 1915. In March of that year, the British Admiralty began establishing a Morse Code transmitting and receiving station at Mount Pearl. In August the same year the building was completed. Incidentally, the City Council of Mount Pearl, being cognizant of its history, decided to acquire and refurbish the Historic Admiralty property as a museum. The project came to fruition in 1997, the 500th Anniversary of the discovery of Newfoundland, when on 23 June, 1997, the beautiful refurbished Admiralty House was dedicated and officially opened by His Royal Highness Prince Philip. Many artifacts dating back to the early 1900s were retrieved and suitably placed into the museum for posterity.

The Historic British Admiralty station at Mount Pearl, "was built with the idea of maintaining direct communication with Naval units and the Admiralty, and for broadcasting in code, news of ice conditions and weather forecasts."¹⁴ This Admiralty station, with the call letters B.Z.M., remained in operation until 1924.

Simultaneous with the last five or six years of the British Admiralty station being in operation at Mount Pearl, Mr. J. J. Collins, Manager of the Newfoundland branch of the Canadian Marconi Company, with the assistance of three engineers were conducting experiments with the view to establishing a radio station on Signal Hill, the site where Marconi received his first wireless signals. After assembling their equipment they waited for voice signals from the S.S. *Victorian*, which they received on July 25, 1920. The human

14 J.R. Smallwood, (ed.). *The Book of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers, Ltd.,) Vol. 1, p. 339.

voice was received and Mr. Collins and the three engineers were informed that the ship would be broadcasting "a concert to the other ships in the vicinity equipped with wireless receiving sets. The concert consisted of a baritone solo and a few gramophone record selections."¹⁵ Soon, lively articles appeared in the newspapers under such headings as the "Wonder of the Age," "Scientific Marvel of the Century."¹⁶ Radio had become a new instrument of communication which, as Mr. Ash suggests, was destined to change habits, thoughts, entertainment, for existing millions and for millions to come."¹⁷ Mr. Ash's prophecy was probably based on a newspaper article written soon after contact was made with the S.S. *Victorian*, which is cited as follows: "A feeling not easily described pervaded those who spoke to and heard men on a ship far out to sea. One can hardly grasp the fact that it has really happened, but the seeming impossible has been accomplished and its potentialities are beyond present comprehension."¹⁸

From 1920 to 1930 several radio transmitters were acquired from outside Newfoundland and many were built by knowledgeable local radio technicians. Consequently, numerous broadcasting stations went on the air. Reference will be made to these later. From 1930 onward it would appear that a semblance of radio regulations were slowly emerging until 1949, when Confederation with Canada occurred. Since then Canadian radio regulations were applicable.

Menjie Shulman once stated, "It (radio) became as essential as breathing."¹⁹ Newfoundland and Labrador, and probably most of North America, experienced some difficulty in establishing communications facilities. Although Marconi

15 Ibid., p. 340.

16 Ibid., p. 340.

17 Ibid., p. 340.

18 Ibid., p. 340.

19 Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe. op. cit., p. 37.

first established wireless communications between Europe and North America through Newfoundland, it appears that its progression in this province was retarded for several reasons. Some of these reasons were: political, financial, geographical complexity, and isolation features.

The first settlers to Newfoundland made their homes alongside the coastline in bays, coves, and inlets to fish the sea and harvest the trees to construct fishing and housing facilities. Their only means of communications were paths through the forest to the next community or by sailboats. Except for path and boat connections between communities, the only other means of communications were the sailing schooners. Isolation, ignorance, and poverty were atrocious in these indigent settlements, the comparison of which is incomprehensible. These situations persisted into the early 1900s. With the inauguration of radio communications, and the availability of sufficient money to purchase receiving sets, such deplorable conditions began to decrease slowly. People could now assemble at the village grocery store, or at the merchant's home to become conversant of transactions around the world.

After Marconi's practical application of wireless transmission in 1901, approximately a decade elapsed before the transmission of the human voice. Radio communications were confined to the Morse Code. Following the 1920s, however, in Newfoundland several amateur and commercial radio stations were established.

Early in 1921, the first radio broadcasting tests were conducted in Newfoundland over radio station VOS. On July 9, 1922 VOS gave its first official broadcast. "Taking part were W.J. 'Billy' Wallace, a star of Hutton operettas; Sandy Lawrence, a noted singer; Jack Canning, another well-known voice; Professor Hutton himself; and some businessmen of the town."²⁰ The call letters VOS were changed to 8AK in 1923, and again to 8JJC in 1925. Apparently the significance

of radio as a means of communicating with Newfoundland's isolated population, had, by this time, become evident and necessary. Accordingly, numerous other radio stations received licenses to transmit and receive.

As an example of the proliferation in radio broadcasting stations from 1922 to 1926, the following list is noted:

- 8AA. E. Ash, St. John's.
- 8AB. St. John's Rod Club.
- 8AC. C. Elliott, St. John's.
- 8AD. G. Roberts, St. John's.
- 8AE. F.L. Southgate, St. John's.
- 8AF. E. Power, St. John's.
- 8AG. M. Linday, St. John's.
- 8AH. W. Meehan, St. John's.
- 8AI. G. Parsons, St. John's.
- 8AJ. H. Canning, St. John's.
- 8AK. J.J. Collins, St. John's.
- 8AL. M. Maiver, St. John's.
- 8AM. Harbour Grace Factory.
- 8AN. Rev. J.F. Kerwan, Curling.
- 8AO. Rev. T.J. Bride, Burin.
- 8AO. D.J. Meaney, Harbour Grace.
- 8AQ. H.D. Reid, St. John's.
- 8AR. R.G. Reid, St. John's.
- 8AS. D. Baird, St. John's.
- 8AT. A.B. Harding, St. John's.
- 8AU. W.E. Boyd, Lomond.
- 8AV. W. E. Whiteley, St. John's.
- 8AW. J. Moores, Carbonear.
- 8AX. Thomas Bambrick, St. John's.
- 8AY. E. Taylor, Carbonear.

20 Ibid., p. 205.

- 8AZ. J. Brown, St. John's.
- 8AZA. C. A. Manuel, St. John's.
- 8AZA. W. Larmer, Whitbourne.
- 8AZC. J. W. Morris, St. John's.
- 8MC. Christian Brothers, Mount Cashel.²¹

In 1927 an international radio conference was held at Washington D.C., U.S.A., at which time regulatory standards were discussed and call letters were assigned to various countries of the world. Newfoundland amateur and commercial radio stations were assigned VO followed by a figure. The call codes from then onward were shown as follows:

| <u>Call</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Address</u> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| VO1A | Ash, E. | St. John's |
| VO1B | Stevens, Clifford | St. John's |
| VO1H | Holden, E.S. | St. John's |
| VO1P | Hayward, Ellis | St. John's |
| VO1W | Mitchell, Clarence | St. John's |
| VO2O | Burke, A.J. | Terrenceville, Fortune Bay |
| VO2Z | Jerrett, E.V. | Brigus, Conception Bay |
| VO2D | Jerrett, Allan C. | Brigus, Conception Bay |
| VO3R | International Grenfell Association | St. Anthony |
| VO4K | Kerwan, Rev. J.F. | Port au Port |
| VO4Y | Standfield, A.R. | Corner Brook |
| VO6Q | Paddon, Dr. H.L. | North-West River, Labrador |
| VO2S | St. Croix, Rev. S. | St. Alban's (Ship Cove) Hermitage Bay |
| VO3M | Leslie, C.V. | Campbellton |
| VO3G | Stone, A.L. | Lewisporte |
| VO1N | Stoyles, W.P. | St. John's |

²¹ J.R. Smallwood, op. cit., p. 344.

| | | |
|------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| VO1I | Hierlihy, C.V.C. | St. John's |
| VO1U | Tucker, George | St. John's |
| VO1L | Butt, Clarence E. | St. John's |
| VO2N | Wetmore, Richard T. | Grand Falls |
| VO1C | Donald, W. Leonard | St. John's |
| VO3F | Osborne, F.G. | Bell Island |
| VO1F | Couglin, F.W. | St. John's |
| VO3X | McNeill, Horace W. | St. Anthony |
| VO3O | Milley, Herbert | St. Anthony |
| VO1X | Wood, A.F. | St. John's |
| VO1C | Small, H.Y. | St. John's |
| VO1J | Elliott, J.C. | St. John's |
| VO4A | Garcin, | St. John's |
| VO6B | McGrail | North-West River, Labrador. ²² |
| VO1D | Monro, R.W. | St. John's |
| VO1K | Barrett, M. | St. John's |
| VO1O | Strong, W.J.C. | St. John's ²³ |

Commercial radio broadcasting made its debut in 1924 when Wesley Methodist Church, St. John's, which, in 1925, became Wesley United Church, received a licence to broadcast church services, messages, and other items of interest to its listening audience. Then in 1929, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, St. John's, obtained a commercial broadcasting licence for similar purposes. Other commercial radio station licenses were obtained shortly thereafter, which were as follows: VOAS, Ayres & Sons, Ltd., 1931; VOGY and VONF, both belonging to the Dominion Broadcasting Co., Ltd., 1932; VONA, formerly the Seventh-day Adventist radio station, was taken over by Oscar Hierlihy, 1932. In the same year

22 VO6B was later obtained by the Rev. Lester Burry. H.W.R. Labrador October 15, 1937.

23 J.R. Smallwood, op. cit. p. 350.

VOGY and VONF amalgamated, however, it was not until 1934, that VONF officially became the call letters for the government owned Newfoundland Broadcasting Company. With the coming of Confederation with Canada 1949, this station started broadcasting as CBN.

However, prior to Confederation with Canada 1949, the Dominion Broadcasting Company was acquired by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to become the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland. Mr. W.J. Galgay, the Studio Director of VONF before it became a government corporation, was appointed the Corporation's Director of radio for the colony (province). Under Mr. Galgay's capable leadership radio broadcasting stations were inaugurated at Corner Brook, Grand Falls, Gander and Labrador. Consequently VONF, and later CBC, performed a magnificent service to isolated Newfoundland and Labrador communities. This fact will be discussed later under a different heading.

In 1933, Walter B. Williams and Joseph L. Butler established VOXM as a commercial broadcasting station and in 1936 it was officially opened by the late Andrew G. Carnell, Mayor of St. John's. Since then VOXM has established radio stations at Clarenville, CKVO; Trinity Conception, Carbonar, CHVO; Marystown, CHCM; Grand Falls, CKCM; Gander, CKGA; and Baie Verte, CKIM.

Realizing that "radio was invented for a country like Newfoundland,"²⁴ Geoffrey Stirling and Donald Jamieson, formed the Newfoundland Broadcasting Company Ltd., and obtained a licence to establish another radio station in Newfoundland with the call letters CJON. Recognizing that in Newfoundland radio broadcasting should consist of something more than entertainment, they visualized their radio

²⁴ *Newfoundland Radio in Pictures*, (published by Guarding Press, St. John's, Nfld., 1952), p. 35.

station to perform mainly a public service, by which was meant a provision for adequate news coverage. On October 11, 1951, their vision came to fruition with the official opening of CJON radio station located at St. John's. Their familiar slogan was "First with the News in Newfoundland."²⁵

Conscious of the need for radio facilities throughout Newfoundland, the Newfoundland Broadcasting Company, under the capable leadership of Geoffrey Stirling, extended their coverage to the Burin Peninsula and Central Newfoundland. The later station was equipped with a directional antenna which projected radio coverage to northern Newfoundland and parts of Labrador.

Consistent with their philosophy the owners felt that complete Newfoundland and Labrador coverage was necessary. With the advent of one of its owners, Donald Jamieson, into federal politics, and the company's excessive involvement in television, CJON radio was sold to another communications firm.

In the meantime, another radio broadcasting station commenced operations at Corner Brook, Newfoundland with the call letters CFCB. Dr. Noel Murphy formed the Humber Valley Broadcasting Company, and obtained a radio broadcasting licence for coverage of the Bay of Islands area. On October 3, 1960 CFCH made its debut. Since that time the Humber Valley Broadcasting Company officials, cognizant of the need for radio coverage of northern Newfoundland and Labrador, extended its radio broadcasting to the north and south of Corner Brook.

Careful attention has been accorded the research, applicability, and synthesis of material for inclusion in this chapter. To create an appropriate setting in which to build a comprehensive study of radio communications in New-

25 Ibid., p. 35.

foundland and Labrador, and to demonstrate its need, it was imperative to carefully analyze and methodically outline a basis for such statements as “radio was made for Newfoundland . . . Radio was the great unifying thing . . . It was meant for a remote and isolated people who never met.”²⁶

26 Bill McNeill and Morris Wolfe, *op. cit.*, p. 34.



Permission VOWR archives

The Radio Room as it appeared in 1930. It remained essentially the same until 1959.



Permission VOWR archives

The Console, 1959.

CHAPTER 3

The Man Behind Radio Communications in Newfoundland and Labrador

It was in Newfoundland that radio communications had its genesis, 1901. Just 23 years following Marconi's receiving the letter "S" at Signal Hill, St. John's, VOWR (8WMC) commenced its formal radio broadcasting from Wesley Methodist Church. It was a quantum leap in communications at that time. Accordingly, during my research for this publication, I was reminded of Robert Frost's poem "The Road not Taken," (p. 177 Gillanders) in which I pictured Dr. Joyce making that homogenous decision to introduce radio broadcasting to Wesley Church and, indeed, to the Province. The last stanza, I would suggest, encompasses his thoughts rather uniquely

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that had made all the difference.¹

¹ Carol Gillanders, *Theme & Image an Anthology of Poetry/Book I*. (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1967). p. 177.

That “less travelled road” which Dr. Joyce chose made a significant difference in the future development of radio communications in Newfoundland and Labrador.

No doubt, Dr. Joyce was cognizant of the history of communications and the scientific data produced by such scientists, as Faraday, Maxwell, Hertz, Morse and others. Having collated, pondered and deciphered much of this knowledge he decided to build on same and produce a communications instrument to convey — as far as possible — Christian and humanitarian broadcasts. The mechanical thoughts which dominated his mind culminated in tangible action. As one methodist clergyman stated some years earlier of the telegraph that the messages sent were of “paramount importance.”² So the unifying and communal factors of radio “connected our minds” which later “defined the Canadian community, (and) the National ethos.”³ Indeed, radio has not only defined our “Canadian Community,” but determined for us a global community and an international ethos. To some degree, it has shaken the globe creating a world neighbourhood. This ultimately meant cultural, political and social changes would occur. As a province of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador has profited socially, educationally, medically and religiously as a result of radio communications. VOWR, under the direction of Dr. Joyce, made a paramount contribution to the communications milieu of this province. He will be remembered in perpetuity for his pragmatic foresightedness in enhancing religious and humanitarian radio broadcasting services. Frank Otis Erle, penned the following poem which I think is a perpetual tribute to the man who was referred to as the “Father of Radio in Newfoundland”:

2 Canadian Geographic, Vanier, Ontario, November/December, 1995, p. 42.

3 Ibid. p. 43.

That noble future you so fondly dreamed;
That service which on life's horizon gleamed;
That influence far-reaching in its scope;
that great success on which you set your hope . . .⁴

Following a short pastorate at Britannia Cove, as the pastoral charge was referred to at that time, he accepted a call to Wesley Methodist Church, effective July, 1922. Having been called to serve a City Church with a large membership enrolment was an honourable engagement for a young thirty-two-year-old, relatively fresh from university. Capability, intuitively and pragmatically he harnessed his pastoral and preaching skills with vigour and enthusiasm. He must have asked himself, "who is my neighbour?"⁵ and to answer that question the words "anyone whom I can help,"⁶ came forcefully, sincerely and eloquently to his lips. Before, many months had expired he began to ask himself, and pray about, ways in which he could communicate the gospel message to his congregation, many of whom were unable to attend the public worship, due to many circumstances. He pondered, debated and agonized over a methodology to initiate a pastoral ministry to reach his parishioners, particularly the aged, sick and shut-ins. At last he discovered a way by which he could fulfil his dream. Without deferment he began to bounce his thoughts off certain members of his congregation and friends of other faiths. The encouragement he received was fantastic and his "dream exploded."⁷ As Johan Huizinga once stated: "What a stunning explosion of knowledge, information, communication and production has erupted . . . (which) have mushroomed shrinking the world into a global

4 *United Church Record and Missionary Review*, June 28, Vol. 4 Toronto, #6, p. 32.

5 Luke 10:29.

6 Luke 10:37.

7 *The Winds of Change* The United Church of Canada, Sept. 1960. p. 4.

village.”⁸ The enormous reservoir of cognition spilled its contents into the pragmatic application of radio communications. The progression of which has been phenomenal, benefiting not only his parishioners but society in general. Accordingly, I am reminded of Karl Lowith’s words: “Progress itself goes on progressing; we can no longer stop it or turn it around.”⁹ Thus VOWR has progressed from a dream to an actuality giving religious and humanitarian service to many thousands of people.

The dream began in a rather small, crude, way by present day standards. Although July 20, 1924 is the official date of the commencement of Church Worship services via VOWR (8WMC), it appears that in a minute way services were broadcast from the Church prior to that date. There is evidence that Church services were broadcast from the Church at least months earlier than the official date. Records and oral tradition tend to indicate that Dr. Joyce had an arrangement with what was then called the Avalon Telephone Company for a select number of home to be connected to the Church through “parallel telephone” lines. This methodology facilitated the broadcasting of the Sunday worship services to the aged and shut-in members of the congregation. The technical aspect of the process was very simple. Telephone lines were connected to the Church with a junction bar on or near the pulpit into which the telephone lines were connected. By calling into the Church, these lines were activated. When the worship service began the clergy spoke into a telephone mouth piece or microphone while at the same time parishioners at home put the telephone receivers to their ears and listened to the service. This maybe over

8 Johan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*, Trans. J. H. Huizinga, (N. York Wm. Norton & Co., 1964) p.p. 9 & 10.

9 Karl Lowith, *Nature, History & Existentialism* (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern Uni. Press, 1966) p.p. 159-160.

simplified to some extent but the basics are relevant. Apparently, there were other occasions when Radio Crystal Sets were used. Both methodologies characterize the inquisitive mind of Dr. Joyce. This technology seemed rather crude, as I stated above, but as his experimentation progressed a more sophisticated system of broadcasting emerged.

The advent of VOWR was eminent. Dr. Joyce instilled within the minds of his people his vision of a progressive outreach ministry. “The wonder of the age”¹⁰ was about to make its debut at Wesley Methodist Church. With the help of several local “amateur radio enthusiasts,”¹¹ Dr. Joyce built a 100 watt transmitter and began broadcasting from the Church July 20, 1924. The Morning Worship Service was a broadcast from St. Thomas Anglican Church and the evening service from Wesley Methodist Church. Numerous modifications, additions, wattage increases and new equipment have been installed to enhance the founder’s progressive vision of VOWR. Today its equipment, facilities and programming are first class. All this reflects eloquently on the vision and organizational skills of its founder Dr. J.G. Joyce.

It has been said that great men have come from humble beginnings. Such a statement has manifested itself in the person of Joseph Gilbert Joyce. His son, Douglas, states: “The family background was what might be described as simple middle class.”¹² Born to this “middle class” family, on a crisp autumn day, when the residents of the Town of Carbonear were drying their salted cod fish on the flakes, dotted along the shore-line, was Joseph G. Joyce, who later distinguished himself as a Clergyman and radio pioneer. His parents, Edward Bemister and Emira Jane (Jeffers) Joyce, were proud

10 J.R. Smallwood, (ed) *The Books of Newfoundland*, St. John’s, Nfld. Book Publishers, Ltd., Vol. 1 p. 340.

11 (VOWR Extracts from minutes and other sources, 1924, prepared by Everett E. Hudson, p. 17).

12 Correspondence from Douglas A. Joyce Jan. 3, 1997, p. 3 (VOWR Archives).

to announce, on November 23, 1889, his birth, their first son. During the ensuing years four other children were born, namely, Douglas Alick Joyce, August 17, 1891, Diadema Jeffers Joyce, July 31, 1894, Julia May Joyce, August 29, 1897, and Sophie Jones Joyce, September 17, 1900.¹³ All of whom have since died.

To present an accurate account of J.G. Joyce's personal history it is necessary to briefly scan his family background. His father, Edward Bemister Joyce, was born at Freshwater, Carbonear, Newfoundland, November 12, 1859, died July 23, 1933, and was buried at Carbonear. Douglas Joyce, a grandson of Edward B. Joyce, states that his grandfather was "a seaman (fisherman) of gentle nature and much away from his home;"¹⁴ while his grandmother, Emira Jane (Jeffers) Joyce, born at Freshwater, Newfoundland March 29, 1859, and died at Carbonear, August 14, 1921, ran a general store on Water Street, Carbonear and "She was determined that her sons should do well."¹⁵ It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that Edward B. Joyce "was born aboard a ship, coming through Baccalieu Tickle, Newfoundland," when his parents, "Robert and Julia Ann (Bemister) Joyce were returning home to Carbonear from Labrador after a summer fishery. Edward (Ned) spent several years in the building trade in Boston, Massachusetts, but returned to Carbonear each year for several months. He was manager of John Rorke's Labrador business and between voyages to Labrador, was in charge of Rorke's fleet of ships."¹⁶

To pursue the historical account of Dr. Joyce's family it is probably essential to refer briefly to his siblings. Firstly, Douglas Alick Joyce, mentioned earlier, completed High

13 Written by permission of J.G.J.'s family/estate, Jan. 3, 1997 (VOWR Archives).

14 Used by permission of J. G. Joyce family/estate, Jan. 3, 1997, (VOWR Archives).
p. 3.

15 Ibid. p. 3.

16 Ibid. p. 6.

School at Carbonear and secondary education at Bishop Feild, St. John's, as did his brother Joseph. He worked at Ayre & Sons, St. John's, Newfoundland and two years at Boston. While pursuing vocal studies in Boston he tragically died of blood poisoning. His body was brought back to Carbonear and buried on July 30, 1917. His brother Joseph Gilbert was with him when he died and accompanied the remains from Boston to Carbonear.

Secondly, Diadema Jeffers Joyce was born, grew up and educated at Carbonear. Following High School she worked for the Royal Stores, St. John's, and eventually became a buyer for that company in London, Montreal and New York. She later moved to Montreal where she became a hospital receptionist. She died in Toronto, April 5, 1979.

Thirdly, Julia May Joyce was born at Carbonear where she completed High School. She moved to Boston and during the flu epidemic in 1916-17 became very ill. She survived the flu, but died of spinal meningitis August 16, 1932.

Fourthly, Sophie Jones Joyce was also "born, raised and educated at Carbonear. She worked in a government office, St. John's and later became private secretary to Sir John Puddister. She married Charles Hubert Kinch, a businessman and member of parliament in Barbados. She died in Montreal, November 23, 1959, and her ashes were interred in Bridgetown, Barbados."¹⁷

The above historical data is cited to focus the spotlight on Joseph G. Joyce, whose practicality, ingenuity and perspicaciousness far exceeded his time. As intimated earlier, Joseph G. Joyce was born at Carbonear, November 23, 1889, the son of Edward Bemister and Emira Jane (Jeffers) Joyce. He was educated at Carbonear Methodist Primary School and probably worked at John Rorke's firm during the summer. Having

17 Ibid. p. 8.

completed his academic schooling at Carbonear, he proceeded to St. John's and attend Bishop Feild Secondary School and worked for a short period at Ayre & Sons. While at St. John's, he boarded with a Noseworthy family. At approximately twenty-four years of age he proceeded to Mount Allison University, Sackville, N.B., in preparation for Ordained Ministry of the Methodist Church. His academic pursuits were as follows: Mount Allison University, 1913-1917 Bachelor of Arts, Boston University School of Theology: 1917-1920 Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Sacred Theology. Union Theological College, Montreal, April 1931, Doctor of Theology.

His doctoral research was executed in the discipline of sociology and his dissertation was written on the subject: *Environment and Social Factors in Newfoundland*. Having read several chapters of his dissertation, and observing his son's (Douglas) comments on same, I am persuaded that his brilliancy, intellectual independence, energy and moral convictions were befitting to a superior scholar and a deeply committed Christian Minister.

Although his research and philosophy were submitted in the late 1920s, he was, nevertheless, struggling with such ideas as amalgamation and consolidation in education. He states: "Another impediment to culture is the denominational system of education. The present antiquated and absurd system is like a cancerous growth protruding itself into the very vitals of the social and economic organism."¹⁸ "The consolidated school presents the only practicable method by which a modern country school may cope with rural problems."¹⁹ His concern for the social and cultural

18 J.G. Joyce, *Environmental and Social Factors in Newfoundland*, Doctoral Dissertation, April 1931, unpublished. Used by permission of the Joyce family/estate. p. 71.

19 Ibid. p. 76.

development of the Newfoundland students is powerfully articulated as follows: "The abolition of the small schools in the communities, and in their place the consolidation or non-denominational school buildings, staffed with properly prepared teachers, is the way by which Newfoundland can liberate herself from the stifling influence of the past, and create a more genuine appreciation for education."²⁰ In these references Dr. Joyce is frowning on the duplication of denominational schools situated in many communities when the amalgamation of them could be an asset educationally, economically and culturally, and socially.

His philosophy of radio broadcasting was prophetic, altruistic and service centered. His perspective of radio "had not only a religious/cultural function, but a sociopolitical function as well."²¹ Indeed, but one would be remiss if education and ecumenism were not added to the above list. His radio station, VOWR, contributed significantly to both of these subjects. Accordingly his holistic concept of radio encompassed a gamut of perspectives which illustrated his intellectual ability. His discontentment with the status-quo was thunderous and radio, he suggested, was a methodology to awaken complacent souls. There was much to be accomplished, services to be provided to the indigent, lonely, sick, troubled people. Radio was inestimable in providing comfort, sociological, educational, nautical, medical and spiritual services to thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. His dissertation eloquently indicated his ability to wade through complex communications mazes and deep humanitarian concerns.

Joseph Gilbert Joyce was received as a candidate for the Methodist Ministry, the Newfoundland Conference, 1911. After serving as a probationer at Hants Harbour, 1912, and

20 Ibid. p. 78.

21 Douglas A. Joyce notes op. cit., p. 3.

Petites, 1913, he proceed to Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick in preparation for Ordained Ministry. Following his theological studies and Mount Allison he returned to Newfoundland and, as requested by him, he was ordained by the Methodist Conference at Harbour Grace, September 12, 1917.²²

Dr. Joyce served the following parishes:

Hants Harbour, Newfoundland 1912, Probationer.

Petites, Newfoundland 1913, Probationer.

Manchester, New Hampshire, U.S.A. during his studies at Boston University.

Britannia — Foster's Point Pastoral Charge 1921.

Wesley (Methodist) United Church, July 1922 - 1930.

Merrickville United Church, Ontario, 1930 - 1933.

Verdun United Church, Montreal, 1933 - 1957.

Retired 1957.

Greenville, North Carolina Presbyterian Church, 1957 - 1958 and Washington, North Carolina

1958 - 1959. Both of these were interim appoints²³

During his arts-theological studies at Mount Allison University he met Susan Hannah Mellett Carlton who was attending the Mount Allison Ladies College. On September 17, 1921, they were married at Souris, Prince Edward Island and moved to the Britannia — Foster's Point Pastoral Charge.

Susan Hannah Mellett (Carlton) Joyce was a resident of Souris, Prince Edward Island, before moving to Mount Allison, Sackville, New Brunswick to study. The Carltons, apparently moved to Souris from Boston, U.S.A. and started a business. Her grandfather was also appointed as the American Consul to Prince Edward Island. Souris was a small

22 A copy of his ordination certificate see Appendix A by permission of the Joyce family. Jan. 3, 1997.

23 Ibid. p. 4.

community, but it nevertheless boasted of containing the permanent residences of two Senators from the Federal House in Ottawa. It appears that the Carltons integrated very well with the people of Souris and soon formed amicable relationships with the other merchants and political families who were considered to be the upper middle class.²⁴

While attending Mount Allison Ladies' College 1914-1916/17, it would appear that Music and the related academic courses were her main focus of study. Later, as a Minister's wife, music would be a valuable asset. Among her other credentials were: a certificate from Union Commercial College, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, June 1920, and a Certificate in Organ Music from Trinity College of Music, London, England, 1929. Her son, Douglas, states, at "Wesley she was admirably suited to deal with the various aspects of Church life: She was musical, she had a fine contralto voice, played the piano, she had an easy — endurably easy — way of getting along with people and had leadership qualities."²⁵

Dr. and Mrs. Joyce were blessed with two children, Douglas Alick Joyce, who did Germanic studies at McGill and Harvard Universities and who taught at the University of Toronto, (Trinity College) and retired in 1988; and Carlton Spencer Joyce who graduated from Sir George Williams and Concordian Universities and is now a researcher and inventor (spectroscopy), and businessman (spectrometrics) in Atlanta, Georgia.²⁶

From the research undertaken and the data collected it is fair to state that J.G. Joyce's ministry at Wesley United Church was super and jubilant. His broadcasts and personal dynamics captivated a large and prominent audience. His "physical appearance was strong and positive but not overpowering.

24 Ibid. p. 4.

25 Ibid. p. 5.

26 Ibid. p. 5.

There was about him a reticence, even shyness which, combined with intellectual activity, purposefulness, and practicality had a disarming yet persuasive effect. He was ingenuous through and through . . . He had the ability to see problems in a broad perspective."²⁷

Indicative of his ability and visionary qualities was the sagacious way in which he introduced radio communication to Wesley Church. His first procedure was to learn more about it. Consequently, he spent several summers at "the Marconi Radio Company, Montreal, familiarizing himself with the new medium of radio."²⁸ Incessantly he discussed his radio proposition with his Church Boards, prominent members of congregation and the community at large. Having received positive feedback to his vision, VOWR (8WMC) emerged. While it was impractical to broadcast from the manse, the first broadcast of 8WMC was successful, and led to procuring a permanent home in Wesley Church. Douglas Joyce states: "I have often heard my mother speak of this broadcast: Mrs. Wallace Goobie sang; it left a lasting impression on her."²⁹ Whatever scepticism may have been lurking in the minds of uncommitted parishioners and others, soon abated. The intelligentsia, Governors, politicians, business persons and professionals soon realized the potential of his endeavours and supported him. His Boards began to recognize their indebtedness to him and dedicated the new VOWR Studios, 1959, in honour of Joseph Gilbert Joyce. Since Dr. Joyce died in March, 1959, his son, Douglas Joyce, represented him on that memorable occasion.

As intimated earlier, Government officials and politicians generally highly respected and praised his pastoral work at Wesley and his intellectual ability particularly his radio work.

27 Ibid. p. 4.

28 Ibid. p. 4.

29 Ibid. p. 3.

They had often availed of his services for various reasons. Accordingly, in honour of Dr. J.G. Joyce's outstanding work a bronze bust of him is situated in the entrance of Wesley United Church as a gift of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. On the occasion of the dedication of this bronze bust, October 24, 1976, his widow Susan Hannah Mellett (Carlton) Joyce, was present and did the act of dedication, and his son, Douglas, preached the sermon.

Grace Lane writing on the subject, *A Dream Walks*, introduces her paper stating, "Significant achievements germinate slowly. They are found in the sturdy faith of pioneers . . . Their roots lie very deep — deeper than the dream itself."³⁰ Such, I believe was the intuitive philosophy of J.G. Joyce. His faith was strong, his perspectives transcended his time and his pragmatic pursuit of knowledge was enormous. Following ordination he was not content to pursue the traditional parish ministry. Joyce requested of the District permission to continue his studies at Boston University. His request was approved and so his dream moves on to new initiatives. During his studies at Boston he was influenced, it seemed, by the "Social Gospel" philosophy, which, apparently remained with him throughout his life. He was also influenced by such thinkers as Rudolf Bultmaun and followed very closely the current events of his day. Cognizant of Marconi's scientific discovery on Signal Hill, St. John's, 1901, he was anxious to put such knowledge to practical use at Wesley Church.

Being a pragmatist in its thorough application, and being blessed with unique imaginative abilities, he developed an interest in woodworking, astronomy, genealogy, etymology, ceramic, as well as radio technology and pastoral duties. At first glance one might conclude that such a list of interests is

30 Lane, Grace, *A Dream Walks*, (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1965, p. 21).

rare. Indeed it is. But from research executed in Dr. Joyce's life, philosophy and work, one must conclude that the main character in this study is an exceptionally energetic brilliant person.

During Dr. Joyce's ministry at Wesley United Church not only did he busy himself with pastoral work and radio technology, but he constructed items of furniture. The living room furniture at Wesley Manse was made by him. He also had a keen interest in youth, particularly the Boy Scouts. In 1929, he attended a Scout Jamboree in England.

But his walking dreams were not only confined to his pastorate at Wesley Church. At Merrickville he made structural changes to the Church basement and at Verdun, Montreal he developed his interest in Astronomy. It was at that time his pragmatic skills manifested themselves in the grinding of two (6" and 8") telescope lenses and with the help of his wife made a stained glass window which he donated to Verdun United Church on his retirement in 1957. Later his interest turned to ceramics, genealogy — the constructing of his family tree and etymology — the origin and derivation of words.³¹

The versatility, agility and vigour exemplified by Dr. and Mrs. Joyce were manifested in their harmonious relationship and devotion to Christian service. It would appear that they were an exceptionally motivated team. They are both resting at the United Cemetery, Souris, Prince Edward Island, the town in which they were married September 17, 1921.

David and Marion Pitt in their publication, *Goodly Heritage*, state that, "Joyce was indeed a man who 'got things done'."³² This statement apply describes the foresight which Dr. Joyce ascribed to his ministry at Wesley Church. His

31 Douglas A. Joyce, Notes, op. cit. p. 4.

32 Pitt, David and Marion. *Goodly Heritage*, (St. John's: Jesperson Press, 1984 (p.45).

perspective directed him to discover a new way by which he could convey happiness and pastoral care to the lives of many people. His hope was to reach, by means of radio, the isolated people along the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as to minister to his own parishioners who were unable to attend the services of worship. Not only was he concerned with providing religious service, but some instruction, entertainment, weather forecasts, messages and news of the world. His view of radio far exceeded the comprehension of his Church Boards and parishioners. At first the Wesley congregation, which had a large debt, were by no means overwhelmed by his advanced foresight. They were not “convinced at the outset that Wesley Church ought to be ‘dabbling in this new-fangled contraption’.”³³ But he was not discouraged by their thoughts. He pressed forward with his vision and he inspired his people and others to take note. Soon the revelation of his perspectives would gain momentum and develop into a first class radio broadcasting system. Maybe Dr. Joyce like Dr. Schweitzer could say with a sense of satisfaction “I have had the pleasure of doing good”³⁴.

Dr. Joyce was committed to radio communications, it appears he had a natural affinity for it. Like Marshal McLuhan once suggested that radio was us. McLuhan used a quotation from the Psalms to substantiate his point, “They that made them, shall be like unto them.”³⁵ While I cannot agree with McLuhan’s position with reference to the Psalms to substantiate the fact that radio is a part of us. I can agree and support the fact that radio was a part of Dr. Joyce. He saw it as a spiritual instrument to augment his pastoral work. Later in 1989 the President of A.I.S.I. Research Corporation said of

33 Ibid. p. 47.

34 Morrison, Max (p.28)

35 Psalm 115:8

radio: "its Spirit technology which allows (us) to communicate."³⁶ Dr. Joyce was cognizant of that spirit years earlier and his commitment to its utilization contributed greatly to the out-reach ministry of Wesley United Church. John Wesley referred to the world as his parish, Joyce was content with a much lesser experience, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Within this confinement he excelled in both Christian and humanitarian commitment, some of which will be stated in this book. Bob Belbin must have felt that Christian spirit and commitment when he wrote:

Ah! Voice of the Church of God
Resounding through the land;
Spreading the Virtue of love
On an ethereal metre band

So that the ear may hear,
And the heart may understand
Surely, God was in the wisdom
and the foresight of the plan

That had its first beginning
In the bosom of a man,
Who was dedicated to his service
In his God-appointed Span.³⁷

Dr. Joyce consolidated his foresight, commitment and cognitive ability in the exemplary work he initiated and accomplished at Wesley Church. His perspective was long range and his organizational abilities were astute and paramount. Soon Wesley Church would glow with a brighter tomorrow. Approximately one year before Joyce's arrival, the

36 *The Evening Telegram*, St. John's, March 2, 1989, p. 30.

37 VOWR Motto "We Serve" by Everett Hudson, p. 7.

congregation of Wesley learned that their present minister was moving and immediately initiated calling procedures, with J.G. Joyce heading the list of possible candidates. "They chose a man who, though not many years past ordination, had already made a name for himself as an energetic organizer."³⁸

Joseph G. Joyce was ordained by the Newfoundland Conference of the Methodist Church 1917. Apparently, the Conference arranged a special ordination for J.G. Joyce and Ernest Davis and one would assume that their ordination was necessitated by their request for study leave; following which he returned to the Newfoundland Conference and was appointed to the Britannia — Foster's point pastoral charge. He started his pastoral ministry at Wesley July, 1922.

According to Marion and David Pitts' book soon after his arrival at Wesley parish, "He called a meeting of the Trustee Board at the parsonage, (clergy's residence) to show the members around so that they could see for themselves the deplorable condition of the house, what work would have to be done at once, including cleaning and painting, and what furnishings and housewares were needed."³⁹ This being accomplished, he turned his attention to "liquidating the debt still outstanding on the Church building."⁴⁰ A well organized financial drive was inaugurated with the minister, Mr. Joyce, pledging \$100.00. David and Marion Pitt paid a commendable tribute to Joyce for his forward organizational abilities: "the Official Board decided at this time that 'the Minister ask a blessing on the offering in the Church.' Hitherto this had not been done. At the same time the Board also decided that the minister request the congregation 'to repeat more audibly the Lord's Prayer'; that a 'vesper Hymn be sung

38 op. cit. p. 45.

39 Ibid. p. 45.

40 Ibid. p. 45.

by the choir at the end of the evening service'; that all announcements to be made from the pulpit must 'be in the vestry early so that they may be shortened or censored by the Recording Steward or Minister before being read in public'; and that 'sacrament held at night be announced at the morning service so that those who attend will have collection for the poor fund."

"So successful was the financial campaign spearheaded by Joseph Joyce that at its conclusion, March, 1924, funds sufficient to liquidate the entire debt on the Church building had been realized and a special service featuring the 'burning' of the documents of indebtedness was held on 'Conference Sunday' to mark the occasion."⁴¹ (pp. 45-46 Pitt).

The organizational and financial astuteness were again recognized when his thoughts reflected on the establishment of a radio station. By 1923 his dream of a radio station was beginning to take shape. There must have been a number of barriers with which to contend. But to a good organizer these barriers were not going to invade or impede his perspective. He knew there would be objection to his proposal of radio broadcasting from the Church. Some thought of it as the "devil's works." This barrier was soon overcome. Another barrier was a studio for his new contraption. Still another barrier was financial. Barriers one and two overcome, he began to work on the third. He began to solicit funds at every opportunity; from businesses, personal, from people who had some interest in his concept, not only in Newfoundland, but elsewhere. By June, 1924, he had accumulated in excess of \$1,000.00. This was a sufficient sum of money to make a beginning in radio broadcasting in a more sophisticated way. His dream came to fruition on July 20, 1924 when the first official broadcast of the Church service occurred at Wesley

41 Ibid. pp. 45-46.

Methodist Church. From that time onward VOWR (8WMC) has provided a magnificent service to the public, which is still continuing to the present time.

Then in 1927, having increased its transmitting power from 100 watts to 500 watts, he put on a great radio display of showmanship. The Pitts state: "a showman as well as a salesman, Joyce arranged a unique opening programme when the new transmitter went on the air for the first regular broadcast on 6 December 1927: an address by the Governor, Sir William Allardyce, delivered by remote control from Government House. Knowing that his listeners would be as incredulous as himself at the notion of his sitting in his own library as he spoke to the whole Island, Allardyce felt that he ought to provide the authenticity of it all by describing the pictures on his wall, the books on his shelves, and anything else he could see in the room. On the following nights other special features followed for a whole week, the new transmitter proving its power and efficiency by being heard as far off as Chicago."⁴² Such a demonstration of the possibilities of radio communication and its impact on the general public resulted from the foresight, wisdom and organizational abilities of VOWR's founder.

Not only was Dr. Joyce a great organizer and builder but he was a man of courage. When he put his hand to the plough he never looked back. It was full steam ahead. This does not mean that he was oblivious to the suggestions of others. It meant that before any undertaking had been instituted it was given thorough analysis. This being done, courage to engage his ideas for the betterment of his parishioners and others was never in question. As Winston Churchill once said, "Courage is the first of human qualities, because it is the one quality which guarantees all the others."⁴³ It is said, that on

42 Ibid. pp. 48-49.

43 Morrison, p. 84)

one occasion when VOWR was in its infancy that someone at the studio began to play the record the "Irish Washerwoman." When he heard it he ran from the Manse to the studio with his feet rarely touching the ground to have it disconnected. For Dr. Joyce, at that time, this was inappropriate music for his station. One can imagine the lecture which had accrued as a result of that inadvertent happening.

Douglas Joyce tells a story of a security contraption engineered by his father to protect his radio equipment. Apparently his father installed an electric bell under his bed in the manse. The bell would "signal the presence of any intruder (entering the) transmission room off the main assembly hall in the Church. The mechanism that set off the alarm was a simple makeshift: a wire strung between the backs of two chairs in the transmission room! One night the alarm under my parents bed set off a huge racket. My father quickly pulled on his clothes and went over to the Church to discover that one of his own radio workers had entered the room for some valid reason, disturbed the security wire, and tripped the bell under my parents bed. In those days radio equipment was so valuable and money so scarce that any precaution, however imperfect, was necessary, whatever the results."⁴⁴

These anecdotes portray the courage, ingenuity, cunning, planning and organizational astuteness Dr. Joyce injected into his undertakings. It appears that he was shrewd in detailing thoughtfully and succinctly the programming, security and technical expertise associated with his radio station.

Dr. Joyce had a message to proclaim; a belief to be enhanced. Consequently these must be reflected in the programming of the station. I once remember someone saying, one of the greatest words in our vocabulary to keep

44 Douglas Joyce's Notes used by permission of the Joyce family -VOWR archives.

us straight on a slippery road is belief. This characterized totally the philosophy of the VOWR. "We serve" was and is its motto. At the basis of its programming, humanitarian, ethical and spiritual emphasis were uppermost. The quality of its broadcasts must be above reproach.

Standards were high and compliance with same was unquestionable. The standard which he envisaged for VOWR and his volunteer staff were those by which he lived. To do otherwise would be to compromise his beliefs and integrity. Although I have been unable to accrue much information on his early personal life, except for that stated earlier, I do know he was baptised at the Methodist Church, Carbonear, February 13, 1890. Having originated from that geographical location myself, and having some knowledge of the strict nurturing of the Methodist Church, and, indeed, the early years of the United Church of Canada, I am persuaded that the religious atmosphere and discipline in which he was brought up were precise. The rejecting or reducing of his strongly nurtured beliefs, although he was highly educated, were not easily reconciled. Consequently, his enshrined beliefs prevailed. I don't think he felt himself to be possessed with superior cognitive abilities, nevertheless, his communications perspectives were well in advance of his time.

Dynamic leadership and having the vision to channel his abilities in a progressive direction was a God-given gift. As Naisbitt and Aburdene so aptly stated of a Corporation: "an effective leader creates a vision that tells people where a company is going and how it will get there and becomes the organizing force behind every corporate decision."⁴⁵ Joseph Joyce was an effective leader: he knew what he wanted, how to accomplish his goal, and had the intellect to move people

45 Naisbitt, John and Patricia, Aburdene. *Ten New Directions for the 1990's -Megatrends 2000*, (New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1990) p. 223.

to his way of thinking. Thus a firm foundation was laid for VOWR, which remains to the present.

Some years ago Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote a best selling book, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, in which Chapter One has the heading "Believe in yourself." The first paragraph of that chapter states, "Having faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy."⁴⁶ When Joyce approached people for help, financial or otherwise, confidence oozed from his personality. Socioeconomic status, religion, political stripes, or the "whose who" in the community made little difference in his approach. He felt comfortable with the politicians, the Governor and leading merchants of his day, all of whom respected his ability and organization skills. The first two radio towers erected to carry VOWR's signal were donated by Roman Catholic and Anglican persons. "These can be called the Anglican and Roman Catholic towers because they were donated by members of these denominations."⁴⁷

Ecumenism was paramount in Joyce's philosophy. He felt comfortable in having other denominations participate in his vision. Such involvement enhanced good public relations, interdenominational fellowship and a wider participation in the day to day activities of his station. "In an age where ecumenism is preached and advocated and where so much theoretical idealism is sought, VOWR stands out as a practical example of what can be done, what is being done, without fanfare, based on good will and a spirit of mutual respect."⁴⁸

In 1928, a further ecumenical experience emerged in the appointment of a programme committee consisting of mem-

46 Peale, Norman Vincent. *The Power of Positive Thinking* (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967) p. 13.

47 *The Monitor*, St. John's, NF. 1979.

48 Ibid.

bership from the community at large. Such a committee enhanced programming and shifted some of that responsibility from the Pastor to a collected group of people. Furthermore, it suggests the acceptability of VOWR and its growth. When Joseph Joyce sought a change in pastoral relations in 1930, his dream for Wesley Church and the Newfoundland community generally had been fulfilled. VOWR is now in its seventy-fifth year of operation, and still progressing well.



Permission VOWR archives

VOWR's archive of equipment and materials c.1974



Hubert Garland



Permission VOWR archives

Everett Hudson



Permission VOWR archives

Studio console and related equipment, 1986-88 installation

CHAPTER FOUR

The Founder's Vision Activated

Early in 1924, a young progressive, prophetic, pastorally oriented, Methodist Church clergyman, the Reverend Joseph G. Joyce, dared to pragmatize his “dream” to facilitate the communication of his religious and humanitarian ministry to aged, shut-in, and lonely within his own congregation, the many sailors on board the ships at sea, the lonely lighthouse keepers and their families and the numerous isolated people situated in settlements scattered throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The manifestation of that “dream” was realized in the establishment of a radio station, 8WMC (VOWR), situated in the basement of the Wesley Methodist Church, St. John's, Newfoundland. From that one hundred watts transmitter, installed and operated by the volunteers, who believed in and supported Dr. Joyce's brilliancy and foresight, there was established a radio broadcasting facility which beamed its signals in all directions bringing tidings and great comfort and help, of various kinds, to thousands of people.

8WMC (VOWR) has had many additions and renovations added to its facilities throughout its history, to which reference will be made in this chapter, and presently it operates under the call letters VOWR. Its potent religious and humanitarian philosophy for which it was known since its inception, currently remains the focus of its broadcasts. As the prov-

ince's official pioneer radio station, VOWR has become an institution.

Henry David Thoreau, an American essayist, poet, and naturalist, expressed the following words of wisdom: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears."¹ This was the introductory quotation with which Mr. Everett Hudson, President of VOWR's Board of Management, began his message to the Annual VOWR Auction, 1968, in conjunction with the Sixtieth Anniversary celebrations of Wesley United Church.

The Reverend Joseph G. Joyce, metaphorically stepped to the music he was hearing, from which there developed a philosophy, which had a unique effect on the lifestyle of the people of this province. There were many mountains to climb and huge valleys to be crossed before his concept of radio broadcasting became a reality. But eventually, on July 18, 1924², just twenty-three years after Marconi had transmitted his first wireless message across the Atlantic, 8WMC, later VOWR, commenced broadcasting.

Although July 18, 1924, has been given as the commencement of broadcasting for 8WMC (VOWR), other sources refer to July 20, 1924, as the official broadcast date. Mr. Ash stated, "On July 20, 1924, it (8WMC) (VOWR) made its advent to the air waves with a church service conducted by the Wesley United Church pastor, the Reverend J.G. Joyce. With the exception of a few Sundays during the periods in which it was either being improved or having technical matters adjusted, it has broadcast ever since."³ Inferences deducted from various data collected would tend to indicate that the Rever-

1 Everett Hudson, *President's Message, VOWR Annual Report*, (St. John's, Newfoundland, 1968) p. 8.

2 Everett Hudson, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

3 J.R. Smallwood (ed.), *Book of Newfoundland*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

end Mr. Joyce was conducting broadcasts from his church some time earlier than the two dates suggested above. The following references indicate that the Reverend Mr. Joyce, through his electronic technological skills, had, by arrangement with the Avalon Telephone Company, a select number of homes connected by parallel telephone lines to the church to facilitate the transmission of the Sunday Worship services to the aged, sick and shut-in members of his congregation. This was known as “telephone ‘hook-ups’ with the church (by which they) could listen to the services by acoustics. Reverend Mr. Joyce saw in radio a better solution of that situation.”⁴

“In 1924, an experiment was made by hooking up telephones between Wesley Church and the homes of several aged members of the congregation so as to enable them to enjoy the service. This humble beginning, restricted to a handful of listeners, was such a success that the Reverend Joyce decided to proceed with his plan.”⁵

Having an inkling of the possibility of broadcasts being conducted from Wesley Church by the Reverend Mr. Joyce prior to July 20, 1924, and the technology used for that purpose, contact was made with a former radio engineer, Mr. Oscar Hierlihy, by the author of this research, to ascertain the probability of such technology being effectively used. His assurance was most emphatic, which confirmed my hypothesis.

Furthermore, having conversed with Mr. Everett Hudson, VOWR’s previous Program Director, on the probability of such broadcasts occurring prior to July 20, 1924, he revealed the fact that he had entertained that notion on several occasions. Although affirmation of such broadcasts is

4 *The Evening Telegram*, St. John’s, Newfoundland, May 2, 1929.

5 *Ibid.*, October 17, 1974, p. 15A.

not immediately available, there is sufficient insinuations to suggest that such were being executed.

The man with a vision who saw an opportunity to perform a priceless service to others, came to be known as the "Father of Radio in Newfoundland."⁶ In an address on the "Recent Developments in Radio"⁷ at the weekly Rotary luncheon, Dr. Joyce stated in response to his being referred to as the "Father of Radio in Newfoundland", that he "did not profess to be a professional and his interest was that of an amateur or novice to whom radio was a fascinating recreation."⁸

"Behind radio," he stated, "was a great array of genius and briefly he referred to the great contributions that had been made in the development of the science: Maxwell's mathematics, Faraday's electromagnetic induction, Edison's incandescent lamp, the discovery by Hertz of radio waves, Branley's coherer, Marconi's use of Herzion waves for telegraphic purposes, etc."⁹ He quickly attributed praise to the scientists whom he admired, but considered himself merely a novice. (This was his way of articulating his humility.) VOWR radio, under the leadership of Dr. Joyce, had been inaugurated to perform a unique and valuable ministry; it outgrew its infancy stages rather quickly and became known as "the first and only broadcasting station in Newfoundland".¹⁰ The radio station that was founded for service, by Dr. Joyce, still maintains its motto "We Serve ."

I.A. Richards quotes Arthur O'Shaugnessy, an English poet, who in his famous *Ode* says: "One man with a dream, at pleasure, Shall go forth and conquer a crown."¹¹ Such a

6 Ibid., October 19, 1929.

7 Ibid., October 19, 1929.

8 Ibid., October 19, 1929.

9 Ibid., October 19, 1929.

10 Wesley United Church Radio Station letterhead (1927).

11 I.A. Richards, "A Man with a Dream" *New Studios*, VOWR Souvenir

tribute befits Dr. Joyce, whose philosophy envisaged a communications methodology which superseded the expectations of his parishioners. His philosophy was to “establish a radio broadcasting station to bring religious services and other desirable forms of information into the homes of people within the range of operation. He was especially interested in the needs of the aged and the sick, who could not attend their places of worship in person.”¹² The motto of service which he envisaged for 8WMC and later VOWR, eloquently portrayed his altruistic and missionary spirit. Religious education, he felt, was a paramount procedure to enhance this motto and “create an active citizenship to overcome divisions among the people.”¹³

He was not only concerned with providing worship services, spiritual guidance, inspiration, and comfort for his own parishioners, but to other persons of any faith within the hearing range of his station who might also appreciate such help. In 1924, Newfoundland had few radio receiving sets. To successfully exercise his radio ministry, it is understood by the author of this work that Dr. Joyce constructed numerous crystal sets for his sick and shut-in audience. His pastoral concern for Wesley Methodist Church parishioners so dominated his philosophy of ministry that he was willing to incur personal expenses to extend his pastoral work. That pastoral concern was also evidenced among his radio audience throughout the City of St. John's, and eventually to an extended geographical area of Eastern Newfoundland. His altruistic, holistic concept of ministry projected considerably ahead of his time. As one parishioner of Wesley United Church stated: “Dr. Joyce was head and shoulders above his

Programme, (Wesley United Church, St. John's, October 26, 1959) p. 4.

12 Ibid., p. 4.

13 J.G. Joyce, *Environmental & Social Factors in Nfld.* Unpublished Dissertation, April, 1931, VOWR Archives.

contemporaries and was considered a radical . . . a heretic in his time for his work in founding the radio station . . . but his influence and initiative brought him support from other areas and the radio station progressed satisfactorily.”¹⁴ The radio station which Dr. Joyce initiated in 1924 has brought untold humanitarian and spiritual blessings to many hundreds of thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and others, that the call letters VOWR have become synonymous with a lifestyle.

The ethereal experience of Dr. Joyce’s “dream” manifested itself in humble beginnings restricted “to a handful of listeners,”¹⁵ in 1924. The success of that humble endeavour was so enthusiastically received that Dr. Joyce was encouraged to proceed with his radio broadcast plan. “The dreamer, (Dr. Joyce), prayed, believed, worked, and made his dream come true. We had all known that he established a radio station in 1924, and that, on July 20 of that year, the voice of Wesley Radio sped over the air waves, broadcasting to all who had the means of receiving it, and a church service was conducted by the man most fitted to dedicate his dream to the people. We know that Radio Station 8WMC (VOWR) was launched on its career with a limited range and audience. But the wonder of it all was that a beginning had been made.”¹⁶ With his voice elevated and trembling with excitement he filled the airwaves with praise to God, as he dedicated his “dream” to his parishioners and all people within the radius of the broadcast.

From that meagre, humble beginning, with his studio situated in the basement of the church, the voice of Wesley Methodist Church Radio Station was on the air with a power

14 *The Evening Telegram*, St. John’s (date and page unknown). The clipping obtained from VOWR archives.

15 Everett Hudson, an address delivered at the Knights of Columbus Installation Banquet, October 29, 1983, (VOWR Archives) p.1.

16 I.A. Richards, op. cit., p. 5.

output of one hundred watts. From then onward, its progress was assured. A Board of Management was established consisting of F. Kinsman, A. Goobie, J. M. Howell, J. Pike, E.P. Nicholle, H. J. Adey, Dr. Joyce and W. H. Pike, to steer the unchartered future of radio broadcasting from Wesley Church.

Relatively soon following the inauguration of broadcast-



Permission VOWR Archives

The First Radio Board

F. Kinsman, A. Goobie, J.M. Howell, J. Pike, E.P. Nicholle, H.D. Adey, Dr. Joyce,
W.H. Pike

ing from 8WMC (VOWR), it was realized that an increase in power output was necessary. Dr. Joyce and his Board of Management commenced the task of soliciting funds for the cost of purchasing a larger transmitter. "With the support of members of his own church and from friends and supporters of other faiths, he was successful in purchasing and installing a five hundred watt Marconi transmitter"¹⁷ in 1927. This new addition to 8WMC (VOWR) provided an extended listening population which accelerated a more "venturesome spirit . . . and with the assistance of a Program Committee composed of members of various religious faiths from the professional and business life of the community, two mid-week programs were produced and broadcasts from (the) Newfoundland Hotel."¹⁸

The First Radio Program Committee was formed in 1928, consisting of Dr. V.P. Burke, O.B.E., George E. Williams, M.B.E., the Reverend Dr. J.G. Joyce, T.V. Harnett, C.E.A. Jeffrey, the Honourable J. S. Currie, A. Smith, Alex Mews, and T.P. Halley.¹⁹ Its ecumenical composition demonstrated the broadmindedness which characterized Dr. Joyce's intelligence. Accordingly, under the direction of Dr. Joyce and his capable Program Committee carefully chosen programs were broadcast from the Newfoundland Hotel "which included such items as weather reports, news bulletins, high class music, and ten minute talks on a wide range of subjects by the best local speakers of that day . . . Truly it can be said that 8WMC (VOWR) monopolized the radio field for a number of years, and the service performed by the station was deeply appreciated. Thus 8WMC (VOWR) had become a public utility whose call letters were a household work in thousands of homes."²⁰

17 *The Evening Telegram*, (October 17, 1974), p. 15A.

18 *Ibid.*, (October 17, 1974), p. 15A.

19 *The Daily News*, (St. John's, Newfoundland, October 22, 1954), p. 11.



ORIGINAL RADIO COMMITTEE

Front row, left to right: Dr. V.P. Burke, O.B.E., George R. Williams, M.B.E.,
Rev. Dr. J.G. Joyce, A. Smith.

Back row, left to right: C.E.A. Jeffrey, Hon. J.S. Currie, T.V. Harnett, Alex Mews.
(Mr. T.P. Halley absent when photo was taken).

On September 12, 1932, 8WMC call letters were changed to VOWR. Although an International Radio Conference held at Washington, early in 1927, desirous of regulating radio broadcasting world-wide, assigned to Newfoundland the prefix "VO", meaning the "Voice of", it was not until 1932 that the call letters were changed. By that time, VOWR had "settled down to regular broadcasting . . . gaining more and more experience in the financing and operating of such a service."²¹

By 1947, the Marconi transmitter, purchased by Dr. Joyce and his Board in 1927, had become obsolete and replacement was necessary. Accordingly, the Radio Board put on a

20 Ibid., (October 22, 1954), p. 11.

21 I.A. Richards, op. cit., p. 9.



W.G. Atwill standing by

special financial drive to raise funds to purchase a new Gates BC-1E 1000 Watt transmitter and a studio console. The new 1000 watt transmitter was purchased and installed in “a transmitter building on a former Royal Canadian Air Force site on Coaker’s Hill, Torbay Road. (It) was remotely controlled by telephone line from the Patrick Street Studio, with audio being fed on this control line . . . The first broadcast on this transmitter (was) June 6, 1948.”²² The new studio console also went into operation the same year. It must be stated, however, that although a new 1000-watt Gates transmitter had been installed, it still continued to transmit on 500 watts. It wasn’t until 1954, when the transmitter was relocated to a

²² Report on technical service to the Radio Board by Roland Peddle (1974), VOWR Archives. p. 2.

site on Mount Scio Road, at a height of 700 feet above sea level, that the transmitter was used at its 1000-watts capacity. VOWR began broadcasting at full power on July 18, 1954, on a new frequency of 800 kilocycles.

Numerous additions and improvements were initiated since the installation of the new Gates 1000-Watts, 1954, including a new Gates Gateway II transistorized console, June 1970; a "record-audition facility was installed in the record library using one of the old CB-11 turntables fitted with dual monaural and stereo arm,"²³ late in 1971; an RFA-4 off-air monitor was installed in 1972; and in 1979, a new 10,000 watt A.E.L. Transmitter was purchased and installed. Since then, VOWR has undergone minor adjustments and additions, providing an excellent quality of religious and humanitarian service.

"This is Radio Station VOWR, calling from St. John's to the people of Newfoundland."²⁴ This was the introductory sentence to an article written in the *Evening Telegram* entitled, "VOWR Calling". Those call letters were and are familiar to most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Similarly, there have been many other people in distant places who have regularly received VOWR broadcasts, become familiar with the call letters and have appreciated its programming.

VOWR, under the direction of Mr. Everett Hudson, has provided programming of exceptional quality. As a church owned radio station, it is natural to assume that broadcasting consists of religious and humanitarian oriented material. The spirit of such programming may be identified in the voice of VOWR speaking to its listeners in poetic expression:

"In the quiet moments of your life, when Sabbath calm

23 Ibid., p. 3.

24 *The Evening Telegram*, St. John's, "VOWR Calling", date and page unknown; clipping held in VOWR Archives.

replaces the noises and strain of the week's striving, I seek you across lakes and forests, over mountains and seas. I find my way into your homes; into your lighthouses where you live lonely lives that others may pursue their course in safety; into your logging camps; into your ships as you sail along your roughest coast or hunt the seal on the icefloes. I seek you everywhere, regardless of class or creed. I remind you of a love that is deeper than the deepest ocean. I sing you the song of the spirit."²⁵

VOWR's philosophy in programming maintains a high quality of communications in the field of music, panel discussions, interviews, news, weather forecasts, morning devotions, Church services, seniors' programs, general information and relaxation. Its influence and acceptability are far-reaching. The current Station Manager Mr. John Tessier, while maintaining the original philosophy, has, to some extent, enriched the program content.

"VOWR does not have all the facilities of a commercial station, mainly because of financial limitations. They do, however, have excellent broadcast studios . . . The programming format, while not as elaborate or diversified as it might be, again because of financial limitations and resource people, gives the listener a wide variety of radio fare—easy listening music, classical music, church services, hymn-time programs, dramatized programs and church world news . . . One distinct advantage over other local stations is that programs are not interrupted with commercial advertising."²⁶

As intimated earlier, VOWR's programming consisted of carefully planned content. Its facilities were available to the ordinary citizen as well as to the governing aristocracy. In 1924, for example, shortly after the radio station commenced

25 Ibid., (date and page unknown).

26 *The Evening Telegram*, op. cit., (October 17, 1974) p. 16A.

broadcasting, the following program advertisement was carried by the *Evening Telegram*:

“Tuesday’s program will open at 8 p.m. local time by His Excellency the Governor at Government House.

“Wednesday’s program will consist of an organ recital from the Church of England Cathedral, followed by a talk on Nonia from Government House.

“Thursday’s Rotary luncheon will be broadcast and at night a grand concert from the Pitts Memorial Hall at 8:15.

“Friday’s program is not yet arranged for.

“On Saturday it is hoped to broadcast the firing of the noon gun (on Signal Hill) and weather reports at night.”²⁷

Wesley Methodist Church, later the Wesley United Church, broadcast their concerts over 8WMC (VOWR). The author while researching material for this work, discovered a program format of a concert presented over 8WMC (VOWR) on February 12, 1925, which was advertised in the *Evening Telegram*. Its cultural content, which was and still is characteristic of 8WMC (VOWR), is abundantly evident. Since it conveys the sober indepth content of its programming, to which 8WMC (VOWR) was (is) committed, in the author’s view, it should be submitted as a sample of early radio broadcasting.

Chairman - Mr. Jesse Whiteway.

—Violin Solo

(a) Allegro Brinnante - W.T. Have;

(b) Mazurka - Mylarskr. -Miss Theresa Power.

—Solo

(a) O Night of Life - Sanderson;

(b) If No One Ever Marries Me - Lehmann
-Miss Barbara Langmead.

—Monologue

(a) The Parrett Said;

(b) Pass the Salt - Mr. T. P. Halley.

²⁷ Ibid., (November 29, 1924), p.3.

—Piano Solo - Poloncy - Paderewski - Mr. Alex Mews.

—Reading

(a) If For Girls;

(b) A China Tragedy - Miss Margaret Murray.

—Solo

(a) Mifanwy - Dorothy Forster;

(b) A Dream - Bartlett - Miss J. J. Miller.

—Cello

(a) Contilena - Golterman;

(b) Mother Machree - Olcott;

(c) The Slumber Song - Schubert.

— Interval —

During the ten minute interval, Rev. J.G. Joyce will speak to 'listeners-in.'

Part II

—Piano Solo - Novelette - Schuman - Mrs. Alex Mews.

—Duet - Selected -

Misses Ida Howlett and Gladys Redstone.

—Monologue -

(a) Dance the Polka.

(b) Breach of Promise case - Prof. Charles Hutton.

—Solo -

(a) Pleurez, Pleurez, Mesyeux

by Massenet from Lecia;

(b) Bonnie, Bonnie Banks of Lock Lomond -

Miss Eleanor Mews.

—French Horn -

(a) Good Bye - Tosti

(b) Love's Gardener of Roses - Hayden Wood -

Arthur Bulley.

—Reading -

(a) The Green Eye of The Little Yellow God;

(b) Selected. Mr. Thomas O'Neil.

—Solo - Old English Air arranged by Quilter -

Mr. H. B. Wordell.²⁸

To illustrate the depth of content which pervaded worship the following Order of Worship is inscribed:

28 Ibid., (February 12, 1925), p. unstated (VOWR Archives).

Wesley United Church

Minister REV. J. G. JOYCE, B.A., S. T. B.

Programme

—OF—

Christmas Music

—BY—

The Church Choir

—AT—

Wesley Church

Sunday, December 22nd, at 6.30 p.m.

(Broadcast by Station 8WMC)

—AND IN—

Gower Street United Church

—ON—

Sunday, December 29th, at 6.30 p.m.

Under the direction of

George E. Turner

*God sent His singers here on earth
With songs of sadness and of mirth
That they might lift the hearts of men
And bring them back to Heaven again.*

—LONGFELLOW.

—+ +—
(Not to be Taken Away)

ROBINSON & Co., LTD., PRINTERS.

Over the steppe and over the town
Snowflakes are weaving a lily white gown,
Jesu, the spotless, to earth came down
Sleep, my baby, sleep.
He, Who was born that Holy Night,
Keep thee forever in His sight
Pure as the snow, so deep, so white;
Sleep, my darling, sleep.

"THE COMING OF THE KING"

A SACRED CANTATA FOR FEMALE VOICES

Words by

HELEN MARION BURNSIDE

Music by

MYLES B. FOSTER

Argument:—Three Angels, Hope, Peace and Goodwill await with their sister spirits, the rising of the star which betokens the birth of Christ.

Chorus:

He is coming! He is coming!
Rise, O Herald of His birth!
Rise, O Light of lights, illuming
All the darkness of the earth.
He is coming! He is coming!
All the sky with glory glows
And each desert place is blooming
Into beauty, like the rose.

He is coming to deliver
All the nations by His birth;
He is coming; Christ, the Giver
Of Salvation to the earth.
God hath spoken, God hath spoken,
Wake, ye people, wake and sing,
While ye wait the promised token
Of the coming of the King.

Solo: (Hope)

Come, Thou Saviour, promised long
Lo, ev'ry heart and voice
Awaits, awaits with holy song
To welcome and rejoice.
Thou bringest peace to all mankind
Sweet comfort to the poor;
Thou com'st the broken heart to bind
With balm for evermore.

With Thee will rise the gladsome dawn
Disputing night's long sway,
For comfort comes for all who mourn
With breaking of Thy day.
Then quickly come, O King of Kings!
Lo, night's dark mists are furled;
Come Thou with healing in Thy wings
To bless the waking world!

Duet: (Peace and Goodwill)

Star of Bethlehem, our eyes are yearning
For the ray which faithful heart requites
Eastward still each wistful face is turning
Lighten our darkness, O Thou Light of Lights.

Goodwill:

O'er the world a sense of peace is stealing
Loving kindness from each heart o'erflows
While, in spirit, by the manger kneeling,
We await the bliss Thy beam bestows.

Peace:

Star of Bethlehem arise in splendour
Love and Hope are born anew to-day,
When o'er the grey horizon, bright and tender,
Shoots the glory of Thy quenchless ray.

Both Angels:

Oh, remove the clouds of sin and sadness
Pierce the gloom that presses and affrights
Weary spirits wake anew to gladness:
Lighten our darkness, O Thou Light of Lights.

Recit.: (Hope)

Lo! it rises! Sing, my sisters, sing
Exultant, greet the coming of the King.

Chorus:

O'er hillside and hollow
It shineth afar;
Rise, sisters, and follow
Fair Bethlehem's star:
Fear not though it guideth
To ways sad and dim
Whatever betideth
It leadeth to Him.

Goodwill:

To Him Who so loveth
The children of earth;
To Him, Who thus proveth
His love by His birth;
Through Whom to each nation
From sea unto sea
The gift of salvation
Flows boundless and free.

Chorus:

To God be the glory-!

Hope Hark, hark, the sweet bells
Are pealing the story
O'er mountains and dells.
Away with all sadness;
From toil let us cease;
With hearts full of gladness
Goodwill and peace.

Chorus:

O'er hillside and hollow
It shineth afar

Rise, sisters, and follow
Fair Bethlehem's star;
In love and in duty
His praises to sing
And see, in its beauty,
The face of the King.

Hymn 125....."While Shepherds Watched"
(Choir and Congregation)

Anthem:

"Hallelujah! For Unto Us a Child is Born".....W. H. Monk

Hallelujah. For unto us a child is born: For unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

Mixed Octette:

(a) "How Far Is It To Bethlehem".....Geoffrey Shaw

How far is it to Bethlehem?
Not very far?
Shall we find the stable room,
Lit by a star?
Can we see the little Child,
Is He within?
If we lift the wooden latch,
May we go in?

May we stroke the creatures there,
Ox, ass and sheep?
May we peep like them and see
Jesus asleep?
If we touch His tiny hand,
Will He awake?
Will He know we'd come so far,
Just for His sake?

Great kings leave precious gifts
And we have naught;
Little smiles and little tears
Are all we brought.
For all weary children
Mary must weep;
Here on His bed of straw,
Sleep, children, sleep.

God in His Mother's arms,
Babes in the Byre.
Sleep as they sleep who find
Their heart's desire.

(b) "The Blessed Birth".....Walford Davies

That so Thy blessed birth O Christ
Might through the world be spread about,
The star appeared in the East
Whereby the Gentiles found Thee out,
And offered Thee myrrh, incense, gold;
Thy threefold office to unfold.

Tears that from true repentance drop
Instead of myrrh present will we
For incense we will offer up

Our prayers and praises unto Thee
And bring for gold each pious deed
Which doth from saving faith proceed.

And as those wise men never went
To visit Herod any more,
So finding Thee we will repent
Our courses followed hertofore.
And that we homeward may retire
The way by Thee we will enquire.
(Poem 1588)

Negro Spiritual—"Go Tell it on the Mountains".....Tenor Solo
(The Christmas Song of the Plantation)

When I was a learner,
I sought both night and day
I ask the Lord to help me an'
He show me the way.
Go tell it on the mountains
Over the hills and everywhere,
Go tell it on the mountains
Our Jesus Christ is born.

The Lord made me a watchman
Upon the city wall,
An' if I am a christian
I am the least of all.
Go tell it on the mountains
Over the hills and everywhere;

Go tell it on the mountains
Jesus Christ is born.
Ah! Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it, Go, tell it,
Jesus Christ is born.

Offertory—"A Festive Chime".....Lemare
(A Fantasia on old Christmas Carols)

Anthem—"Now Once Again".....Percy E. Fletcher
(Founded on the Melody "Lasst uns Erfreuen" 1623)

Now once again our hearts we raise
In hymns of thankfulness and praise
Alleluia Alleluia.
Give praise to God this joyful morn
On which the King of kings was born
Alleluia Alleluia.

For unto us was born this day
He Who shall wipe all tears away,
Alleluia Alleluia.
Give thanks to God this joyful morn
On which the King of kings was born.
Alleluia Alleluia.

To you this day is born a Child,
Of Mary, chosen Virgin mild.
Alleluia Alleluia
That Blessed Child so sweet and kind
Shall give you joy and peace of mind.
Alleluia Alleluia.

The soloists are as follows:

Trio—"The Coming of the King".....F.....

Three Angels—

Hope—(1st Soprano).....Mrs. W. R. Goobie

Peace (2nd Soprano).....Miss F. L. Moore

Goodwill (Contralto).....Mrs. J. G. Joyce

Baritone.....Mr. J. C. Rooney

Tenor.....Mr. G. E. Turner

Contralto.....Miss Lillian King

Mezzo-Soprano.....Miss Louise Beck

THE OCTETTE:

Mrs. W. R. Goobie

Miss F. L. Moore

Mrs. J. G. Joyce

Miss G. Butterworth

Mr. J. F. Moores

Mr. G. E. Turner

Mr. J. C. Rooney

Mr. A. K. Snow

All items, with the exception of trio and contralto solo, will be accompanied by Mr. J. C. Pratt.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude—"Angels Serenade".....Von Gluck

Doxology—Praise God from Whom.

Invocation

Hymn 119—"Silent Night! Holy Night!"

Prayer—The Pastor

Anthems:

(a) "There Were Shepherds".....Myles B. Foster

Chorus:

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid. And the Angel said unto them.

Baritone:

Fear not for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

(Choir of the Heavenly Host)

Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men .

Mezzo-Soprano:

Shepherds in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night;
God with man is now residing,
Yonder shines the heavenly light.
Come and worship Christ the new born King.

Chorus:

Saints and Angels join in praising
Thee, the Father Spirit Son
Ever more their voices praising
To the Eternal Three in One.
Come and worship Christ the new born King.

(b) "While Shepherds Watched".....C. V. Stanford

Chorus:

While Shepherds watched their flocks by night
All seated on the ground,
The Angel of the Lord came down
And glory shone around.

Solo:

Fear not, said he, for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind,
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.
To you, in David's town, this day
Is born of David's line
A Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord
And this shall be the sign.
The Heavenly Babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands
And in a manger laid.

Chorus:

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of Angels, praising God Who thus
Addressed their joyful songs:
All glory be to God on high
And to the earth be peace
Goodwill henceforth from Heaven to man.
Begin and never cease.

Contralto Solo—"A Russian Cradle Song".....Alexine Prokoff

(English translation by Ferdinand Krenker)

Hush thee, my darling, gently sleep
Mother her loving watch will keep
Shadows of evening softly creep,
Sleep, my darling, sleep.
Slow and silent, the weary day
Folds its garments and steals away,
Dreamland voices are calling
Sleep, my darling, sleep.

Bells are chiming across the snow
Praising His name, Who, long ago
Came to His children here below—
Sleep, my darling, sleep.
Once, in Bethlehem, far away
Helpless a Babe in a manger lay,—
Jesu, our Lord most Holy:—
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

'Tis Christ our Lord and God indeed.
Your help and stay in every need;
Himself your Saviour He will be
From sin and death to set you free.
Around His throne thus may we sing
When all creation owns Him King,
Praise to God this joyful morn.
Alleluia Alleluia.

So once again our hearts we raise
In hymns of thankfulness and praise.
Alleluia Alleluia.
Give praise to God this joyful morn
On which the King of kings was born.
Alleluia Alleluia.

Hymn 120....."O Come All Ye Faithful"
(Adeste Fideles)

Benediction—

Vesper—"Hail Gladdening Light".....Stainer

Hail Gladdening Light of His Pure Glory poured
Who is the Immortal Father Heavenly Blest
Holiest of Holies, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now we are come to the Sun's hour of rest
The lights of evening round us shine
We Hymn the Father, Son and
Holy Spirit Divine.

Worthiest art Thou at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue.
Son of our God. Giver of life alone.
Therefore, in all the world.
Thy glories, Lord, they own. Amen.

Postlude—Chorale, "Christians Grave Ye".....J. S. Bach

Programming format in recent years has changed, but the cultural, religious, and humanitarian content remain.

The expressions of appreciation of the magnificent services VOWR has performed during its years of broadcasting are so eloquent and numerous that a brief summary of such may be sufficient for inclusion in this project. Accordingly, several excerpts will be presented to illustrate its impact and acceptance, on and by its listeners.

“Friendly Station Brings Cheer to Thousands of People in Isolated Places”³⁰ was the title of an article carried in one of St. John’s leading newspapers. The introductory paragraph of that article stated: “To thousands of homes, to ship, to logging camps, to isolated lighthouses, Wesley Church radio station VOWR has, since its beginning in 1924, brought countless hours of blessing, enjoyment and cheer.”³¹

Some of the correspondence received by the Radio Board of Wesley United Church, and quoted in the articles such as those referred to above, deserves reiteration. The following quotations will substantiate the high esteems with which VOWR is held by its listeners:

“Because of ill-health I have been unable to attend Divine Worship for 13 years. Your broadcasts have filled a great need in my life, for which I offer my sincere thanks.

“I have a very good friend at the General Hospital, would you include her favourite hymn in your next song service?

“I am 78 years of age and unable to get out to church. I thank God daily for the great privilege offered me in my old age, that of being able to listen to your church services over VOWR.

“The Sunday Services over VOWR, from Wesley, the Kirk, and St. Thomas’ are a great source of blessing to me.”³²

30 *The Daily News*, (St. John’s, Newfoundland, October 28, 1947) p. un stated.

31 *Ibid.*, (October 28, 1947) p. un stated.

32 *Ibid.*, (October 28, 1947) p. un stated.

In the early days of VOWR, a listener from Portugal Cove, approximately fifteen miles north of St. John's, whose minister visited that settlement once monthly, contributed an article to the *Daily News*, entitled "Extending the Usefulness", from which the following excerpt is taken:

Wesley Church Service, bright, attractive and inspiring as ever, was broadcast last night from its own station, 8WMC (VOWR). From the singing of 'Old Hundred' to the pronouncement of the benediction, the proceedings at the stately Patrick Street Church kept close grip on all its auditors, and especially on those who heard the sermon via radio. The pastor, Rev. J.G. Joyce, officiated. He possesses a magnificent broadcasting voice, an eloquence of speech, and an impressiveness of delivery that makes the most of hymns, prayers and sermon. He was heard to particularly good effect last night. Wesley Church pastor is a Newfoundlander of whom his countrymen are justly proud and to whom his congregation is sincerely attached both because of his outstanding ability and of his devotion to the duties of his high calling . . . The Portugal Cove Congregation . . . Was especially complementary to the very efficient Wesley Church Choir.

It is expected that a radio receiver will now be installed at the Portugal Cove Church for use when Rev. Mr. Cochram, of Bell Island, is ministering in other parts of the mission."³³

On July 2, 1995, a letter was received at VOWR stating: "I listened to The Protestant Hour on your radio station today. I hardly ever listen to the radio on Sundays, but I'm glad I did now. I thoroughly enjoyed the program. It explained the Gospel to me regarding St. Luke's about who is the greater, etc.

"Thank you for your wonderful station, I remain a staunch listener."³⁴

33 Ibid., (March 30, 1925), p. unstated.

The acceptability of radio broadcasting in Newfoundland and Labrador, from a religious and humanitarian perspective, has been exceedingly pronounced by the many appreciative benefactors who have profited from its outstanding services.

“The spirit of Christian service finds expression in a thousand forms.”³⁵ One of those forms found its expression in the functionality of VOWR’s outreach ministry. The philosophy of VOWR from its inception has been outreach and Dr. Joyce’s great Christian and humanitarian spirit infiltrated through the mosaic of radio programming and outreach. That spirit exemplified itself in the question “Who is my Neighbour?”³⁶ to which the answer is “anyone whom I can help! . . . The kind of help depends upon time and circumstances . . . (The) Rev. J.G. Joyce . . . discovered a way by which he could bring an added happiness to the lives of many . . . a radio set as part of the equipment . . . he hope(d) to reach . . . the isolated dwellers on the coast of the island (and Labrador) and fisherman in their lonely occupation.

“The Station not only broadcasts services of different denominations, but also addresses of general interest, musical entertainments, and news of the world. The result is that the lighthouse keeper, cut off by the stormy sea, the fisherman on the remote ice-fields, and the inhabitants of the little hamlets on its coast of Newfoundland and Labrador are kept in touch with what is best in the activities of the world.”³⁷

The question, “Who is my Neighbour?” in the context in which Dr. Joyce’s outreach ministry was intended, found its application in the many religious and humanitarian expressions where radio communications were most evident: the

34 VOWR Archives used by permission.

35 *The United Church and Missionary Review* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House), June, 1928, p. 13.

36 Luke 10:29, *B.S.U.*

37 *The United Church Record and Missionary Review*, op. cit., p. 13.

people in the isolated settlements, disasters at sea, hungry people needing food, emergency calls to doctors, hospital boats, and air ambulance service.

Currently the facilities of VOWR are not required to accommodate such humanitarian services as those stated above. Nevertheless, its philosophy of service, outreach, cultural and religious manifestos have remained constant. Its founder was most emphatic in his concept of radio that secure plans were undertaken to maintain the service and humanitarian motif. His Radio Board was /is most conscious of that fact.

The Radio Board of Management, under the leadership of Dr. Joyce, conceived of the outreach ministry of VOWR as being sufficiently important as to appoint an Outreach Committee to assist with the ongoing work of the station in coping with the many requests for services.

Having conducted extensive research in the history of radio in Newfoundland and Labrador, the author is convinced that its embryonic stage manifested itself on Signal Hill, St. John's, Newfoundland. The concept was born out of the intellectual ether of the human mind which manifested itself in Marconi's experimentation with radio waves in England during the late 1800s. The conception having occurred there, he set sail for Signal Hill, the nearest point in North America to Europe, where impregnation became evident. From that small beginning the radio audience began, firstly, on Signal Hill in the presence of Marconi's two assistants, secondly at the Crosbie Hotel when the announcement was made and thirdly, when speech contact was made with the SS *Victorian*, in the Atlantic Ocean.

VOWR's audience was minute, "a handful of listeners,"³⁸ in 1924, and from that beginning its audience increased to

38 I.A. Richards, Op. cit., p. 4.

encompass most of Newfoundland and Labrador, and other parts of the world. The people located in the isolated settlements of Newfoundland and Labrador depended on VOWR for worship services, news, messages, weather forecasts, and other necessities. The ships at sea relied on its facilities to convey mayday messages, accident reports and to receive the Sunday worship service. The lighthouse keepers' loneliness was lessened by the voice of Wesley Radio. One could continue to list many other essential services performed for the audience of VOWR. Its audience became dependent on its altruistic spirit as though the minister of Wesley Church was their minister.

Mr. Richards states: "The station . . . reaches an audience scattered over a wide area from the coastline to the interior and away up into the Arctic. Many bedridden persons listen in each Sunday . . . The broadcasts have even been picked up in England, and are heard regularly in many parts of Canada and the United States."³⁹

The founder, Dr. Joyce, said: "In the most eastern part of the continent, there the church's radio station sounds forth the non-denominational character of its message and service to people of all races, classes and creeds, on land and to the people that travel the pathway to the sea, enroute from the New World to the Old. There is a church which ministers to a far-flung audience, a church whose spirit leaps beyond its denomination edifice in St. John's."⁴⁰

The VOWR audience is comprised of people of all walks of life, all ages, difference socio-economic backgrounds, different cultures, all have found acceptance, belonging and spiritual fulfilment in having been part of the radio congregation.

Recently a friend visiting this Province from Ontario

39 Ibid., p. 8.

40 Ibid., p. 9.

stated: "I've been listening to a radio station, VOWR, since I've been here visiting. I like its music and its general relaxing approach. Tell me about the station." After a brief history of the VOWR was conveyed he said, "I thought so, that is terrific."

The history of VOWR has been centred on service to humanity from a Christian perspective. When Dr. Joyce, therefore, conceived the idea of radio as a medium of communicating Christian principles, the pragmatical implications were far-reaching. This concept was implied in the motto "We Serve," which was established by the founder from the inception of 8WMC (VOWR). The impact of that motto connotes involvement, which has probably been one of the ingredients that contributed to VOWR's success.

Dr. Joyce's astute leadership, his ability to delegate authority, and his anticipation of a job well done, commanded a response from his volunteer staff which left its mark on the future operations of the station. The fact that he could visualize better things for the greatest number of people, just a few years following the transmitting of the human voice, 1920, was indicative of his prophetic leadership. With that exceptional foresight, he sought to involve helpers and instilled in them the "courage, faith, and vision to attempt the building and operating of a radio broadcasting station at a time when radio communication was in its infancy."⁴¹

One of his first tasks was to organize and train volunteer operators. The subject of volunteers will be referred to later. At a time when both the leader and the operators were learners, it required unique vision to direct such a medium as radio in its unknown mission. But with vision, faith and

41 *The Evening Telegram*, October 17, 1974, p. 15A.

persistence, the unknown gradually unfolded revealing its great potential.

The second task was to assign personnel to various operational responsibilities, among whom were: W. Whitmarsh, W. G. Atwill, the latter became the Chief Operator, Walter I. Vey, J. J. Collins and R. Letts. The latter three persons helped with the construction of 8WMC (VOWR) and volunteered their services for several years thereafter.



Permission VOWR archives

EARLY VOLUNTEERS

The Rev. Mr. Joyce and his two volunteer operators,
W. Whitmarsh and W.G. Atwill

The third task involved the formation of a Radio Committee, which again demonstrated foresight and astuteness, in that the Committee was composed of leading St. John's personages of different religious persuasions.

As the station developed, additional personnel were needed to perform the many essential tasks. Those persons were announcers, operators, programmers, technical and maintenance volunteers. The status of those persons who performed the voluntary tasks were: business managers, clergymen, electronic technicians, engineers, lawyers and teachers and other professionals, "these were the type of personnel whom we feel (felt) are (were) best qualified to administer the affairs of VOWR."⁴² Many of the volunteer personnel remained with the station for long periods of time. Mr. Everett Hudson, for example, a past Station Manager, had devoted a total of forty-six years of service to VOWR.

As intimated earlier, VOWR's operations began in a little room in the basement of the church, with crude radio technology, two huge antenna located adjacent to the church, donated by Roman Catholic and Anglican persons. From that humble beginning, 8WMC (VOWR) has progressed favourably over its seventy-five year history. Improvements and additions to its facilities have occurred throughout its history resulting in modern technological equipment with bright, comfortable studios.

To facilitate the philosophy envisaged by Dr. Joyce for 8WMC (VOWR), progressive power output was inevitable. Reference has already been made to that power output progression. Presently, VOWR operates on a 10,000 watt A.E.L. transmitter projecting its signal to an exceptionally large audience. With an increase in power output, VOWR is

42 Everett Hudson's address to United Church Conference Communications Committee, March 15, 1974, p. 4, (VOWR Archives).

better equipped to execute its original mandate of transmitting religious and humanitarian programming.

The spirit that elevated VOWR's fame was inherent in the term voluntarism. The dedication and commitment of Christian voluntarism has been the key to the station's success. The original transmitter was installed voluntarily, "aerial poles were supplied free and erected without charge by a prominent shipwright. The annex of the church which houses the radio equipment was erected by voluntary labour, experienced carpenters and masons.

"Contributions came in from all sects and creeds, just as the labour which made the venture possible was supplied by all creeds, Roman Catholic and Protestant, working side by side."⁴³

The spirit of voluntarism permeated the total operation of VOWR from its beginning, in 1924, as 8WMC, to the present. One observes, as one visits the station, that all assignments appear to be enthusiastically executed and professionally assimilated. A clipping obtained from VOWR Archives states: "Everything connected with his (Dr. Joyce) station is supplied free, including the service of the operator and the artists who provide the entertainment."⁴⁴

Presently, VOWR has over eighty volunteers who willingly contribute many hours weekly to the operations of the station. As stated earlier, they comprise various professions and religious affiliations. The ecumenical spirit which permeated the station's philosophy from the beginning still prevails. Mr. Hudson, the former Station Manager, stated that those volunteering their services to VOWR are required to do a short apprenticeship at the station before becoming fully engaged in the operations. Those volunteering as an-

43 *The Toronto Star Weekly*, May 4, 1929. p. un stated.

44 Clipping heading: "Reaches Widespread Parish by Means of Radio; Pastor Pays Visit to Montreal." VOWR Archives, number 19, dated 1928.

nouncers or “on air” assignments, must undergo a voice testing procedure, to determine their suitability for that particular aspect of broadcasting. Many persons who are now engaged in successful communications careers with other radio stations began their apprenticeship at VOWR. Some of whom, although employed by different radio stations, continue to volunteer their services to VOWR.

“One man with a Dream”⁴⁵ whose motto was “We Serve,” launched out into the unchartered radio communications world with expectancy and faith never to “put his hand to the plough and turn back,”⁴⁶ but to press onward with his service motif. Amidst complication, discouragements, lack of finances and expert advice, Dr. Joyce thrust his way with the expertise, crude “make-shift” radio technology, and the volunteer service at his disposal, to inaugurate a religious and humanitarian service which has contributed exceedingly in alleviating isolation, distress and ignorance in Newfoundland and Labrador. The crystal receiving sets which Dr. Joyce made, at his own personal expense, and distributed to his aged and shut-in parishioners, accelerated the goal he envisaged radio communications to achieve in the future.

In 1925, to be told that his Sunday worship service broadcast had been heard so distantly as Massachusetts, United States, created jubilation and thanksgiving for the “splendid scientific accomplishment. But there was greater cause for thankfulness than that. The modestly made announcement of the pastor . . . (of) the great Christian service that 8WMC is performing on behalf of Newfoundlanders (Labradorians) not so favourably situated or so consistently served spiritually as the more fortunate folk of St. John’s City (was cause for jubilation).

“Far into the interior of Newfoundland, lumbermen ob-

45 I.A. Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

46 Luke 9:62, *R.S.V.*

serving the sacred day of rest are receiving the services of Wesley Church constantly and distinctly and are joining in the worship of the Deity as readily as if they were within the walls of some sacred building. On occasions, thirty woodmen formed the audience grouped round the radio receiver in one of the camps beyond Millertown (central Newfoundland). . . . From Marystown, Placentia Bay, too, comes reports of eminently successful reception of Sunday evening proceedings at Wesley Methodist Church. Surely, Rev. J.G. Joyce and his church have enlisted (sic) the science of radio in the noblest of all services.”⁴⁷

The success stories of VOWR are numerous and emotional. Were Dr. Joyce living today, he would probably concede that the little radio station he was instrumental in constructing had progressed over the years since its inception beyond his extreme imagination. Yes, VOWR has fulfilled its goal expectations and continues to initiate new ones.

The “Radio Mecca of Far-Flung Coasts”⁴⁸ to which *The Toronto Star Weekly* referred, in 1925, presented a moral and religious challenge to the Reverend J.G. Joyce. Having been born and raised in the township from which the author of this work has come, Dr. Joyce was acutely aware of the isolation, hardships and deprivation that hazardously interfered with a progressive lifestyle. Only the fittest survived the milieu. The obscenity of that lifestyle no doubt plagued his conscious with such magnitude that it cast a reflection on his religious and humanitarian sensitivity. That magnanimous sensitivity enveloped his moral and religious commitment.

Assuredly, any organization, radio station, or institution, with which he became identified would reflect a moral and religious influence. Such an influence permeated and still permeates the atmosphere of VOWR. Wesley Radio Station,

47 *The Daily News*, March 30, 1925, p. un stated (VOWR Archives).

48 *The Toronto Star Weekly*, op. cit., (May 4, 1929), p. un stated.

VOWR, therefore, established on that firm foundation, ever remains a memorial to the moral and religious integrity of the person whose ethical and religious characteristics dominate its philosophy. Probably, one could use the last stanza of Johann Andreas Rothe's hymn to emphasize the moral and religious basis on which VOWR was founded by Dr. Joyce.

Fixed on this ground will I remain,
Though my heart fail, and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away;
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.⁴⁹

The moral and religious influences of VOWR were felt on "Sunday mornings (as) isolated members of Canada's⁵⁰ far-flung frontiers, on sea and on land, from the lighthouse, two hundred miles away, to the fishermen on the Grand Banks, reach for their prayer books and take part in the service."⁵¹

Or, "In a small Newfoundland (Labrador) outport, a little girl goes to Sunday School, by radio. A fishing boat, rocking off the Gaspé Coast, picks up schooner reports and news of Newfoundland (Labrador) sent by a radio announcer in a church basement in St. John's. And, sitting in a wheelchair in the capital City, an invalid has a warm little glow of pride because her small contribution has helped finance a service unique in Newfoundland (Labrador) and one that has gone a long way toward cutting down the loneliness of the outport Newfoundlander"⁵² (and Labradorian).

Much of what has already been written testifies to the

49 *The Hymnary of the United Church of Canada*, (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1930), p. 272.

50 Should read Newfoundlands and Labrador's far-flung frontiers, because in 1929 this province was a colony of Britain.

51 *The Toronto Star Weekly*, op. cit., May 4, 1929, p. unstated.

52 Clipping VOWR Archives, unidentified.

need fulfilment of VOWR. Dr. Joyce was deeply cognizant of the need that existed for radio communication. He knew that radio could reach those unable to attend a place of worship; he knew there were many isolated, lonely and despairing people who could receive solace through radio communications; he knew the aged could listen to the Worship services at home; therefore, Dr. Joyce became “keenly interested in radio and he followed the trends radio was taking with an eye to adapting this modern system of communication to the needs of the people all over Newfoundland (and Labrador) who (sic) he thought would need and appreciate the solace and hope that the church had to offer to those unable to attend services. These included the aged, the isolated, the sick and the lonely.”⁵³

On March 15, 1931, a terrible tragedy at the ice-fields⁵⁴ occurred. South of the Horse Islands on Newfoundland’s northeast coast, the SS *Viking*’s “stock of dynamite blew up, killing 20 men and injuring many more. Shattered by the blast, the burning hull soon plunged to the bottom of the ocean.

“Immediately, the facilities of 8WMC (VOWR) were devoted to the broadcasting of information all the night to promote the rescue of the survivors. Hour after hour throughout the week the station stayed on the air, a list of survivors was received by Wesley officials from all parts of the island. The newspapers later wrote on March 21, 1931: ‘The service of the station to the whole country, is beyond dispute!’ ”⁵⁵

The founder of VOWR states in his Doctoral Dissertation, “Our denominationalism has split our citizenship . . . This

53 *The Evening Telegram*, op. cit. (October 17, 1974) p. 3A.

54 The ice-fields represent the Arctic ice which move south towards Newfoundland each Spring, on which seals congregated. The seal fishery was at that time a very lucrative and necessary source of livelihood.

55 *The Evening Telegram*, op. cit. (October 17, 1974) p. 5A.

has to be changed if the future citizenship is to be free and progressive . . . Religious Education must create an active citizenship.”⁵⁶

Intellectually and pragmatically, Dr. Joyce’s ecumenical perspective was progressive. It would appear that his vision for 8WMC, later VOWR, projected a holistic concept for religious and humanitarian radio communications in Newfoundland and Labrador. His inimitable approach to ecumenicity is expressed in his own handwriting sixty-five years ago, when the cooperation of religious denominations was rare. He said: “Newfoundland has one broadcast station. It is owned and controlled by Wesley United Church. Its service, however, is not confined to that denomination for every second Sunday morning of every month it broadcasts regularly a service from an Anglican Church. And in addition to the whole-hearted cooperation with the desire of all the churches, the station in the Fall and Winter months broadcasts bi-weekly programs, consisting of music, educational talks, local and world news and weather reports. to the remote and isolated small communities shut-off from regular mail service . . .

“The poles necessary to hold an aerial and counterpoise were supplied by an Anglican and Catholic and placed in position by a Methodist and his crew of men.”⁵⁷ Nevertheless he was impatient with denominational promotionalism, and indeed with clergy of all denominations. He states: “They (clergy) are trained for the maintenance of sectarian ambitions.

“A more extensive use of Radio broadcasting can contribute to a better type of citizenship. The only broadcasting in the Country (1924-30) has been under the auspices of a

56 J.G. Joyce, op.cit. unpublished Dissertation, p. 173, VOWR Archives used by permission of the Joyce family.

57 The above-quoted document is held in VOWR Archives.

United Church in St. John's, and a great service has been rendered . . . The non-commercial policy governing its service, together with undenominational use, has made possible sufficient voluntary contribution for its maintenance. An influential Anglican Church broadcasts its services . . . through this station free of cost Roman Catholic Convents and Orphanages, as well as a Cathedral Choir, have broadcast through it. These efforts so insignificant on paper, have displaced bigotry and intolerance by means of sympathy and understanding.

"In the broadcasting of the Sunday Services, the unsectarian character of the preaching in the two Protestant Churches has created a richer relationship between the Anglicans and members of the United Church, as also with the Roman Catholics. A clear understanding of the activities and purposes of other denominations make for a united citizenship."⁵⁸ With the spirit of ecumenicity germinating one can easily account for the enthusiastic spirit with which the aerial poles at Wesley Church were erected.

Another testimony to the ecumenicity of VOWR is quoted by I.A. Richards: "Its (VOWR) microphone placed at the disposal of other Churches is its symbol of spiritual unity . . . Broadcasts to the delight of the unseen audience have consisted of no less than recitals from the magnificent organ of the Anglican Cathedral, and outstanding programs of the noted band of the Roman Catholic Boy's Orphanage. Such readiness on the part of the station's Radio Board to help in the cultural as well as the religious life of the country has created the best of goodwill and has made the call letters of the station a household name."⁵⁹

That spirit of ecumenicity which was initiated in 1924, remains active and progressive presently.

58 J.G. Joyce, op. cit. p. 175 used by permission of the Joyce family.

59 I.A. Richards, op. cit., p. 9.

The altruistic qualities and missionary spirit have been alluded to earlier in this work. But there were two outstanding altruistic qualities, among many, deserving mention. They are:

(a) Fears were expressed for the safety of schooners which left here (St. John's) on Friday for their homes in Bonavista Bay (and) there was no communication available as the telegraph offices were closed. Dr. Clark announced, by request, during the course of the broadcast service from Gower Street, (Church) that it desired the operators of Greenspond and Wesleyville should open their offices and communicate with St. John's. The request successfully reached its designation over the ether, and both places were communicated with and facts concerning the schooner established. Later in the day 8WMC (VOWR) was again able to play its helpful part, this time to announce during the evening service at Wesley, the rescue of Captain Green and his crew of four men by the steamer *Holfplein*.⁶⁰

(b) In 1930, a tidal wave struck the Burin Peninsula with a deplorable loss of life and extensive damage to property. 8WMC (VOWR) was again in the thick of the humanitarian broadcasting by soliciting help: food, clothing and shelter for the homeless bewildered victims. Lady Middleton "made her wonderful appeal which went out to the public on the air, with results beyond all expectation."⁶¹ She personally expressed her sincere thanks and appreciation to 8WMC (VOWR) and the station management for their assistance on that tragic occasion.

The missionary spirit is a process which pervades consistently the religious outreach. It is the Gospel message in action. Dr. Joyce's methodology to spread that message was radio. It must be borne in mind, however, that proselytization was not his objective. Instead one must identify his

60 *The Daily News*, op. cit., (December 2, 1929) p. un stated (VOWR Archives).

61 *The Evening Telegram*, op. cit., (February 3, 1930, p. 8.

sincere Christian motive and message as totally altruistic service. His listeners, of all religious persuasions, deducted quickly the basic thrust of his broadcasts. Accordingly, "that in any community the owner of a radio threw open his doors to his less fortunate neighbours and this getting together was emphasized on the Sabbath when the regular service was broadcast. And many kind hearted people, blessed with a good income, donated receiving sets to the sick and infirmed in their homes or in hospitals and thereby earned the sincere gratitude of the recipients for their Christian generosity."⁶² This was the essence of Dr. Joyce's missionary spirit envisaged for VOWR and it still persists today.

VOWR is the evangel in action. It has demonstrated in word and deed the living, caring spirit of Christ. Dr. Joyce, a Christian minister, through whom the Evangel manifested himself, although now physically absent, yet he is spiritually alive. The work that he was lead by the Spirit to initiate, still continues, as a vital, vigorous Christian witness within the realm of VOWR's listening audience. So profoundly and dynamically was his commitment to the Evangel, as conveyed by radio, personal contacts and Wesley United Church pulpit, that people of all faiths were moved by his sincerity and respected his conviction. One such person was Judge F. J. Morris. He wrote to the Reverend Theodore Green, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, the following letter:

Dear Dr. Green:

Presuming on our pleasant association during the celebrations at St. Anthony, and later as shipmates on board the 'Silver City', I am introducing you to Rev. Joseph Joyce, pastor of Wesley Church, St. John's, who is a great admirer of the Grenfell Mission work. Rev. Joyce, although being

62 *The Daily News*, op. cit., (October 22, 1954), p. 11.

the City's youngest minister, carries a wise head on young shoulders, and although being a good Roman Catholic myself, I do no violence to my conscience in recommending him to you, not only as an excellent churchman, but a good fellow.

With kindest regards and best wishes.

Judge F.J. Morris"⁶³

Evangelism, therefore, was so indelibly imprinted in the philosophy of VOWR and in the lives of people with whom Dr. Joyce came in contact, that its intrinsic significance continues in perpetuity. The hymnologist's concept of evangelism probably portrayed its deeply entrenched impact in the following words:

Father, Thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far;
Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
Thy arms of love still open are, . . .
On this my steadfast soul relies, —
Father, Thy mercy never dies."⁶⁴

Although, VOWR possesses a commercial radio license similar to that of other radio stations, it does not solicit or promote advertising.⁶⁵ VOAR, the voice of Adventist radio, nevertheless claims to be the first commercial station in Newfoundland, which came on the air officially in 1930, 8WMC (VOWR), Wesley Methodist Church, made its debut July, 1924, obviously the first to possess a commercial license. That is, however, another subject of research in which future researchers might like to delve.

Mr. Everett Hudson, former Station Manager, VOWR,

63 VOWR Archives, St. John's, Newfoundland.

64 *The Hymnary* op. cit., p. 272.

65 Everett Hudson, op. cit., p. 1.

already mentioned, stated in an address to the United Conference Communications Committee, that “unlike our sister Church station, VOAR, which we understand is financed by its mother Church in Washington, D.C., VOWR raises its funds to operate and maintain its services as well as make allowance for depreciation of its equipment and the purchase of new equipment, through the holding of an annual radio auction and sale of turkey teas. Also, most of the churches from which we broadcast make an annual contribution to VOWR, but this rarely exceeds \$500.00. It must be remembered that VOWR makes no charge for the use of its facilities, but on the other hand, it welcomes any financial assistance it is offered.”⁶⁶

The radio auction apparently originated as a result of Dr. Joyce’s suggestion for program planning. Early in the station’s broadcasting, concerts were aired with an intermission approximately half way through the performances. During these intermissions, Dr. Joyce made announcements mentioning the sale of items at the Lecture Hall. From that minute beginning developed the radio auction at Wesley Church which still continues.

The listening audience, appreciative of VOWR’s outstanding broadcasting, forwards contributions to the station. There is one elderly lady, residing at St. Luke’s Home, where the author of this work was chaplain, consistently contributes financial support to VOWR.

Since VOWR is operated by volunteer help, its annual budget, debarring unforeseen expenses, is approximately \$30,000.00; three quarters of which is derived from its annual radio auction. People look forward annually to the VOWR auction, not so much for the purchasing of commodities at cheaper prices, but to support the station’s work. That

66 Ibid., p. 4.

support comes “in from all sects and creeds, just as the labour which made the venture possible was supplied by all creeds working side by side. Station 8WMC, (now, VOWR), had become a power in the land, a power for good, . . . a household word.”⁶⁷

The “dreamer” whose memorial, VOWR, remains a living testimony, expired March, 1959. Mr. Richards succinctly immortalized Dr. Joyce’s influence in the following words of a poem:

You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will cling to it still.

67 I.A. Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 5.



Permission VOWR archives

Artifacts Case



Permission VOWR archives

At Entrance of New Office Area

Left to right Board Member Everett Hudson; Minister of Wesley, Rev. Arthur Elliott; Station Manager, John Tessier; Board Member, Cecil Strickland; Board Member, Max Penny; Board Member, Marvin Barnes.



Mayor Wells Cuts the Ribbon to Officially Open the Expansion to VOWR

Left to Right: Rev. Art Elliott; Board Members Doreen Whalen and Bill Dawe; Mayor Wells; Board Members Walter Milley and Melvin Barnes; Chairman, Cecil Strickland; Board Member, Brian Wentzel; Construction Foreman, Don Hiscock; Board Member, Max Penney; Wesley Staff Associate, Sam Johnson.



Mayor Andy Wells signing the Guest Book

In the background is part of the display case containing artifacts of early radio.

Conclusion

In St. Paul's Cathedral, London, England, there is an epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren which reads: "If you would see his monument, look around."¹ Similarly, one might suggest, look around Wesley United Church, and particularly the studios of VOWR, and numerous monuments can be identified with the ministry of the Reverend J.G. Joyce. His radio ministry and humanitarian concerns, which had far-reaching consequences, are memorials to his ingenuity and foresightedness. Having been blessed with the intellect to capitalize on Marconi's discovery; the experimentation of Maxwell, Faraday, Hertz, and others; and realizing that he was living in a colony (at that period in history), which could be credited with several firsts, with respect to communications and strategic position, Dr. Joyce decided to pragmatize this knowledge in tangible evidence, thus VOWR.

His astuteness resulted in many obstacles and impediments, but his stamina, logical thinking and cerebral confidence persuaded the "Who's Who" of the City of St. John's, to support him in his endeavours. After careful planning 8WMC (VOWR) has occupied the airwaves for seventy-five years and still growing in popularity. In 1924 the knowledge of radio was meagre. Dr. Joyce had one of two choices open to him: to experiment or abandon his ideas. From my observation the latter was not an option. Accordingly he proceeded with his obsession, which to some degree, reminds one of Robert Frost's poem, *The Road Not Taken*:

1 Gillis, William E. & Margaret E. Babbage, *Our First Half-Century Pasadena Community Church*. Publisher Unknown, 1975, p. 17.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less travelled by,
And that had made all the difference.²

The road less travelled made all the difference. It was a distant road along which many complex mazes were encountered. Nevertheless, with the preparation engendered and his perspective firmly charted, the pursuance of which was relatively certain. Consequently, ample guidelines were introduced by Dr. Joyce; committees were formed; a clear philosophy was articulated; a financial plan envisaged; a sound public relations established with both his parishioners

2 Williams, Oscar. *Modern Verse*. Rev. ed., New York: Washington Square Press' Inc., 1958. p. 236.

business and professional personages and with the goodwill and blessing of the public generally his prophetic radio vision was on the way to success. Since 1924 VOWR has been a household word which has communicated good tidings of great joy to all people. The "We serve" and the humanitarian motives have contributed to the success of the station. They were the pillars on which VOWR was founded.

Most of those pillars which the founder of VOWR established are still in firm position today. Dr. Joyce's concept of volunteerism remains as enthusiastic presently as it was seventy-five years ago. The installation of his vision of radio communications in Newfoundland and Labrador, made such an indelible impression on the minds and hearts of his early volunteers that its effects became contagious, resulting in increased fervour which remains as such today. Consequently, numerous volunteers have devoted many years of dedicated service to the various functions of VOWR. The present Chairperson of the Radio Board, Cecil Strickland, had involvement in several aspects of the on-going development of VOWR. Some of these were: Treasurer, Secretary and presently its Chairperson.

Among the many outstanding volunteers who contributed significantly to the success of VOWR was Everett Hudson. On October 26, 1997, the Radio Board of Wesley United Church presented him with a plaque honouring his fifty years of dedicated volunteer service. Everett served VOWR in many capacities, among which was its Manager. His personal acquaintance with Dr. Joyce, gave him a unique appreciation of the founder's vision for the station. Everett, like many other volunteers, maximized that vision, which contributed to the enhancement of the concept which Dr. Joyce envisaged.

Dr. Joyce introduced the concept of public concerts early in the history of VOWR, which became a popular feature. His perception of these concerts included at least three profound thoughts: public education, entertainment and fund-

raising. Consequently, his concerts were designed to include an auction, which appealed to both the radio audience and those present in the auditorium. The items on auction were donated by businesses and individuals, and the proceeds were used to defray the cost of operation, maintenance and acquisition of new equipment. Eventually the radio auctions became the prime method of fund-raising. In recent years, take-out Turkey Teas were introduced as an additional fund-raising methodology. However one must not overlook the fact that individual listeners, who appreciated VOWR's programming, made financial contributions. It would appear that Dr. Joyce was desirous that the station support its own operation than its becoming a budgetary responsibility of Wesley Church Finance Committee. Accordingly, his vision of fund-raising and other related financial methodologies, have been retained during its seventy-five years of operation.

The many additions, renovations, refurbishing and updating of broadcast equipment emanate from the Radio Board's desire to perpetuate the founder's philosophy. Accordingly, if one wishes to experience that philosophy, pragmatically functioning, then visit VOWR and observe the founder's monument.

Dr. McLeod, one our Church Fathers stated: "The purpose of salt is neither to turn everything it touches into salt nor to remain safely in a jar. Salt reveals and fulfils its saltness only when it releases the full flavour of that into which it has been scattered."³ This is the story of VOWR; it has been scattering its flavour for seventy five years and the taste is still commendable.

3 Dolan, Rex R. *The Big Change*. Toronto: The United Church Publishing House. 1967. p. 26.

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- (b) The Provincial Archives Department.
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Rev. Dr. H.K. Swain was born and raised at Perry's Cove, Carbonear. After teaching school for one year at Deadman's Bay, he served as a student minister for three years — at Burgeo, Weybridge (Foster's Point) and Sunnyside. He studied at Mount Allison, Pine Hill Divinity Hall, The Atlantic School of Theology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. Andrew's (Tottenham, England) and Colombia Pacific University, and earned the following degrees: B.Ed., B.Th., M.Div., Ph.D. He served as Chaplain with the Canadian Navy, holding the rank of Lieutenant-Commander, and was awarded a Canadian Forces Decoration (C.D.) for Meritorious Service.



From 1957 to 1970 he served as minister of the following parishes: Musgravetown, Corner Brook, Botwood, and Mount Pearl. He taught Religious Education at Macpherson Junior High School from 1970 to 1981, when he was appointed as Principal of St. Philip's Elementary School, retiring in 1989.

He was involved in numerous church, community and social activities, including the Religious Education Committee of the Denominational Education Committee. His three previous publications were: *Reverend Charles Lench: Dynamic Spokesman of Methodism in Newfoundland*, 1974; *A History of the Naval Reserves in Newfoundland*, 1975; *Lester Leeland Burry: Labrador Pastor and Father of Confederation*, 1983.

Rev. Dr. Swain married Edna Parsons, a teacher, and they have three children and seven grandchildren, all residing in Mount Pearl and Goulds, Newfoundland.

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