I Have Become All Things to All People:

Spirituality in Church Archives & Digital Preservation

by

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Abstract

The records held by church archives have a spiritual value for church communities, in addition to their administrative, legal, and historical value. While spiritual value is by no means absent from other religious archives or even secular archives, my thesis will focus primarily on the spiritual value associated with Christian church archives. The spiritual value of church archives derives from the fact that they are often used to support the spiritual needs and activities of a church community or institution. Without these records of spiritual value, the identity, memory, and spiritual mission of church communities and institutions would be negatively impacted. It is for this reason that church archivists must take into serious consideration the spiritual value of their records, in order that a church community's spiritual mission can be properly fulfilled. Increasingly in contemporary culture, many of these records are born-digital, meaning that they are being created, stored, and used in digital environments. It has therefore become imperative that archivists implement long-term digital preservation strategies or else risk losing many valuable born-digital records. Church archivists, because of the spiritual value of their records, must take seriously the calling to preserve born digital records, and the spiritual value of those records if they are to continue to support the spiritual mission of the church communities and institutions they are serving. This thesis will show the basis for understanding the spiritual value behind church records, both non-digital and digital, and therefore prove the urgent need for implementing long-term digital preservation strategies in church archives. Examples from various Christian denominations will be considered in this analysis. Some basic digital preservation tools will also be proposed to provide church archivists with a foundation to begin digital preservation in their archives. The thrust behind the thesis is an urgent call for digital archival preservation that supports the continuing spiritual mission of church communities and institutions.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Greg Bak, for his guidance, knowledge, and insight that helped me greatly throughout the thesis process. I would also like to thank the three archivists whom I interviewed – Melanie Delva, Conrad Stoesz, and Rodney Carter – for their interest in my research as well as their willingness to participate and contribute to my thesis. Finally, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to my parents whose constant support and encouragement have been invaluable.

Positionality

My interest in writing my thesis on the intersections of spirituality and archives stems from three of my passions in life: the study of history, the promotion of archives within society, and personal growth in my faith. It has been my desire to put these three subjects into one, allowing each of them to inform and feed off one another in the most natural and complementary way possible. Doing this, of course, is not always an easy thing, and this was very much the case while writing my thesis. I am a practicing Catholic and my concern for the continuation of church archives springs from this reality in my life. My faith continues to set everything else in focus, informing my priorities in studying history and archives. My thesis, however, was not intended to be an entirely religious treatise on the spiritual importance of church archives. I opted for a rather interdisciplinary approach instead, where my interest in spiritual realities would stand alongside and communicate with my interests in archival theory, historical research, and religious studies. Taking such an interdisciplinary approach certainly required that I reach outside my comfort zone. For instance, I never had much knowledge or experience in dealing with the intricacies of digital technology before starting my Master's degree in Archival Studies and blending these technological studies with spirituality allowed me to consider new applications for spiritual principles. Although recognizing my inadequacies, my goal was nevertheless to reconcile these different threads into a coherent argument to allow spiritual principles and archival theory to have a proper interdisciplinary relationship. My hope is that this approach will inspire further study and discussion along similar lines.

Introduction

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.[1]

The Bible passage quoted above is recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew as the final words that Jesus spoke to his disciples on earth. It often happens that a person's last words, spoken to their family and friends, contain what that individual views as most important in life. In this passage, Jesus spoke not only to those within the immediate range of his voice, but to all Christians down throughout the ages. Jesus, in a real sense, provided with these final words the core idea of the mission that he desired for Christians to work towards. One of the earliest and most famous Christians, St. Paul the Apostle, records in one of his letters to the Christian community living in ancient Corinth his mode of fulfilling this fundamental Christian mission: "To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some."[2] As St. Paul sees it, because he is a follower of Jesus and an inheritor of his mission, he must devote all his efforts, talents, and resources towards the goal of providing for the spiritual good of all people, explaining that he desires to bring the gospel to everyone "by all means" necessary, that is, by presenting the message of Jesus to people in a way that fits within the various contexts of their individual lives. I have chosen this verse from First Corinthians as the title of my thesis to show the connections between Christian mission and church archives; that pursuing digital preservation in church archives has now become, within the context of contemporary digital culture, a necessary aspect of the Christian mission to contribute to the spiritual good of all people.

Now, of course, different Christian communities will have different emphases and perspectives of what it means to carry out Jesus' final commission to his followers; nevertheless, it is the nearly universal Christian perspective that they must work towards the common good of all people, for both their bodies and their souls. Churches have various ministries and methods of bringing about the spiritual good of their neighbours such as religious education programs and

[1] Mt. 28:19-20 (NRSV-CE).
[2] 1 Cor. 9:22 (NRSV-CE).

community outreach programs, but one aspect of a church community's life that perhaps does not get as much attention is the creation, preservation, and use of records. While not every church institution or community will have an official archival repository, they will nevertheless have need of documentation and other forms of archives and will have, no matter how rudimentary, some system of preservation. It is my argument in this thesis that church records are of great importance and serve a necessary function in the spiritual mission of a Christian church or community. Church records not only serve immediate administrative purposes but also document a church's activities and experiences, preserving its traditions and convictions for the spiritual benefit of future church members, and reminding them of the spiritual mission of their community. Churches must, therefore, work closely with their archivists. In today's digital world – where digital means of creating and accessing information have become nearly essential to life in many societies – for the spiritual mission of churches (to preserve and spread their message and way of life) and church archivists (to collect, preserve, and make accessible church records for the benefit of the community) to continue into the future, greater attention must be given to the preservation of born-digital records with spiritual value. My urgent call for the long-term preservation and accessibility of born-digital church records relies upon recognizing the enduring spiritual value of many of the digital records created by church communities. They function as vital means for encouraging the spiritual lives of individual church members as well as propagating the church's spiritual mission as a whole.

If churches and their archivists want to most effectively follow St. Paul's spiritual motto of becoming "all things to all people", that is, using every possible means to tend to the spiritual good of all people, they would be wise to put greater emphasis on the preservation of digital records of enduring spiritual value. Churches and other religious communities are currently, and will continue to, rely heavily on digital means of creating and accessing information. To ignore, therefore, the preservation of digital church records would be to thus ignore a fundamental element of the daily life of Christian communities as well as the spiritual functions and mission of these communities. Church archives should most especially take seriously one of the biggest developments within records preservation: digital preservation. If churches are to continue to fulfill their spiritual mission into the future, then church archives need to take seriously the need for increased efforts in digital records preservation and further develop the digital means by which their mission can relate to contemporary needs.

Since my thesis topic is focused on Christian records and their preservation, I have referred to aspects of religious ideology and worldviews in my analysis. I have utilized Christian themes in exploring what might be called a theology of church archives and the pastoral role of church archivists. The motivating assertion behind my thesis, in fact, that church archivists should increase their digital preservation efforts because many of these records have enduring spiritual value, is built firmly upon Christian ideology and worldviews. Many Christian communities have their own views concerning the meaning and trajectory of history and have developed over time their own historiographical methods of studying and understanding their own histories and the history of the world. G. Dan Harris has recently written a dissertation on this topic of the Christian view of history that places Jesus and his spiritual mission, which extends itself through Christian communities, at the centre of historical interpretation.[3] While different Christian denominations may disagree over this exact assertion, it is my argument that church archives, as repositories for a community's historical textual materials, should be viewed by Christians (leadership, laity, and archivists) as significant to the spirituality and mission of their own church communities, no matter their different perspectives on Christian spirituality and mission. Recourse to Christian belief is thus an important part of my analysis.

When it comes to primary source research, I have looked at the content of the records within church archives, as a means of better understanding the spiritual nature of the different types of church records. Most of all, however, my primary source research focus has examined the management of records within church archives, specifically when it comes to archival appraisal and preservation of archival records. This included analyzing archival policies and procedures as well as the systems and interfaces for archival description, access, and digital preservation. I will be limiting the scope of my analysis to primarily the church communities and archives of the prominent Christian groups that have existed in Canada over the last half-century or so. This investigation will provide one with the knowledge of church archives' mandates, functions, structures, what their priorities are in terms of acquisition and preservation, and to

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[3] G. Dan Harris, "The Central Event View of Human History Model (CEM): An Apologetic for a Christ-Centered Christian View of Human History," (PhD dissertation, Liberty University, 2017), xi, Liberty University Doctoral Dissertations and Projects (1412). Other publications on this topic include: David Bebbington, *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought*, Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1990; Gabrielle M. Spiegel and Sarah Maza, "Historical Thought in Medieval Europe," in *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, ed. Lloyd Kramer, 78-98, Blackwell Publishing, 2006; Christopher Dawson, "The Christian View of History," *Blackfriars* 32, no. 376-7 (July 1951): 312-27.

what extent spirituality is manifested throughout. Within this contemporary Canadian archival context, I examine church archives from the following communities: Catholic, Anglican, and Mennonite most prominently, but also including United Church, Presbyterian, and Evangelical church archives. While looking at the policies and procedures of church archives is the focus of this research, as I have mentioned above, I have also looked at some collections of records and broad categories of record types that are typical of church archives. In this, I seek to understand the types of records that should be deemed spiritually, and therefore archivally valuable to church communities and institutions.

Again, my analysis focuses on the past half-century of Canadian church archives, which means that my analysis will also be limited to contemporary views on the role of and importance behind church archives within their communities and within the society as a whole. For many centuries, primarily in the medieval and early modern periods, church archives embodied roles far outside the realm of what most people today would consider a "spiritual mission". Church officials would often serve as government officials or legal professionals during these centuries, so the purpose of their recordkeeping practices was not limited to shepherding the flock, but also to keeping track of legal disputes, government policies, and the like. While at that time these functions would have been viewed as equally spiritual to preaching a sermon, today, a separation of spiritual and secular has become dominant, and church archives have largely transformed to fit into this new separation. As an example of the historical role once played by churches in Canada's history, for much of it, churches played a significant part in the promotion and administration of residential schooling in Canada. There continues to be cooperation between non-religious and religious groups in Canada where governments often partner with religious organizations to deliver social and other services throughout society. While it is true that contemporary church archives are, more than in previous centuries, far more concerned with the inner workings of the church community, which often strongly emphasizes their spirituality and mission, Canadian churches and other religious organizations still nevertheless have major roles to play in operating schools, homeless shelters, and other social services. All these various secular and spiritual roles are reflected in the records contained in church archives. It is my hope that my analysis will help archival advocates more easily get to the heart of why Canadian church archives need to exist: they must be one of the foundation stones that allows churches to fulfill their contemporary role in Canadian society of responding to both the temporal as well as

the spiritual needs of its citizens. My analysis of contemporary records of church archival policy and procedure will be interpreted in this light.

Along with my research into the archival policies, procedures, and the spiritual documents of church archives, I have also conducted interviews with three Canadian church archivists in order to gain greater insight into their perceptions of the spirituality of the archival work that they do within their institutions and communities. While it was important for me to choose interviewees who are working church archivists, I was in no way intending to gather participants to secure a representative sample or comprehensive overview of church archives from every Christian tradition. I instead chose three church archivists representing – through their archival work – the three Christian traditions with which I was most familiar: Melanie Delva (Anglican), Conrad Stoesz (Mennonite), and Rodney Carter (Catholic). Melanie and Conrad are both believers (from the Anglican and Mennonite traditions respectively) while Rodney is a non-believer, which I hoped would allow for more diverse perspectives concerning archival spirituality. I knew of Conrad because of his archival work at the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg and was recommended to contact Melanie (Reconciliation Animator for the Anglican Church of Canada) and Rodney (archivist at the Archives of the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph, St. Joseph Region) on the advice of my thesis advisor, Greg Bak. I chose to limit the interviews to these three church archivists simply because I also wanted to devote space to analyzing archival policies from various Christian traditions as well as to strike a modest balance between the rest of my analysis and the more personal tone of the interview responses. The interviews were conducted in the form of an email questionnaire sent to each participant. Since Melanie and Rodney live on opposite ends of the country (Vancouver, British Columbia and Kingston, Ontario respectively), I thought it would be most realistic to conduct the interviews in the style of an email questionnaire which allowed each participant to answer the questions in their own time, at their own pace, in however way they felt most comfortable. The interview questions ask the archivists about how they understand the spirituality behind their work and how this relates to archival work in general, including the preservation of digital information, and other aspects of archival spirituality and digitality. While it was important to capture these aspects of the archival profession in the work of the questionnaire participants, I did not want these interviews to neglect the important aspects of what is called the “life story” model and method of interviewing. In order to create interviews that allowed for richness and

depth in their narrative substance, it was important to ask the participants some questions that encouraged them to see their professional work within the context of (and not separate from) their whole life story, which includes their experiences, beliefs, and spirituality.[4] Quotes from these interviews are found throughout the thesis and the full text of the questions and responses are included as an appendix.

In the first chapter, I begin by discussing the spiritual nature of church archives. This includes a brief literature review of the various sources that have already examined the concepts and themes of archival spirituality and other topics surrounding church archives. The term "spirituality", which I will use throughout my analysis, can have two different definitions. Firstly, there is the traditional, typically Christian, view that understands spirituality within the framework of a structured religion. This definition of spirituality often refers to the inner renewal of a person's soul with reference to God, with the end goal of the soul's eternal salvation. In my analysis of spirituality within the context of church archives and mission, this is primarily what I refer to. I do also, especially when analyzing archival spirituality in general, refer to a second definition of spirituality. In this second definition, spirituality may refer to conforming one's self and work to some understanding of ultimate meaning, life values, and personal growth in virtue, even if not officially informed by organized religion, although this broader definition of spirituality is often applied in the modern study of world religions.[5] With reference to these two definitions of spirituality, I secondly analyze what is meant by archival spirituality and how this has been applied by archivists, both in church archives and non-church archives, as well as by believing archivists and non-believing archivists. To this end, I have made use of the answers given in the interviews I conducted with three church archivists to see how they understand the spirituality behind church archives as well as their own role within church communities. These interviews have provided some unique, interesting, and practical information concerning archival work and spirituality. Thirdly, I explore the role of church archives as creators of community identity and as repositories of spiritual memory.

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[4] Alexander Freund, Kristina R. Llewellyn, and Nolan Reilly, "Introduction," in *Canadian Oral History Reader*, eds. Alexander Freund, Kristina R. Llewellyn, and Nolan Reilly (Montreal: McGill Queens University Press, 2015), 7.

[5] I would like to thank Dr. Kenneth MacKendrick (Associate Professor of Religion at the University of Manitoba) for helping me to clarify the usage of the term spirituality throughout my analysis. His assistance in this through the thesis review and defence process is greatly appreciated.

My second chapter necessarily serves as a bridge between the first and third chapters of my thesis. Firstly, I investigate different Christian views on the use of digital technology and participation in digital culture as well as how this relates to Christian mission within church communities. Secondly, I analyze some examples from different denominations of digital record types that are created and used in church communities for both evangelistic and mundane reasons. Here I argue that even the more mundane church records (such as administrative records) potentially have a deeper spiritual purpose in the life of the community and therefore should be seen as having potential archival value. The interviews that I conducted also provided some unique perspectives on these and other topics surrounding digital preservation and spiritualty. Thirdly, I explore any possible connections between digitality and spirituality as well as some implications for the meaning of records in a culture of digital technology.

In the third chapter, I come to the end of my argument that I had been building up in chapters one and two, that since church records have spiritual value and this importance extends to born-digital records, concrete action must be taken by church archivists regarding long-term digital preservation. It is in this chapter that I provide some analysis of the various tools available to church archivists for practically pursuing digital preservation efforts. I discuss the OAIS model, Archivematica, BitCurator, and various other digital preservation infrastructures. In order to drive home the message that every church archive is able to, and must, act immediately on digital preservation, I emphasize the use of open source tools. I couple this analysis with a survey of the current state of digital preservation in church archives, providing some practical ways forward aided by my interviews.

In the end, I hope that my thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the spiritual significance of church records, specifically born-digital records created by contemporary churches. Based on my research, my work will more clearly highlight the urgent need for implementing long-term digital preservation and accessibility strategies for digital records in church archives. It is my hope that this call for digital preservation will be well received by church archivists and church communities across the entire Christian community as an encouragement towards implementing digital preservation strategies.

Chapter One: Archival Spirituality

Introduction

One of the primary goals of any given Christian community, no matter the denomination or church, is to preserve the religious principles and spiritual practices that have been passed on to them to be passed on to succeeding generations of Christians. While this transference of religion and spirituality from generation to generation has been, down through the centuries, accomplished through oral tradition and liturgy, it has most prominently, especially in the modern era, been passed on through written records. Textual records have thus taken on religious and spiritual significance within Christian church communities and institutions. The Christian Bible is the most famous example of a Christian textual record that embodies the fundamental religious and spiritual truths of Christianity since it is the inspired words of God Himself and passes on the stories and doctrines that guide Christians in what they believe and practice. Over the past two centuries, other records have been preserved for the benefit of Christian communities and the maintenance of the Christian mission in the world. It is in this long history of Christian communities preserving records for these purposes that the spiritual foundations and motivations behind church archives can be seen.

In this first chapter of my thesis, I will develop the concept that I am calling "archival spirituality". To this end, I will investigate the spiritual and religious meanings behind church archives as expressed by scholars and church archivists themselves. Church records are truly archival in nature just like any other archival documents are, in that they preserve information of historical, cultural, and administrative importance. There is, however, I would argue, another, more foundational level of importance when it comes to church records: church records, even the most seemingly mundane among them, have a spiritual dimension to them that guides the beliefs and activities of church communities. What is the nature of this spiritual importance associated with church archives? In analyzing this spirituality, this chapter will explore how archival spirituality can be applied to the practice of archivists both religious and non-religious. It will also look at two of the spiritual functions that church archives serve in the life of a church community: to create community, and to preserve memory.

Archival Spirituality: What Others Have Said

To begin with, I will review some of the relevant literature on the topic of archival spirituality. I will expand upon some of the themes contained therein in the later sections of this chapter. The topic of this chapter has been treated from several different angles by different writers in the last half century. Hugh Taylor, a notable contributor to the archival community, for instance, during his lifetime wrote several times about a sort of archival spirituality. As Jarad Buckwold wrote in his thesis on the life and thinking of Hugh Taylor, "[Taylor] positioned archiving as a quasi-religious act and archivists as the spiritual contemporaries and successors of the shamans and community knowledge keepers of oral-based cultures." By redefining knowledge, reality, and the archive itself, Taylor offered a Cosmic view of what it means to be an archivist and what it means to archive.[6] As Buckwold explains in his thesis, Taylor's broad sense of archival spirituality positions the archivist as one "beholden to a community… and one who helps build communities as a keeper (in Taylor's words) of tribal knowledge." Taylor drew support for his ideas about an archival spirituality from many sources, including the writings of Marshall McLuhan.[7] McLuhan is perhaps best known for his treatment of modern communications media. McLuhan's most explicit exploration of the themes of religious spirituality surround digital media which can be found in *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion*, a book compiled and edited after McLuhan's death.[8] While McLuhan does not mention anything specifically about archives in this collection of some of his work, he does talk about the ways that the Catholic Church has interacted with changes in media through the ages, including in our current electronic age. Central to McLuhan's perception of electronic media was his own Catholic faith, that is, his spirituality and adherence to religious principles. McLuhan argues that there is a spiritual principle then, it seems, behind living in a digital world. This idea of digital spirituality will be expanded upon in the second chapter of this thesis.

Hugh Taylor's conceptions of spirituality in the archives are broad enough to include any archivist of any or no religious affiliation yet were also informed by his own personal life and

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[6] Jarad Buckwold, "Of Space, Time, and the Archives Between: The Life of Hugh A. Taylor and the Redefinition of the Archival Cosmos" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2016), i, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace.
[7] Ibid., 93.
[8] Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium and the Light: Reflections on Religion*, eds. Eric McLuhan and Jacek Szklarek (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

faith as an Anglican. While some archival writers (most notably Hugh Taylor and Scott Cline) have argued that every archivist, in both religious and non-religious settings, should take on a kind of spiritual role in their archival work,[9] James O'Toole, a prominent American church archivist, has said that the incorporation of spirituality into archival work is most properly the defining mark of religious archives rather than non-religious archives. In his article "What's Different About Religious Archives?" O'Toole points out that church archives, "to a greater degree than other kinds of archival repositories… have constant reference to an external set of beliefs, ideologies, and values – that is, to religious faith itself." This kind of spirituality is founded in concrete religious beliefs, governing the activities through which records are created, the justifications for their preservation, and the content of the records themselves.[10] A second but related aspect is that the work of a church archivist begins with the belief that there is both a material reality and a spiritual reality that needs to be preserved in the record.[11] Religious faith and spirituality, according to the modern and more open-ended definition of spirituality, should not, however, be so exactly equated. While religious faith is one of the main sources of many different spiritualities, and thus rightly a very prominent feature of church archives, even non-religious archives can contain records of spiritual value. While O'Toole rightly points out that the spirituality contained in church archives derives from Christian beliefs, ideologies, and values, he is wrong in concluding that church archives are unique in containing records of spiritual value. My analysis of archival spirituality will seek to temper these conclusions of O'Toole by incorporating the concepts developed by Taylor, Cline, and others.

Robert Shuster's article "Documenting the Spirit" explains further what is meant by an archival spirituality within a Christian religious framework. Shuster explores what he terms the "spiritual enthusiasm" behind religious institutions and the records they create and preserve. He emphasizes that an archivist of church records must try to capture the internal spiritual motivations that often result in external actions, citing F. Gerald Ham who famously stated that archivists must "make an informed selection of information that will provide the future with a

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[9] Hugh Taylor, "The Archivist, the Letter, and the Spirit," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 1-16; Scott Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You': Covenant and the Archival Endeavor," *The American Archivist* 75, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 282-96; Scott Cline, "'To the Limit of Our Integrity': Reflections on Archival Being," *The American Archivist* 72, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 331-43.
[10] James M. O'Toole, "What's Different About Religious Archives?," *The Midwestern Archivist* 9, no. 2 (1984): 94.
[11] Ibid., 95.

representative record of human experience in our time."[12] An indispensable part of the human experience that must be represented in an archive is religion and spirituality. Shuster touches on the obvious challenges associated with preserving something as nebulous and oftentimes intangible as spirituality or religious fervour in religious archives. This spirituality, while hard to pin down at times within the archives, is most often discovered in some of the most seemingly mundane of records, which shows just how much a church archivist must be familiar with the spiritual motivations behind the creation of church records in order to properly follow the mandate of that specific church or community.[13]

Bob Stewart, in his article "Nurturing the Spirit", speaks to this. In mentioning the recorded minutes of church courts and meetings, he suggests that even *these* records can be used as a resource to understand theology, while not directly theological documents in themselves. These records aid in continuing the life of the community, so they should be preserved as important to the community's spiritual mission. Stewart proposes that a church archivist "be committed to a kind of pastoral ministry to the institutions which they serve", nurturing their spiritual goals as they are contained within their records.[14] Whatever archival principles or technologies are employed, this fundamental idea of preserving the spirit of a church cannot be ignored or relegated to anything less than primary importance. Tim MacQuiban, in his article "Historical Texts or Religious Relics: Towards a Theology of Religious Archives" stresses this point also as he reflects on his time as a Methodist church archivist. He believes that much money and time is spent in church archives on resources and projects that have little relevance to what he calls the mission of the church. He traces this problem to what he sees as a lack of a philosophy or theology of church archives; he sees both the records themselves as well as the task of the archivist as sacred, requiring a Christian religious view of history, or at least a strong knowledge and appreciation of it, in order to properly collect and preserve the records essential for the future existence and actions of a church archive.[15]

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[12] Robert Shuster, "Documenting the Spirit," *The American Archivist* 45, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 136-137.
[13] Ibid., 138-139.
[14] Bob Stewart, "Nurturing the Spirit: Reflections on the Role of a Church Archivist," *Archivaria* 30 (Summer 1990): 111-113.
[15] Tim MacQuiban, "Historical Texts or Religious Relics: Towards a Theology of Religious Archives," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 16, no. 2 (1995): 146.

Church authorities, although not trained archivally themselves, have also spoken a fair amount about the importance of church archives in the life of Christian communities. In 1999, Pope John Paul II addressed the superiors and staff of the Vatican Secret Archives and the Vatican Apostolic Library, making reference to the long history of church archives. He highlighted that Catholic archives "contain and transmit the Church's own memory and… service down the centuries… [that must be made known] with sincere gratitude to the Lord, who never ceases to guide his Church in the midst of world events."[16] The Pope continued in this way to stress the spiritual mandate given to church archivists:

> This is your service to the evangelization of culture, indeed, to the new evangelization of culture. You know well that this is a central and vital task for the Church in the contemporary world, to which the Servant of God Paul VI referred in the past with enlightening words in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (cf. nn. 19-20) and which I have mentioned several times. We must find a way to see that the Gospel values communicated to us, together with those that stem from a true humanism, both of which are in fact closely connected, reach men and women of culture, and perhaps even before that, the environments and circles where our present-day culture is created and passed on.[17]

The Pope here sees a strong connection between the work of preserving cultural heritage with the preservation of religious ideals; it is the task of a church archivist to highlight such connections as they go about their archival work. A little over a decade after this address, Pope Benedict XVI gave an address before the Vatican archivists and librarians, where he made even more explicit connections between the preservation of both the cultural and spiritual heritages of society and the Christian community: "Your task, dear friends who work here every day, is to foster the synthesis between culture and faith which transpires from the valuable documents and treasures in your custody." The Pope also mentioned providing archival access to scholars and preserving materials for the "dissemination of the faith" as archival duties of the utmost importance.[18] Most recently, on March 4, 2019, Pope Francis gave an address to the archivists of the Vatican Archives, where he thanked them for their dedication in preserving Christian heritage, comparing

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[16] John Paul II, *Address of John Paul II to the Superiors and Staff of the Vatican Secret Archives and the Vatican Apostolic Library* (The Holy See, January 15, 1999), 2. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19990115_librarian.pdf.
[17] Ibid., 2.
[18] Benedict XVI, *Visit to the Vatican Apostolic Library and the Vatican Secret Archives: Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI* (The Holy See, June 25, 2007), 2. http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070625_bav-asv.pdf.

their work to "the cultivation of a majestic tree, whose branches are stretched towards the sky, but whose roots are solidly anchored in the earth… You, archivists, with your patient toil work on these roots and help to keep them alive."[19] The Pope concludes by stating that "the Church is not afraid of history, rather, loves it, and would like to love it more and better, as God loves it! So, with the same trust of my predecessors, I open and entrust to researchers this documentary heritage."[20]

A 1998 article from the *Mennonite Herald* expresses a similar sentiment from a Canadian Mennonite perspective: "Important moments in the life of a church are recorded [in a church archive]. Some may be regrettable; others have been formative moments in spiritual growth. All can serve to help us remember and learn. A forward-looking people should never fear to look back and gain broader perspectives on God's purposes."[21] A 2012 *Mennonite Brethren Herald* article by Conrad Stoesz, Archivist for the Mennonite Heritage Archives, elaborates on the importance of Christian communities remembering their past in order to properly and more clearly understand their identity and mission for the future. While an important part of this is remembering the faithfulness of God to his people in the past, it is also essential to recognize past mistakes and sins, learn from them, and grow from there into refocusing mission accordingly. For these reasons, the study and understanding of history is a necessary aspect of living in a Christian community. As Stoesz mentions in the article, the Christian Bible records God admonishing His people to remember their past so that they can act rightly in the future. The continuation of Christian values such as peace, forgiveness, and love towards all people within church communities will be advanced greatly if Christians will remember how such virtues have been practiced in the past, and the ways in which they were not. Church archives, therefore, containing such information, will act as spiritual guides for the benefit of the community.[22] As Stoesz indicated in his answers to my questionnaire, mission comes out of a communal identity,

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[19] Greg Kandra, "BREAKING: Pope Francis Opens Vatican Archives on Pius XII, Declaring 'The Church Is Not Afraid of History,'" The Deacon's Bench, March 4, 2019, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/deaconsbench/2019/03/breaking-pope-francis-opens-vatican-archives-on-pius-xii-declaring-the-church-is-not-afraid-of-history/.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Quoted in: Don Kroeker, "Manitoba Mennonite Archives and Canadian Mennonite Collective Memory," (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2000), 84, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace.
[22] Conrad Stoesz, "A Future Found in History: How the Past Shapes Our Mission," Mennonite Brethren Herald, January 1, 2012, https://mbherald.com/a-future-found-in-history/.

and this identity is shaped by memory of the past.[23] As an example, Stoesz mentions his involvement in several projects (which included writing essays and creating a video documentary about Conscientious Objectors during the Second World War) to re-introduce many within the Mennonite community to their story – to their historical roots of non-resistance and non-violence – two concepts which are central to Mennonite belief and practice. As Stoesz notes regarding the impetus behind the projects: "Clearly there was not an understanding about our stories dealing with violence – we collectively have been neglectful of telling our story and allowed other stories to become the guiding narrative."[24] Church archives as creators of community identity and repositories of spiritual memory will be explored later in this chapter.

These aspects of the spiritual function of church archives along with their historical and cultural importance for church communities' identity find their summation in a Vatican document promulgated on February 2, 1997, by the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church. It took the form of a circular letter titled *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives*, which was distributed to all the world's Catholic bishops but nonetheless contains important ideas for church archives of all Christian communities. In it, the members of the Commission express their wish to encourage interest in supporting church archives and the preservation of church documents due to their important cultural and pastoral significance, responding to Pope John Paul II who is quoted as stating: "We must systematically and wisely promote [church archives], in order to make it part of the lifeblood of the Church's cultural and pastoral activity."[25] Pastoral activity, in the context of this document, is referring to the act of providing church members with spiritual guidance. The members of the Commission further reflect upon the past 2000 years of ecclesial documents and archival practice, and in so doing present a concise definition for what the Catholic Church sees as the role of church archives in the modern world:

> In the mind of the Church, *archives are places of memory of the Christian community and storehouses of culture for the new evangelization*. Thus, they themselves are a cultural good of primary importance whose special merit lies in recording the path

[23] Conrad Stoesz, Answers to Questionnaire, April 2020, Question #2. See Appendix.
[24] Ibid., Question #2.
[25] Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church, *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives* (The Holy See, February 2, 1997), Introduction. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc_com_pcchc_19970202_archivi-ecclesiastici_en.html.

> followed by the Church through the centuries in the various contexts which constitute her very structure.[26]

As a part of church communities' cultural heritage, church archives are to act in the service of the spiritual mission of Christianity, both as a witness to the Christian tradition and also as a means to carry out the pastoral work of "evangelization", that is, to spread the message of the Christian religion and to clearly show to the world the *transitus Domini*, that is, the most fundamental mystery of the Christian religion: the death and resurrection of Jesus and how this relates to humanity's passage from death to eternal life.[27] Since the earliest years of Christian history, it was believed that through recorded memory, the traces of Christ's action could be revealed; as Pope Paul VI described it, within church archives "are kept the traces of the *transitus Domini* in human history".[28] Even to this day, it is the conviction of many Christians that it is Jesus himself who is operating in human history, and thus it is his voice that echoes through the written church archives. Though the level to which this conviction is adhered to depends on the Christian denomination or community, most Christians might agree at the very least that the message of Jesus spoken two millennia ago continues in varied ways through the recorded actions of his followers. Pope Paul VI makes clear his own position on the matter: "Thus, having veneration for these papers, [and] documents… means having veneration for Christ, and having a sense of the Church."[29]

The Impetus Behind Church Archives: Some Examples

Other than the spiritual and evangelistic motivations behind church archives, there is also other equally important obligation on the part of some church archives, depending on their denominational affiliation, to properly preserve what church officials have deemed necessary for administrative, financial, ethical, and legal reasons. This obligation of church archives to properly archive these essential records also stands at the foundation of a church's spiritual mission to effectively and ethically continue its spiritual mission. Every Catholic diocesan archive must, for instance, according to both the Code of Canon Law (for the Latin Church) and the Code of Canons (for the Eastern Churches), establish the role of the primary administrator of

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[26] Ibid., Introduction. (Emphasis as in original).
[27] Ibid., Introduction, 5.0.
[28] Ibid., 1.3.
[29] Ibid., 5.0.

the diocesan archive, that is, someone who will work within the administrative structure of the diocese to ensure that the records of the activities of the diocese are gathered, arranged, and preserved in the archive.[30] The diocesan archive and the diocesan records management policies, therefore, cannot be established and organized haphazardly. There are Canons that specify who will have access to archival material, where and how archival materials are to be stored, what general types of records are to be prioritized for preservation, and the separation of sensitive or private records into a "secret archive" that is separate from the diocesan archive.[31] To contravene any of these Canons would be to contravene the laws which govern the life of the Catholic Church as laid out by the Pope. Such legal and canonical structures are an important aspect of the context in which Catholics are to live out their faith. While Catholic archives, in one form or another, would certainly still exist without canonical impetus, it is largely due to the canonical responsibilities that Catholic archives exist in the organized way that they currently do.

Another example of church-prescribed archival formalities can be seen in the Anglican Church of Canada, whose national archive must follow the Canons of the General Synod when dealing with their own archival records. Canon V, specifically, governs this and the formal selection of the Archivist by the Council of the General Synod. The Archivist is required to maintain archival policies and a records management program to cover the records of the General Synod with its committees, boards, and commissions, along with the records of the Primate, the General Secretary and all other Synod employees. With all this as an archival foundation, the Archivist must also collect and preserve all records of historical value pertaining to the history and activities of the Anglican Church of Canada.[32] Like the Canons of the Catholic Church, these canonical formalities are essential in motivating Anglican archives to properly document the activities of the Anglican Church of Canada in a detailed and systematized way. Such obligations, for these and similar church communities, are fundamentally tied to the desire to properly record the history of the community of faith in order that the activities that these church archives record can be remembered for generations to come.

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[30] Tyyne Petrowski, "Aditus Ad Archivum: Exploring Access to Catholic Diocesan Archives in Canada," (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2016), 42-43, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace.
[31] Ibid., 42-49.
[32] Anglican Church of Canada, *Handbook of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada* (Anglican Church of Canada, 2019), 47. https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/handbook-19th-ed.pdf.

While the above examples show the institutional obligations of certain churches towards maintaining their own institutional archives, there are other church communities that, while also maintaining archives, do not have the same sort of dictates from church leadership regarding the form and organization of church archives within their communities. Some examples of this are found in Mennonite archives, where the archival imperative is not entirely regulated from a central church authority, but is often formed out of the administrative needs of Mennonite congregations as well as the interests of certain community members in the preservation of their shared histories. The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg is an excellent example of a Mennonite church archive springing forth from a faith community's desire to preserve their heritage and spirituality. According to the Centre's website, the Centre is "a ministry of the Canadian Conference of MB [Mennonite Brethren] Churches" and is intended to serve as a resource for Mennonite Brethren churches as they carry out their shared spiritual mission.[33] The Centre does this primarily by preserving, describing, and making accessible various Mennonite Brethren records including the institutional records of provincial conferences, the Canadian conference, and congregations; various theological resources including conference resolutions, conference yearbooks, confessions of faith, and study conference papers; family genealogies, personal papers, various publications, and worship resources.[34] It is clear that while the Centre acts in many ways as other church archives do, it also acts as a practical resource to support the everyday spiritual life of church communities. The Centre works alongside the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission which is also a Mennonite Brethren ministry funded by both the Canadian Conference and the U.S. Conference to coordinate the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Mennonite Brethren archival records.[35] So, while not existing strictly to fulfill any formal institutional policy such as is the case with canon law in Catholic and Anglican communities, the archival work of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies is motivated by a mandate from the governing Mennonite Brethren bodies to preserve the heritage and spirituality of the community. Similarly, the Mennonite Heritage Archives, was created in 1979 as a result of an expanded heritage preservation program on the part of Mennonite Church Canada as well as

[33] "About CMBS," Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/.
[34] Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/.
[35] "Where is the Historical Commission: Supporting Archival Centres," Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, https://mbhistory.org/about/centres/; "What is the Historical Commission? Our Mission and Goals," Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, https://mbhistory.org/about/.

out of a growing desire on the part of many Mennonite congregations to properly preserve their archival records of historical and spiritual importance.[36] It seems, then, like the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, that although the Mennonite Heritage Archive received ministry funding from church leadership, the archive was largely formed out of a community response to preserve their community heritage and spirituality.

Archival Spirituality: Secular and Religious

When it comes to exploring the meaning of what I have termed "archival spirituality" in this thesis, I have found it useful to speak of two distinct sub-categories within the broader subject of archival spirituality. These two sub-categories within archival spirituality are to be understood within the wider definition of spirituality that I have laid out in the introduction to this thesis. These sub-categories, while interpreted with some reference to religious concepts by way of analogy to Christian spirituality, are ultimately to be understood in wider terms of human spirituality. Firstly, there is what can be considered the sub-category of what I call the personal or professional archival spirituality of individual archivists themselves. The personal spirituality and the professional spirituality of an archivist can also be considered separately, but most often they overlap where the one informs the other. Secondly, there is what can be considered the spirituality of the church archival repository or institution itself, which often includes the spiritual meaning behind the archival records themselves, the ways they are used within or without the community, and the application of various archival functions within the archive. These two sub-categories of archival spirituality – archivist spirituality and archive spirituality – must not necessarily be limited to discussing only church or other religious archives and communities, nor must it be limited to discussing only those individual archivists who themselves adhere to any form of religious faith or spiritual practice. In this section, I will explore the first sub-category of archival spirituality, that of the personal or professional spirituality of individual archivists, firstly showing how non-religious archives and archivists participate in various forms of archival spirituality in their work as archivists. This section will secondly look at how church archives and religious archivists also adhere to forms of archival

[36] Lawrence Klippenstein, "Two Decades at the Heritage Centre: Survey and Reflections," *Mennonite Historian* 23, no. 3 (September 1997): 1-2; for further reading, see also: Conrad Stoesz, "The Creation of an Identity: The Conscientious Objector in Canadian Mennonite Memory," (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2018), 79-87, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace.

spirituality and in what ways these spiritualities may be similar or different from the archival spiritualties displayed by non-religious archivists.

Archival Spirituality: Secular Archivists

To begin with, it will be useful to explore the archival spirituality of Hugh Taylor, the late Canadian archivist, theorist, and educator. Much of what can be said concerning archival spirituality in the broader sense of the term which includes the archival spirituality employed by even non-religious archivists can be found in Taylor's archival theory and practice. Taylor sought to redefine knowledge, reality, and the archive itself, offering a Cosmic view of what it means to be an archivist.[37] As Buckwold explains in his thesis, "[Taylor] positioned archiving as a quasi-religious act and archivists as the spiritual contemporaries and successors of the shamans and community knowledge keepers of oral-based cultures."[38] In laying out his views on archival spirituality, Taylor took into consideration the interconnectedness of all material things in the universe due to their common "cosmogenesis", with this common origin becoming the common context of all things. From this, Taylor argues, emerged information which resulted in communication and memory.[39] Although Taylor himself identified as an Anglican, his views on archival spirituality were not limited to the spiritual beliefs and practices of his specific Christian tradition nor to any form of religion, whether Christian or not, and whether organized or not. His was a broader sense of archival spirituality, a spirituality that every archivist, whether religious or not, must adhere to in some way while conducting their work as an archivist. As Buckwold explains in his thesis, Taylor's broad sense of archival spirituality positions the archivist as one "beholden to a community… and one who helps build communities as a keeper (in Taylor's words) of tribal knowledge."[40] Taylor made the case for a return to a "lost spirituality" that is not necessarily related to one single religion. The work of the archivist, along with all forms of human work in this world, is all connected through the "Great Work", that is, "the expression of the Spirit at work in the world through us… at the level of service to the community."[41] For Taylor, the spirituality in the work of any archivist finds its root in the fact that work, often seen

[37] Jarad Buckwold, "Of Space, Time, and the Archives Between," i.
[38] Ibid., i.
[39] Taylor, "The Archivist, the Letter, and the Spirit," 5-6.
[40] Jarad Buckwold, "Of Space, Time, and the Archives Between," 93.
[41] Taylor, "The Archivist, the Letter, and the Spirit," 8.

as secular and at times unpleasant, can be transformed by directly accessing the love of God and sharing that love with others. The work of the archivist is thus given a new, spiritual meaning; archivists should participate in the work of archives "as a powerful expression of humanity, and to be and become part of a larger mission, a community, a professional culture that believes in archives."[42] Such an archival spirituality is centred around "a faith based on identity with something bigger than yourself," and although it must not necessarily conform itself to any form of religion, it is truly and properly called spiritual.[43]

Building upon Hugh Taylor's theorizing concerning the meaning of archival spirituality, Scott Cline offers archivists another concept taken from religion with which to understand archival spirituality: covenant. Since ancient times, people have made both political and spiritual covenants, that is, agreements with one another. Such covenants would be made between two parties as contracts of protection, service, and obedience.[44] Cline suggests that because archivists have historically formed numerous associations and affinity groups with one another, this can be seen as evidence for some kind of essential commonality of purpose and meaning among members of the profession.[45] He breaks this commonality down into three concepts that reveal a common archival spirituality in the professional work of archivists. Firstly, Cline argues that archival work necessitates that archivists have *genuine encounters* with creators, donors, users, and colleagues. Such encounters often naturally form into covenants, that is, archival work animated by relationships of reciprocity, trust, and respect. Hospitality and ethical relationships should thus form the spiritual context of every archival action.[46] As St. Paul mentions in Scripture: "By doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it."[47] Secondly, Cline argues that archival work must constantly be in line with the *sacred obligation* of every archivist to, while acknowledging their position of power to control societal memory and knowledge, use this power to the benefit of the members of their archival covenant relationship with creators, donors, and users.[48] The obligation of the archivist towards others in conducting their work is to be of service towards their fellow humanity. Jesus said concerning this in Scripture, "whoever

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[42] Ibid., 8-9.
[43] Ibid., 9.
[44] Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You,'" 284.
[45] Ibid., 287.
[46] Ibid., 290-291.
[47] Heb. 13:2 (NRSV-CE).
[48] Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You,'" 293.

wishes to be great among you must be your servant."[49] And thirdly, Cline argues that archival work must include *piety of service*, or, as many philosophers have defined it, justice. When archivists provide good service, recognizing their obligation to equity and fairness, understanding their own biases, and being transparent in their actions, they in turn promote justice and the common good in society. The common good is the archives' *raison d'etre*.[50] Such an obligation, while on the face of it secular in nature, can easily find its spiritual roots in the words that God proclaimed through the Prophet Isaiah, to "maintain justice and do what is right… Happy is the mortal who does this."[51]

An example of this kind of non-religious archival spirituality can be seen in the archival work of Rodney Carter, Archivist for the St. Joseph Region of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph in Ontario. Although the archivist for a Catholic religious congregation, Carter is himself non-religious, considering himself an atheist and a non-spiritual person. What's also interesting is that five of Carter's predecessor archivists for the religious congregation were also non-Catholics.[52] Because of Carter's position when it comes to religion, he does not consider himself having any particularly spiritual role within the archive or the broader life of the congregation: "My role of the archivist, then, is to maintain the evidence of the congregation's work and to support that work. In this, the work of a religious archivist is no different from most other archivists: the archives serve to support the operation and administration of the sponsoring body."[53] While not identifying with any form of archival spirituality, Carter does mention the archival philosophy that upholds the work that he does. He has always viewed archives as essentially "non-neutral spaces of power that are willfully constructed to preserve some voices at the expense of others"[54] and that his duty as an archivist in response to this is to "critically ask who is being featured in my appraisal decisions and in the archival descriptions and what is being left out, overlooked, or otherwise elided" and to be self-reflexive in addressing these issues.[55] Carter's archival philosophy here fits well into what Cline speaks of as the "sacred

[49] Mt. 20:26 (NRSV-CE).
[50] Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You,'" 294-295.
[51] Is. 56:1-2 (NRSV-CE).
[52] Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #2. See Appendix.
[53] Ibid., Question #2. See Appendix.
[54] Ibid., Question #3. See Appendix; for further reading on the subject of archival silences, see: Rodney Carter, "Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence," *Archivaria* 61 (Spring 2006): 215-233.
[55] Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #3. See Appendix.

obligation" of every archivist to acknowledge their position of power as an archivist in controlling societal memory and knowledge, and to use this power to the benefit of all people in a sort of "covenant" relationship with them.[56] An archival "piety of service" underlies what Carter is saying, that is, a recognition of his obligation to equity and fairness, understanding his own bias, and being transparent in his actions, although without using the spiritual language and understanding utilized by religion.[57]

The three concepts (genuine encounter, sacred obligation, and piety of service) that Cline provides for the preservation of a proper covenantal relationship between archivists and others form the basis of the archival spirituality that Hugh Taylor theorized about and practiced. Such archival actions and mindsets can be applied to the work of any archivist, even those without any formal religious affiliation, despite the obvious correlations with religious belief and practice, especially of the Christian variety. The work of the archivist and the archive is in and of itself spiritual in the broader sense of the concept outlined by Taylor and Cline. As Brian M. Owens puts it, archivists "have been assigned with a divine act," that of maintaining and preserving memory, for the "ability to communicate and record an idea and transmit it to all other individuals is a divine creation."[58]

Archival Spirituality: Church Archivists

Now that we have looked at the broader meanings of archival spirituality with reference to the archival spirituality of a non-religious archivist, we will now narrow our focus on studying the meaning of archival spirituality to look at how Christian church archivists who adhere to a form of organized religion or spirituality view archival spirituality in their work.

Whereas in the previous section where I examined archival spirituality in more general terms and sought to describe some potential archival spiritualities that may be applicable to secular archivists, this section will explore one specific theme that often arises when speaking of the role of religious archivists in church archives: the church archivist as "pastor" or "minister". As we have seen, such a title could potentially find a home even within a more secular and

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[56] Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You,'" 293.
[57] Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You,'" 294-295.
[58] Brian M. Owens, "The Safeguarding of Memory: The Divine Function of the Librarian and Archivist," *Library and Archival Security* 18:1 (2003): 10-11.

broader sense of archival spirituality. As Buckwold explains in his thesis, Hugh Taylor speaks of all archivists as "successors of the shamans and community knowledge keepers of oral-based cultures"[59] while Brian M. Owens refers to the act of preserving and transmitting memory by archivists as a "divine act".[60] It is far easier, however, for us to understand an archivist as a pastor when working within a religious archival environment, and most especially if that church archivist themselves practices a form of Christian spirituality.

In fulfilling their role as pastors in the archives, church archivists should mirror the actions of a religious pastor in the ways that they conduct themselves and how they interact with the members of the denomination to which their archive belongs. The word "pastor" can also translate as "shepherd", with the inference being that pastors of church communities must shepherd the members of their congregation, who could be considered "sheep", guiding them along the right paths by the green pastures and still waters of the Christian life.[61] An archival pastor would, thus, have the obligation to be a guide and servant to the life and health of a church community, whether in terms of their spirituality or any other needs they may have that require reference to archival materials. Just as a church pastor must encourage his congregants to consult sermons, church music, and devotional activities to provide spiritual and worldly benefits, so also must an archival pastor encourage the community who they are serving as an archivist to consult the church's archival records in some way to keep the spirit of their faith and traditions alive. Church archivists, in fulfilling their pastoral role, should assist the community in resisting spiritual amnesia by conducting their work with the spiritual life of the community in mind, serving them accordingly.[62]

Church pastors can be said to have three main roles in the life of a church community that can be seen as spiritual disciplines: inward meditation, outward service, and corporate celebration. Inwardly, a pastor meditates on the mysteries and truths of faith and life; outwardly, a pastor serves his congregants according to their spiritual and corporeal needs; corporately, a pastor leads the community in celebrating the joy and enthusiasm of their faith.[63] Church

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[59] Jarad Buckwold, "Of Space, Time, and the Archives Between," i.
[60] Owens, "The Safeguarding of Memory," 10-11.
[61] Ps. 23:1-3 (NRSV-CE).
[62] Stewart, "Nurturing the Spirit," 111.
[63] McGarvey Ice, "Sensitivity, Blessing and Doxology: Archival Practice as Spiritual Discipline," *Restoration Quarterly* 58:3 (Third Quarter 2016): 179-181.

archivists would do well to imitate these three pastoral disciplines in their archival work also. A church archivist that meditates on the spirituality of their records and the spirituality of their community when approaching their archival activities will in turn allow the whole community to meditate on its spiritual past and future with reference to its archival patrimony.[64] When church archivists promote equality, hospitality, and truthfulness in their work, they do so in imitation of the Christian gospel; they cherish the ethic of service, serving their client community with the spirituality embodied within their records as their motivation.[65] For many church archivists, their work is "a vocation, a calling to serve a community, a sacred task of handing down tradition inherited from those who have gone before."[66] The result of such archival meditation and service is that a church archivist will desire to make the spirit within the records known to the community, joining with them in celebration and thanksgiving for the gracious acts of God found in the life of their community, past and present.[67] As archival pastors, church archivists are equipped to effectively reveal to their communities their records of spiritual value, in which "are kept the traces of the *transitus Domini* in human history".[68]

In her answers to the questionnaire that I sent to three church archivists, Melanie Delva, former Archivist for the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster and Archivist for the Provincial Synod of British Columbia and Yukon, responded that she always refers to her work as a church archivist as a ministry on several levels. Firstly, Delva considers her archival work as a ministry to the members of the church community whom she serves along with the wider Christian community. Hers is a ministry of keeping the story of faith alive amongst believers, helping to "understand where we have come from, to learn from our mistakes, to see – maybe for the first time with 20/20 vision – the way that God has been present in our story – as imperfect as it is."[69] This ministry applies not only to other members within the community, but to herself also. Delva acknowledges that her work within church archives has helped her to better understand and live out her own Christian faith with greater intentionality and integrity. "Because of the nature of the records, I was forced to eat down to the bare bones of who Jesus was and what he taught us to be

[64] Ibid., 179-180.
[65] Ibid., 180.
[66] MacQuiban, "Historical Texts or Religious Relics," 150.
[67] Ice, "Sensitivity, Blessing and Doxology," 180-181.
[68] Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church, *The Pastoral Function of Church Archives,* 1.3.
[69] Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #2. See Appendix.

and how to live in the world. The archival work shaped my faith, and that in turn shaped my archival work."[70] Over the course of her being a church archivist, Delva had "a spiritual awakening, and experienced a renewed/restored faith,"[71] which brings to mind the relationship between a church archivist's "inward meditation" on the spirituality of their records and their ability to properly minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the community they are serving.[72] Ministering to the community in this way can also facilitate a ministry between church archivists as Delva points out occurred especially in the years when many church archivists were dealing with records production for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, when she was able to support and minister to her archival colleagues who were struggling with the emotions that went along with that process.[73] Secondly, Delva considers herself a minister to those outside the church community, especially researchers and other members of the public: "I walked with people at some of the happiest and most devastating moments of their lives – this was particularly true in my work with Survivors of the Residential School System. It was not only ministry to them, but the ministry of learning from them to begin to shed light on things for others who didn't understand."[74] In assisting members of the public who were using the records under her care, Delva "was conscious of trying to embody the teachings of Jesus (service, speaking up for the marginalized…)" in all her interactions with archival researchers.[75]

When it comes to archival appraisal, church archivists must be vigilant in archiving church records that document the spiritual enthusiasm or spirit generated by events or people in the community's past. Careful archival documentation of spiritual enthusiasm and religious spirit is one of the most important ways that a church archivist can allow the members of the community to recall that same enthusiasm and spirit of faith of the past in the present moment of their own lives, thus contributing to their spiritual health. Church archivists must preserve the many kinds of records created by the church community, not simply the obviously spiritual or religious ones, but even the records that may seem to the eye untrained to the spiritual value of church records to be mundane, or "secular" in their meaning and use. Mundane records can

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[70] Ibid., Question #3. See Appendix.
[71] Ibid., Question #1. See Appendix.
[72] Ice, "Sensitivity, Blessing and Doxology," 179-180.
[73] Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #2. See Appendix.
[74] Ibid., Question #2. See Appendix.
[75] Ibid., Question #2. See Appendix.

include church meeting records, the minutes of church courts, and other similar administrative records.[76] Even such mundane church records contain within them traces of spiritual enthusiasm and spirit and have the potential to inspire that same spirituality within the minds of the faithful. Church archivists cannot afford to ignore or discard completely such archival records if they are to take seriously their role as archival pastors in guiding their client community in developing their spirituality. While some of these records may be preserved for administrative reasons, the spiritual value behind them must also be taken into consideration when describing and providing access to these records, for instance. The idea proposed by F. Gerald Ham concerning the role of archivists can be applied very easily to the duties of church archivists: archivists must "make an informed selection of information that will provide the future with a representative record of human experience in our time."[77] While Ham may be speaking of archival institutions with broader mandates (such as governmental archives), it should nevertheless be the goal of church archivists to make spiritually-informed selections of information created by a church community, that is, they must not neglect church records that have the imprint of spiritual value, even if appearing seemingly mundane, so that as full a representation of the community's spirituality as possible can be preserved.[78] Of course, one could argue, then, that every single record created by a church community or institution has some trace of spiritual value and thus should be archivally preserved. This, however, is unsustainable and unreasonable; church archivists, just as any other archivist, must make rational appraisal decisions as to which records will to be preserved (which is always a small portion of all records created). Archival appraisal will be discussed further in the second chapter of this thesis.

Several church archives in Canada have published various documents for use by records creators and managers at parishes and congregations in determining which records have enduring archival value. The Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto has recently created a records retention guideline for Anglican parishes within the diocese, which provides parish records managers a nearly four-page list of record types that are most commonly created in parish

[76] Stewart, "Nurturing the Spirit," 111.
[77] F. Gerald Ham, as quoted in: Shuster, "Documenting the Spirit," 136-137.
[78] Ibid., 138.

environments along with their retention period.[79] Various kinds of non-archival records are listed with retention periods including administrative memos, bank statements, and utility contracts. More obviously spiritually valuable records such as photographs and audio-visual recordings of parish and congregational activities, parish newsletters, scrapbooks, parish rolls, sacramental records, and parish histories are to be sent to the diocesan archives. Along with these records, however, are also other, more mundane church records that are to be sent to the archives including bylaws, policies, and procedural manuals; minutes and reports of various church boards, committees, and synods; annual vestry reports; financial ledgers; and church property titles. Such records are to be sent to the diocesan archive every three to five years for preservation.[80] The United Church of Canada Archives has also published several very similar documents for use by the records managers of the various United Church congregations. Record types created by United Church congregations are listed along with their retention periods, in a list very similar to that of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.[81] A complementary document published by the United Church of Canada Archives mentions that church records considered archival "have an historical and legal value that necessitates their being correctly kept and carefully preserved."[82] It seems to be that the more mundane church records often serve legal necessities for the church community.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has also issued a document to assist congregational records managers in determining which records have enduring archival value. In the document, minutes, registers, membership rolls, policies, ledgers, and other similar record types are all categorized as having permanent archival value for the church community.[83] In another Presbyterian Church in Canada document on this topic, it is stated that "the minutes, reports, correspondence and other select records generated by both Presbyteries and Synods act as

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[79] Anglican Diocese of Toronto Archives Department, *Parish Records Retentions Guidelines* (Archives Department, Anglican Diocese of Toronto, November 2019). https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/archives/information-for-parishes/parochial-records/.
[80] Ibid., 1.
[81] United Church of Canada Archives Network, *Sample Record Schedule: Congregations* (United Church of Canada Archives Network, 2014). https://nakonhakaucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/archives-records-schedule.pdf.
[82] United Church of Canada Archives Network, *What Do the Archives Want? A Basic Guide for Congregations* (United Church of Canada Archives Network, 2014), 2. https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_what-archives-want.pdf.
[83] Kim, Arnold and Bob Anger, *Managing Your Congregation's Records* (The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, May 2016), 2. https://presbyterianarchives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Archives_InfoSheet_ManagingCongregationRecords.pdf.

evidence of the life and work of these courts: documenting their actions, decisions, activities, responsibilities and financial position. They therefore have important legal and administrative value, as well as long-term historical value."[84] We see here again the importance of those mundane records. In a similar document issued by the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, description and preservation guidelines are provided for three types of records and are thus singled out as especially archivally valuable: parish registers, minutes and reports, and photographs.[85] Leaving photographs aside, church registers, meeting minutes, and committee reports may seem to be mundane administrative and legal records and of little importance to the spiritual life of a church community, but looked at from another perspective, it is the preservation of these kinds of archival records that will be essential to the continued life of a specific church community. It is these records that sustain the systems of administration, finance, and legality that provide church communities with the environment to grow and thrive spiritually.

Besides the mundane administrative and financial records created and preserved by church communities, there are also those records, which although being mundane, do show more obvious signs of what we might call "spiritual enthusiasm" in them. How is an archival pastor supposed to see, understand, and properly articulate such enthusiasm and spirit within church archival records, though? Such a concept as "spiritual enthusiasm" is rather elusive and hard to point out many times. While it is far easier to document the exterior effects of spiritual enthusiasm, such as various actions taken or words said, it is very difficult to properly record the interior moving of hearts and minds in the grip of spiritual enthusiasm. Such individuals see the world differently than those who have no spiritual enthusiasm.[86] Such a reality may perhaps make selection of these records difficult for a church archivist who does not personally ascribe to the religious or spiritual tradition of the community who they are serving. In such cases, a church archivist, in the name of serving as an archival pastor, must acquire a sensitivity to the spiritual ethos of the client community.[87] I do not mean to say, then, that a church archivist must always be a member of that specific faith community, nor that they belong to any. As I have already

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[84] The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, *Archives and Records Management Guidelines for Synods & Presbyteries* (The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives, April 2015), 1. https://presbyterianarchives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Archives_InfoSheet_RMforSynodsandPresbys.pdf.
[85] Anglican Diocese of Toronto, *What to Send to the Diocesan Archives?* (Anglican Diocese of Toronto, n.d), 2. https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/policies-guidelines/.
[86] Ibid., 138-139.
[87] Stewart, "Nurturing the Spirit," 113.

mentioned in this chapter, Rodney Carter, archivist for the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, is himself not religious. While in some ways, being a non-believer may prevent a professionally trained archivist from fully understanding the spiritual enthusiasm behind church records, hiring a professionally trained archivist is precisely what is needed in many church archives where many years of neglect or improper management may have already done some damage. If a church had the option between a congregation member with little to no archival expertise and a professional archivist from outside the community, I do not think the church would be wrong in hiring the professional archivist. Archival training, I would say, is certainly of greater importance to any archive than most other qualities; using untrained archival workers or even volunteers within church archives can have its benefits, but nothing compares to professional archival training in this regard. When it comes to understanding the practices surrounding appraisal, knowing description standards such as Rules for Archival Description (RAD), and being familiar with the principles of both physical and digital preservation, a professional archivist has a far greater advantage. Such professional archival training is especially important today as church archivists will increasingly need greater knowledge regarding the challenges of digital records. As I have shown earlier in this chapter using Cline's work, there is a sense in which a non-believing church archivist, in carrying out their archival training, can serve in a sort of pastoral role to the church community they are employed by.[88]

Even, however, within church communities where archivists have a deep and personal understanding of the spirituality of their client church community, it often happens that church records of spiritual value, even of the most obvious variety, are forgotten and discarded. Such has historically been the case in Christian churches and communities that do not belong to any of the ancient or mainline Christian traditions with rigid ecclesiastical leadership structures and well-documented creeds and confessions. The Christian churches and communities that grew out of the Evangelical movement over the past few hundred years, despite being strongly devoted to the proclamation of the Christian message and the growth of spiritual enthusiasm and faith in the lives of individual Christians, have historically placed an almost exclusive emphasis on the present and the future to the almost complete neglect of the past, especially in the way of

[88] Cline, "'Dust Clouds of Camels Shall Cover You,'" 288-295.

archival documentation.[89] Archives were rarely a priority among these Christian communities and movements that put such great emphasis on the present needs of evangelization, with little focus on where they had come from as opposed to where they were going. These sentiments can also be seen in some Mennonite communities with a heavy emphasis on mission work; preservation of the past in archival facilities seem to pale in comparison to the more pressing matters of the future salvation of people. One Mennonite commentator on a similar situation within Mennonite communities summarized the sentiment this way: "True, a denomination that ignores history lacks reference points, but one that dwells unduly on history misses the Christian imperative of urgency, both evangelistic and love-service."[90] Finances were allocated towards these kinds of activities without any monetary support for the preservation of the records of them, with parachurch groups such as The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and World Vision being a few examples of preserving the actions, both spiritual and "secular", of various Evangelical communities.[91]

The archival pastors of the Evangelical Christian world have only recently begun to come forward to address the current sad state of Evangelical archives with the establishment and work of the Evangelical Archives Conference since the late 1980s, with many realizing that while these church communities have done well by maintaining the spiritual ministries of teaching, preaching, and healing, they have forgotten the one ministry that is fundamental to all of them: remembering.[92] The Billy Graham Center Archives published a collection development policy in 1985 which stated the underlying spirit of their new archival efforts: "Just as Billy Graham has been at the center of evangelism for a generation, the [Billy Graham Center] Archives, by building a selected collection of major, representative documents, should be at the center of practical research in evangelism and missions."[93] Without an archival-pastoral ministry existing in these communities as has developed in some such as the Billy Graham Center, the spiritual

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[89] Robert Shuster, "'Everyone Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes': Nondenominational Fundamentalist/Evangelical/Pentecostal Archives in the United States," *American Archivist* 52 (Summer 1989): 367.
[90] Quoted in: Kroeker, "Manitoba Mennonite Archives and Canadian Mennonite Collective Memory," 81; One local exception seems to be the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies archive, which has attempted to strike a balance between preserving their history as well as maintaining the urgency for Christian mission. In this, it is unique among the more evangelistic-focused churches.
[91] Shuster, "'Everyone Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes,'" 370-371.
[92] Shuster, "'Everyone Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes,'" 374-375.
[93] The Billy Graham Center Archives, *The Billy Graham Center Archives Collection Development Policy* (The Billy Graham Center Archives, February 15, 1985), 1. https://www.wheaton.edu/media/billy-graham-center-archives/Collection-Development-Policy.pdf.

enthusiasm of the past could easily be lost in the future; with the loss of spiritually valuable records, a church community is weakened spiritually. A spiritual allusion for this may be found in the words that God declared through the Prophet Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge…"[94]

Archival Spirituality: The Spirit of Church Archives

Now that I have covered the first sub-category of archival spirituality by studying the personal and professional archival spirituality of both non-religious and religious archivists, in this section I will move on to the second sub-category: discussing the spirituality of the church archive itself, including the spiritual meaning behind the archival records themselves, the ways they are used within or without a church or religious community, and the application of various archival functions within the archive with reference to spirituality. Although this section will rightfully call to mind the spiritual value of obviously religious records such as birth, baptismal, marriage, and death records, along with records of sermons, doctrinal statements, and evangelistic records, it will also be necessary to point to records in church archives that may seem to be mundane or even "secular". Such mundane records must not be viewed as not spiritually valuable and thus not archivally valuable to a church archive but must be seen as an important part of the structure of a church or religious community. The spirituality of church archives can be considered with reference to two themes: church archives as creators of community identity, and church archives as repositories of religious memory.

Church Archives as Creators of Community Identity

I have written often about church "communities" throughout this chapter, referring to these communities of believers as the foundation of and motivation behind the pastoral work of a church archivist. Church archives are, in many cases, however, to be regarded as institutional or organizational archives, similar in many ways to other secular institutional archives. When it comes to the basic requirements for an archive (a facility, staff, budget, supplies, etc.) church archives are only different in so far as they translate these general archival norms to fit their own unique situations. Church archives are also very similar to, for instance, state-run archives in the

[94] Hos. 4:6 (NRSV-CE).

kinds of vital records that they preserve. The vital birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, and death records kept by most church archives can be considered in many cases legal substitutes for records which contain similar information in the archives of nations, provinces, and cities.[95] Like school and university archives, church archives often preserve records relating to education; like business archives, church archives also preserve financial, administrative, legal, and personnel records of the institutions within their jurisdiction; and like museum archives, church archives will often preserve artifacts and other objects that have a connection with the community's history and spirituality.[96]

Although it is clear that church archives function as institutional archives, church archives also function as community archives on more than one level. Though there are a wide range of possible definitions for what exactly community archives are, for the purposes of this chapter, I will define a community archive as any archive that seeks to document the history of any specific community with service to the members of that community in mind. Although most church archives are not owned and controlled directly by the members of that church community, church archives, even if created and controlled by the institutional leadership of that church, exist primarily to serve the needs of the church's members. In most cases, it is not the initial impulse behind the creation of church archives that makes church archives community archives (since the impulse behind them aligns more with the institutional needs of the church community); it is the fact that an archival repository exists for the benefit of the members of a church community that makes a church archive a community archive.[97] According to Ken Reddig, former head of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg, "there can be no mature personal or group sense of identity that is not rooted in thoughtful reflection upon the past."[98] With specific reference to Mennonite church archives, Conrad Stoesz speaks of a very important and common thread of identity that is often created through using church archives: Mennonite peace and social justice narratives, which "have shaped Mennonite group identity and are foundational to advancing a just-peace agenda in conflict zones around the world."[99] Much

[95] O'Toole, "What's Different About Religious Archives?," 93.
[96] Ibid., 93-94.
[97] Andrew Flinn, "Independent Community Archives and Community-Generated Content: Writing, Saving and Sharing our Histories," *Convergence* 16, no. 1 (February 2010): 41.
[98] Quoted in: Kroeker, "Manitoba Mennonite Archives and Canadian Mennonite Collective Memory," 83.
[99] Stoesz, "The Creation of an Identity," 75-76.

has been said, written, and done by Mennonites in discussing, understanding, and formulating their peace and social justice identity throughout the centuries, much of which continues to occur with reference to beliefs and actions recorded in church archives. Stoesz thus describes church archives as more than simply memory banks where communal identity narratives are deposited, but as spaces where, through the mediation of archivists, these identities are formed and re-formed.[100]

In viewing church archives as community archives, one must also look beyond the immediate community that consists of registered, often church-attending members of a congregation, parish, or denomination. In many places, churches exist to provide various services to those non-members who live in the surrounding neighbourhood, for instance. In some towns or neighbourhoods, the local church serves as valuable part of the identity of the broader community, so much so that it would be difficult to understand the history of a local area without also understanding the history of that church and its interactions with the wider community.[101] If we look again to F. Gerald Ham's idea that archivists must "make an informed selection of information that will provide the future with a representative record of human experience in our time,"[102] we can use this idea to understand the role of many church archives that play a central role in the life of their surrounding communities in preserving records that form the wider community's heritage and identity. Perhaps unbeknownst to many church leaders and archivists (and non-members of church communities), church archives can often serve as an indispensable resource for finding information concerning the history of the communities surrounding church congregations.

An example of this can be found in the genealogical work done by the genealogical archives and libraries established by the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints, unlike most Christians, believe that the human soul is immortal, that is, it never had a beginning, nor will it ever have an end. A soul takes on a human body for a time, and upon death, that soul continues to exist but so also do the earthly relationships (spouses, children) that it acquired while in a body. It is for this reason that,

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[100] Ibid., 72-73.
[101] Bill Sumners, "Church Archives: A Reason for Existence," Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives - Archive Helps, April 2, 2020, https://www.sbhla.org/art_reason.htm.
[102] F. Gerald Ham, as quoted in: Shuster, "Documenting the Spirit," 136-137.

in order to ensure that these familial relationships endure forever, certain sacred ordinances must be performed by those still living. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints believe that they have a divine duty to perform these ordinances on behalf of all their ancestors who have died for as far back into history as is possible. It is for the purpose of discovering the names of their ancestors for whom they must perform the ordinances, that members of the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints have developed an extensive genealogical archive (The Genealogical Library) for church members to conduct family research with. The performance of ordinances on behalf of the dead is the primary spiritual and religious purpose of this archive, but in recent decades, due to the rise of interest among the general population in genealogical research, the Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-Day Saints has opened this repository up to anyone, regardless of religious affiliation, conducting genealogical research.[103]

While for members of any church community, church council minutes, congregational policies, denominational statements of belief, and other similarly mundane church records may serve an administrative purpose with the added spiritual dimension discussed in this chapter, these same records could easily be viewed by non-members not for their doctrinal value, but for the other information and activities that they record. The activities of church members recorded in church records can easily shed light on larger historical trends such as in the areas of women's history, politics, education, social movements, and the stories of minority groups.[104] It is in this way that church archives can be essential resources in the creation and development of wider community identities which may exist alongside their role as creators of spiritual identities among church community members. And is this kind of wider community involvement by churches and their archives not a central part of the Christian spiritual mission? Is it not one of the marks of Christian communities to outreach and participate in the life of the wider community based on Christian principles of service to neighbour? Whether it be service to

[103] David M. Mayfield, "The Genealogical Library of The Church of Jesus Christ and Latter-day Saints," *Library Trends* (Summer 1983): 125-126; For a counter-view perspective on this, see: Creet, Julia. *The Genealogical Sublime* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2020).
[104] Robert C. Ray, "No One Has Ever Seen God: The Use of Religious Archives for Nonreligious Purposes," *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 7 (2009): 153-154.

church members or non-members, church archivists should "go out to the highways and byways" (Luke 14:23) and invite people to use their records to create communal identity.[105]

Church Archives as Repositories of Spiritual Memory

Closely connected with the church archive being a creator and sustainer of a community's identity is the church archive as the place of communal remembrance; the remembrance not only of the past activities of the community and its individual members, but more importantly the remembrance of the works of God among His people, despite their many shortcomings. This remembrance becomes the *locus* of God's passage through space and time among his people. Meditating on the memory of past events in turn guides God's people towards spiritual fulfilment in the future. This idea of "memory" is central to most scholarship on church archives with this idea of spiritual or religious "memory" also being an important theme within the pages of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles.[106]

Father Romuald Boucher, in a homily addressed to Catholic church archivists attending the 1987 Canadian Religious Conference, provides a historical-religious example that highlights the religious significance that records have had in Jewish and Christian communities in terms of remembering their God and their faith. He mentions the Biblical story of when the Jewish exiles were returning from Babylon to Jerusalem. The Jewish temple in Jerusalem had long since been destroyed and there was much anxiety on the part of the Jewish people regarding the practice of their sacrificial rituals without a temple there. Upon searching the Babylonian archives, a document, signed by the Babylonian king himself, was discovered which permitted the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem. This record, while on the surface simply permitting the construction of the Jewish temple, allowed the Jewish people on a spiritually fundamental level to properly practice their religion again.[107] The discovery of such a document allowed the returning Jewish exiles to remember the goodness of God towards their ancestors in allowing for their temple to be rebuilt, an action that was far from the living memory of any at that time. If the

[105] Paul A. Ericksen, "Letting the World In: Anticipating the Use of Religious Archives for the Study of Nonreligious Subjects," *The Midwestern Archivist* 12, no. 2 (1987): 89-90.
[106] Michael John Zielinski, "Ecclesiastical Archives and the Memory of God's People," *Catholic Archives* 30 (2010): 3.
[107] Linda Wicks and M.C. Havey, eds., *Perspectives on Religious Archives: Selected Papers Presented to the CRC-O Archivists Conferences 1982-2002* (CRC Archivists Group, 2003), 11.

record had not been preserved, the memory of ancient Jewish religious practice and belief itself would not have been preserved in the practice and belief of the returning Jewish exiles. Church archives, just as any kind of religious archive, can thus easily be seen to be preserving the community's memory of the past with the benefit of guiding the community into the future with a solid spiritual-historical foundation.

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg provides an excellent example of a church archive positioning itself as an archive for the Mennonite Brethren community that seeks to preserve the memory of the community for its future benefit. From its very beginnings, the Centre has sought to demonstrate the spiritual necessity of church archives within Mennonite circles, often with connection to the spiritual memory that church archives preserve. In his 1989 letter to Mennonite Brethren pastors, Ken Reddig, then head of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg described the mandate of church archives as "not only to preserve the documents, bulletins and correspondence that tell the story of each congregation, but to help pass on the truth that a life filled with the spirit of Christ is the answer to each person's quest for meaning in this earthly life."[108] When a church archive preserves the spiritual memory of its community's past, it in turn allows for future generations to understand and live according to that same spirituality in their lives. The Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg also serves a large portion of the Mennonite community by, as Korey Dyck puts it, documenting "the common experience of a faith group whose everyday activities flow from their identity as a Christ-centred community."[109] Dyck continues by stating that church archives, in collecting, preserving, and sharing the stories contained in archival records, "help generate both the ongoing memory of past mission and ministry initiatives, and the foundation for new iterations of the same for a new generation."[110] In this way, church archives can act as memory institutions by reminding church members of the lives and spirituality of their ancestors in order to inspire them to emulate and build upon their legacy within the community. Preserving the memory of the community's past can allow for future community members to challenge previous notions of community identity through re-evaluation and reinvention while also serving to hold the community accountable for

[108] Quoted in: Kroeker, "Manitoba Mennonite Archives and Canadian Mennonite Collective Memory," 83.
[109] Korey Dyck, "Why a Mennonite Church Archive? Part Two," *Mennonite Historian* 42, no. 4 (December 2016): 6.
[110] Ibid., 6.

past mistakes and sins.[111] Archival efforts should, then, be intended towards positively pursuing Christian mission within the community. As Dyck says with reference specifically to the Mennonite Heritage Archives:

> The value of the MHC archive can be judged by how well it transmits the church's values, and how well it presents the themes of the church's ongoing witness in new and different contexts… MHC helps to bring together these pieces of history for the purpose of enabling Mennonite faith communities to construct ongoing examples of ordinary and extraordinary Christian witness in our shared community life.[112]

When church archives act as preservers of a church community's spiritual memory, they fulfill the pastoral role that this chapter has already attributed to church archivists. The pastoral task of church archives is to preserve the memory of the "care of souls" in the past to encourage and strengthen future individuals in their spiritual lives also.[113] The documentary heritage transmitted by the work of church archives is essential to the spiritual life since, as a "moment of tradition, it expresses the memory of evangelization and it represents today a privileged pastoral tool."[114] As the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Patrimony of the Church notes, the transmission and preservation of tradition allows memory of past events to become prophecy for the future; church archives become "places of memory of the Christian community and storehouses of culture for the new evangelization."[115] Remembering the spirituality of the past inspires spiritual action for the future, for "based on an awareness of its own past, the Christian community lives out its ecclesial commitment today, realizing that it must entrust its inheritance to tomorrow, and so guarantee an original experience of the *Traditio*."[116] Church archives, by preserving the memory of previous generations, position themselves to become useful instruments of future pastoral action in times of religious fragmentation when archival records can serve to clarify the core identity and values of the community. Religion can be seen as a chain of memory, with church archives acting to preserve the continued structural integrity of this chain.[117]

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[111] Korey Dyck, "Why a Mennonite Church Archive? Part One," *Mennonite Historian* 42, no. 2 (June 2016): 6.
[112] Dyck, "Why a Mennonite Church Archive? Part Two," 6.
[113] Zielinski, "Ecclesiastical Archives and the Memory of God's People," 1.
[114] David Bracken, "The Pastoral Function of Church Archives: A Reflection on the Theological, Juridical and Pastoral Context of Roman Catholic Diocesan Archives," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 82:1 (2017): 63.
[115] Ibid., 63.
[116] Zielinski, "Ecclesiastical Archives and the Memory of God's People," 5.
[117] Bracken, "The Pastoral Function of Church Archives," 64-65.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined what spiritually compels and informs a church archivist in their archival work, whether they personally belong to a religious community or not, as well as what overall spiritual principles act as the impetus behind Christian communities creating and preserving archival records. From the earliest days, Christians have gathered and preserved in various ways records that bear witness to their faith and spirituality. For most of Christian history, the role of the church archivist in preserving the spirit of religious institutions and communities was limited to the non-digital world. In the past half-century, however, the amount of electronic and digital records being created has increased exponentially in every part of society, including within church communities. This situation that church archives find themselves in following the digital revolution requires new ways of approaching church archives and new ways of understanding how digital records interact with the Christian mandate of preserving and thus proclaiming its spiritual message to the world. Does the spirituality that developed with relation to non-digital church archives now extend into the realm of digital church archives?

In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to make some connections between historical church archiving and modern digital culture. The spiritual elements associated with digital technology and records could potentially serve as a meaningful context to better understand the spiritual connections between digital records and church archives. In order for the spirituality of church archives to maintain its place and meaning in this digital age, greater attention must be given to the more abstract meaning of the digital world and the records that we produce in it. In better understanding the spirituality of both non-digital and digital church documents, church archivists can more fully and more accurately capture the entire spirit of the Christian experience in society, which includes the digital. The enduring spiritual value of born-digital records must not be overlooked if Christians desire to fulfil their spiritual mandate in this world.

Chapter Two: Spirituality in a Digital World

Introduction

In recent decades, with the proliferation of born-digital records entering archival repositories, archival institutions across all sectors, both religious and secular, have begun developing creative ways to properly preserve such records. The archival preservation of digital records requires new technologies and systems that can respond to the unique characteristics of digital records and digital environments. As time progresses, and the number of born-digital records being created by every institution steadily increases, the urgency for archival action in developing long-term digital preservation systems and techniques also increases. Whatever the institution, organization, or community, digital records will continue to make up one of the largest portions of newly created records. If such an entity wishes to fulfil its mandates, functions, and activities effectively into the future, prioritizing the preservation of such a large portion of its records is certainly within its best interests.

Churches and other Christian communities and organizations are not any different from other entities in this regard, especially within the modern Canadian context. Church institutions and communities exist to organize and preserve certain spiritual beliefs and practices among their members with many also existing to spread such beliefs and practices to those outside their membership. These can be considered the core mandates of a church or religious community. Church records then, while at once serving administrative purposes, are also created and archived to document a church's activities and experiences, preserving its traditions and convictions for the spiritual benefit of current and future church members, and reminding them of the spiritual mission of their community. These are only some of the ways that church records play a major role in the spiritual mission or mandate of a church. Church institutions must, therefore, work closely with church archivists to ensure that such records of spiritual value are properly preserved for long-term accessibility by the members of the church community.

As has been established in the previous chapter, Canadian church archivists must now, just as much as any other archivist, take seriously the preservation of born-digital records so that their ability to enact their spiritual mission can continue. This understanding of the spiritual value of church records must be harnessed by church archivists, and those who advocate on their

behalf, as an essential point of leverage when arguing for increased institutional funding for church archives with church leadership. This chapter will expand this argument for the inherent spiritual value of church archives into the realm of digital church records. Not only can advocates for church archives refer to the spirituality of church archives in their non-digital form – which includes the spiritual value of the records themselves as well as the spiritual value found in the professional work of the archivist – but they can also make reference to the spirituality found in intersections between digital culture, technology, and church archives.

In discussing the connections between the spiritual value of church archives and digital records, there arises some interesting questions. Does digitality, that is, the conditions associated with living within a digital culture, have any connections with spirituality, that is, the conditions associated with living within a spiritual community? What are the connections between digital technology and spirituality? How does digital technology assist in the practice of spirituality? Does digitality perhaps have its own form of spirituality that can be said to complement or even enhance traditional spirituality as practiced by members of certain church communities? In asking such questions (and by hopefully attempting to provide some answers to them), the growing necessity for addressing long-term digital preservation by church archives can be advanced. If the connections between spirituality, the use of digital technology, and the creation and preservation of born-digital archival records can be elucidated upon, perhaps my urgent call for digital preservation within church archives can more easily be understood. Some recent archival and non-archival scholarship would suggest that digital technology does contain reflections of spirituality that could serve to promote its usage in archival preservation among communities such as churches and their archives that readily attribute value to spiritual endeavours that promote their spiritual mission. This chapter will analyse these concepts with the hope of providing church archivists with additional material in advocating in favour of the spiritual value of church archives, especially in terms of digital records.

Now, these arguments for the spirituality of digital culture and technology need not be strictly limited to church archives, as I will be doing in much of my analysis. As I have already mentioned in the first chapter, spirituality can be applied in any archival context if the broader, "world religions" definition of spirituality is used; that is, if by spirituality we mean the application of deeper human truths and the development of human virtues in archival work, one

could conclude that any argument for digital preservation could potentially utilize the arguments for the spiritual value of archives and digital culture in general. When speaking of the intersections between spirituality and digitality using the wider, modern definition of spirituality, the spirituality associated with digitality would not only be of interest to churches, but also to banks, schools, and government departments. My analysis, however, will be limited to how arguments founded on concepts of archival spirituality and the spirituality of the digital can advance the mission of churches and their archives.

Digital Technology and Church Mission

One of the most readily accepted connections between the digital and the spiritual by many within church communities, especially within the last few decades, is the role that digital technology plays in supporting various kinds of church activity. This is perhaps the most easily perceived role of digital technology within churches and other Christian organizations. Church leaders and other prominent advocates for a greater Christian commitment to more widely disseminating their spiritual beliefs and practices to the masses have been vocal in their support for a greater integration of digital technology into spirituality. Pope John Paul II, for instance, in a statement issued in connection with World Communications Day in 1989, spoke of the mandate given to Catholics specifically after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) concerning the relationship between religion and technology. He alluded to the attitude within certain Christian circles which seems to suggest that Christians should "stand aloof or try to isolate [themselves] from the mainstream" of the culture in which they live in terms of utilizing technology in everyday life. The pope in this address spoke of how, since Christians always live amid the many societal and technological changes that occur throughout history, these experiences, being held in common, must be interpreted in the light of Christian faith. In doing so, the pope indicates, Christians can make "creative use of the new discoveries and technologies for the benefit of humanity and the fulfillment of God's plan for the world".[1] A more recent example of optimism surrounding the relationship between new digital technologies and spirituality can also be seen in the 2011 Vatican gathering of 150 Catholic and non-Catholic

[1] John Paul II, "The Church Must Learn to Cope with Computer Culture", EWTN, May 27, 1989, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/church-must-learn-to-cope-with-computer-culture-8129.

Christian bloggers, invited by Pope Benedict XVI to discuss their experiences with digital technology and faith as well as to respond to the pope's call to "inhabit the digital world".[2]

Others have echoed this point that Christians cannot spiritually afford to ignore or misuse the many forms of digital technology, especially since new forms are continually being introduced. Incorporation of certain elements of digital culture into the life of Christian spirituality provides, many would argue, an opportunity for Christians to fulfil their God-given mandate to spread their message as has been done since the earliest days of Christian history, the major difference now being that this can be done using newer and more relevant technologies and media. Many commentators within Christian communities have recently attested to the spiritual benefits of keeping in step with digital culture and the spiritual elements that go along with it, such as digital media being used to enhance the spiritual lives of individuals through the dissemination of information of spiritual value. Proposed benefits of using the digital also extend to the Christian task to evangelize the culture in which they find themselves. Using digital means to do so follows well the ancient Christian principles of inculturation and contextualization in conducting missionary work; some consider it to be the most effective way to find culturally relevant ways of engaging with a society born into digitality.[3]

The argument of my thesis is in complete agreement with such ideas of properly utilizing contemporary digital technologies in the service of Christian mission and spirituality. The benefits of incorporating digital technology and media as instruments for preserving and invigorating the Christian mission in the modern world, whatever form this may take within the various church communities and institutions, are very great in my estimation. This view on the relationship between digital technology and spirituality, as seen within the formulation created by technology scholar Stephen Garner, can be labelled as the "technology as neutral" perspective. This view, while seeing the obvious benefits that digital technology has on contemporary forms of spirituality in church communities, always perceives digital technology as neither inherently good or evil to begin with; while keeping in mind technologies' inherent biases, use of technology must be tested and can be used for spiritual good. In this view, digital media is not created in isolation, nor is digital technology, rather, they are social constructions

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[2] Miriam Diez Bosch, et al., "Open Wall Churches: Catholic Construction of Online Communities," *Prisma Social* 19 (December 2017): 300.
[3] Philip R. Meadows, "Mission and Discipleship in a Digital Culture," *Mission Studies* 29 (2012): 173.

and thus are guided by social values. Within the context of Christian spirituality and mission, digital technology would be spiritually beneficial if utilized to, for instance, encourage church members in the practice of their faith. Of course, this concept of neutrality must never be confused with the mistaken idea that technologies are simply neutral and empty vessels that are created to contain our ideas; every technology incorporates inherent bias.

A second view proposed by Garner is called the "technology as liberator" perspective, an optimistic view which sees in the proliferation and usage of digital technology within church communities a way to extend their spiritual mission as far as possible. The first view is essentially a tempered version of this second view, which, I would say, does not properly take into consideration technological bias. A third perspective, "technology as oppressor", sees digital technology as a threat to everything that is uniquely human. Proponents of this view see in the application of digital technology into the spiritual life and the activities of church communities significant ethical and moral concerns such as the breakdown of face-to-face relationships and thus the loss of what makes spirituality human.[4]

There is some truth in this third view that can be easily tempered by the first position. While digital technology and media can be used as points of connection within spirituality, they cannot replace gathering in community to share and experience the very real expressions of spirituality that can only be understood through human presence and encounter. In seeking to properly incorporate digitality into spirituality, these "real" spiritual expressions must empower and enliven the "virtual" ones in a spiritually edifying way.[5] Some common examples of digital media becoming a hinderance to proper spiritual practice come very often from, for example, video footage of worship services being posted on social media or other platforms out of its original context. This can be as simple as only a small snippet of the worship service (for instance, the sermon) being posted on a church social media account. In what way did this sermon correlate to the rest of the worship or liturgy that both preceded and followed it? Could it be that a different impression was made on the person who heard the sermon in its liturgical context as opposed to the person who heard it in its isolated social media environment? Does the

[4] Garner is quoted and discussed in: Anita L. Cloete, "Living in a Digital Culture: The Need for Theological Reflection," *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (2015): 2-3.
[5] Claudio Carvalhaes, "And the Word Became Connection: Liturgical Theologies in the Real/Virtual World," *Liturgy* 30, no.2 (2015): 33.

act of worshipping corporately in community allow for a more spiritually accurate experience than does engagement with a digital recording? Such questions about context and the effects of digitality should be asked by church communities seeking to use digital technology and media for spiritual purposes as well as by church archivists seeking to preserve spiritually valuable digital records.[6]

Such varied perspectives among Christians resulting from theological reflection on the meaning and place of digital technology in the spiritual life and in the life of church communities is intriguing, but it is also concerning. For advocates for the adoption of digital preservation strategies within church archives such as myself, the "technology as oppressor" perspective can at times pose a threat to the creation and preservation of digital records. The benefits that digital technology has within the spiritual lives of communities and individuals must be further explored, especially when it comes to the development of "born-digital theories of digital religion" and an "analysis that understands how religion is situated in a technologically infused space and culture."[7] Such grand analysis will be included near the end of this chapter, but I will firstly discuss the seemingly mundane digital records created and shared by churches through the internet and other records created through the daily activities of church offices and other ministries. These mundane records show the routine use of digital technology in the service of Christian spirituality and mission and should thus be understood by church archivists as important records of spiritual value for archival preservation.

Churches, the Internet, and Digital Records

Churches and Internet Presence

It is quite common today for churches and other Christian communities to at least have a website, whether it be elaborate with many features and a large amount of informational content or simply containing the bare necessities such as contact info and the like. What is becoming more common as the years progress is for churches to create and maintain at least one social media account, especially as social media platforms have become very nearly universally

[6] Lisa M. Allen-McLaurin, "Let Me Post This Praise on Facebook: Questioning the Use of Digital and Social Media in Worship," *Liturgy* 30, no.2 (2015): 48-51.
[7] Heidi A. Campbell, "Religious Communication and Technology," *Annals of the International Communication Association* 41, Issue 3-4 (2017): 3-4.

accepted and used by individuals both within and without church communities. While much can be said concerning the proliferation of individual social media accounts and profiles in terms of how this affects the work of archivists in preserving society's history and memory as portrayed on the internet, I will limit myself to speaking of church archives. It must be acknowledged that the content found on church websites, social media accounts, and other audio-visual platforms on the internet are truly records. They are records that preserve evidence of the digital presence and actions of any given church community as well as the new ways in which Christian spirituality has been communicated through and affected by digital technology and media. It is common to find shared across church social media accounts Saint of the Day blurbs, comments on Gospel passages, images with inspirational or encouraging quotes, and prayer requests posted by individuals or community leaders; community members are able to interact with these digital records and with one another by viewing, liking, recommending, sharing links, and leaving comments.[8] Such interactivity fits well with how many church or other Christian organizations view the meaning behind having a digital presence and the creation and use of digital records. In one study the website managers of six prominent Catholic media groups and organizations were asked about the end goal of their digital creations: every single one of them answered that the reason they were creating digital Catholic content and fostering user interaction in digital spaces was for the purpose of evangelization.[9]

An example of the creation of digital content and spaces for the purpose of spreading spiritual messages can be seen with the online presence of the Catholic community of St. Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg.[10] St. Mary's Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Winnipeg which in a sense makes it the ecclesiastical centre of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. Its clergy are responsible for the spiritual care of their parishioners as well as informing others about liturgical and other parish events, much of which occurs through the cathedral's website and its social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). As of 2020, St. Mary's website has five dropdown bars titled "The Cathedral", "Sacraments", "Faith Formation", "Parish Life", and "Contact". Under the "Sacraments" tab there are four options: baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals. Under "Faith Formation" there are Catechism and RCIA (Rite of Christian

[8] Bosch, et al., "Open Wall Churches," 312.
[9] Ibid., 312.
[10] St. Mary's Cathedral, https://www.stmaryscathedralwpg.ca/.

Initiation for Adults) and under "Parish Life" there are six options, one of which is a link to the parish blog containing images and information on past and upcoming parish events. That three of the five dropdown menus contain information about liturgical and other spiritual topics in the life of the parish show the main reason the website exists. Its primary purpose is to serve the spiritual needs of the cathedral parishioners by providing them quick and easy access to parish resources and inform those who may be interested in becoming a member of the community. To view such online digital records and community social media accounts as non-archival would be to also view them as not important to the spirituality of the community. They serve as reminders of core Catholic spirituality placed among the parish event reminders, notes from the rector, and uplifting quotes. This serves as an example of the ways that church communities often use digital technology and media to serve their greater goals of advancing Christian spirituality among their members. Website preservation will be discussed further in the third chapter of this thesis.

Digital Records: Mundane and Spiritual

While it is very true that these social media and internet-based born-digital records cannot be ignored by archivists when it comes to archival preservation, no matter how routine or mundane they may appear, it must also be remembered that the day-to-day records being created by clergy, administrative staff, and ministry coordinators are also largely born-digital. These records are also – even more so than social media postings and webpages – often viewed as mundane records, separated from and devoid of any sense of spirituality that will form the foundation of any future practice of spirituality within the community. Such understanding is especially true of administrative records, policies, and any similar records that seem to only serve the immediate day-to-day function associated with their creation. It should be understood, however, by church archivists especially, that such records should be the priority when it comes to preserving the digital records of a church community. The digital culture that has in recent decades grown up around the creation and use of digital records in church offices by clergy, administrative staff, and ministry coordinators shows how interconnected the spiritual mission of church communities are with the creation, use, and preservation of digital records. Church records, many of which serve immediate functions such as office management, financial accountability, and human resources, also, as I hope has been made clearer in the first chapter, very often also serve as the practical foundation to any church or religious community. These

records serve both to complement the spiritual foundations of the community as well as to serve as spiritually valuable records in and of themselves as the community moves forward in their mission and mandates. Knowing how to properly identify these spiritually valuable records is essential to the existence of any church archive.

Conversations surrounding archival appraisal and acquisition are particularly important when discussing the preservation of digital records in church communities. While the specifics behind establishing a proper digital preservation system or plan will be discussed in further detail in the third chapter of this thesis, it will be necessary to discuss here the appraisal that must complement such a preservation plan. To begin with, Helen Samuels stresses the idea that creating a strategy surrounding appraisal for an archive (Samuels is referring to institutional archives in general) should be less about what already exists within its holdings and more concerned about what should ideally exist in its holdings based on the archive's mandate and collecting goals.[11] A church or religious archive is primarily concerned with collecting the records that are either created by their own religious community/institution or those records that have been created that have some significant connection or relevance to that particular community. While this is a collection mandate that can be customized for each church archive, it nevertheless covers an exceptionally large amount of records; not every record created by a church institution can (or should) be kept for long-term archival preservation. This is especially true when considering born-digital records which tend to exist in large amounts on desktops, hard drives, and cloud servers. It would simply be impractical for any archivist to have to acquire and preserve every single digital record created by the institutional side of the community. As is the case in many other institutional archives, such as in governmental archives, appraisal decision making must, on the one hand, take into consideration the historical and archival value of records and, on the other hand, consideration must also be given to their value in terms of operational needs, legal requirements, and other similar administrative purposes. It is in making these appraisal decisions that an archive's mandate or mission must be in constant dialogue with any record-keeping responsibilities.[12] As has been shown in the first chapter of this thesis, some church archives are regulated according to canon law; while it is essential that they fulfill their spiritual mission in their appraisal decisions, it is equally important that they fulfill their legal

[11] Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," *The American Archivist* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 119-120.
[12] Ian E. Wilson, "The Fine Art of Destruction Revisited," *Archivaria* 49 (2000): 136.

and administrative responsibilities. Striking the right archival balance surrounding the intersections of digital church archives and spirituality will continue to be the most important question facing church archivists for many years to come; in all of this, they must work hard at identifying those records that have an underlying spiritual importance.

Church records that may seem mundane at first glance range in appearance from records that are more obviously spiritually important (such as sacramental records of births, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and funerals) to the less obvious ones (financial and legal documentation, property files, and personnel records). Upon further inspection, it can be discovered that many such records show – or at the very least, complement – the spiritual mission and activities of the community.

For instance, the Westminster United Church fonds stored at the United Church of Canada Archives in Winnipeg contains a range of different record series having to do with congregational board meetings, various committee meeting minutes, annual reports, ledgers, sacramental registers, and communion rolls spanning from 1889 to 2002.[13] While most of these records are non-digital paper records, these same kinds of records are undoubtedly still being created but most likely now using computers. If these kinds of records in non-digital form have been seen to have long-term value to the spiritual mission, life, and activities of the Westminster United Church community, and thus warranted long-term preservation, then it should be equally clear that these same kinds of records in digital form should be given similar treatment. Yes, many of these records do have levels of practical value for the church community, but the underlying spiritual value should never be ignored when making decisions on archival appraisal and preservation. Bob Stewart, a United Church archivist has written about the underlying spiritual value of seemingly mundane church office records. Even though records of church courts and church meeting minutes do serve their obvious immediate functions of maintaining accountability and keeping order, these same records can be used as a resource to make decisions of spiritual importance for the community at a later time as well as to understand theology, even while not directly being theological or spiritual documents in themselves. These records aid in continuing the life of the church community and thus should be preserved as important to the

[13] Westminster United Church fonds, United Church of Canada Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

community's spiritual mission.[14] The records of the Executive Office series within Mennonite Central Committee's Archives (a Canadian Mennonite charitable organization) at the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg also contains many committee meeting minutes, various program administrative records, and financial records.[15] While these records are also non-digital paper records (spanning from 1964 to 2007), there is every reason to believe that these same kinds of records are still being created and used but on computers by Executive Office staff members and various program directors and staff that interact with the office. Such records reveal the administrative and financial work behind the humanitarian, social, religious, and political activities undertaken by MCC Canada throughout its history. Obviously, with all of these and similar born-digital records, proper appraisal techniques must be applied; due to the vast amount of born-digital records being created by church offices, the various functions of church communities and organizations (with the spiritual function being prioritized) must be kept in mind.

Similar mundane church records exist in every church or religious institution and should not be overlooked by church archivists in exercising their roles as appraisers and preservers of church records. Most importantly to the topic of this chapter, much of these records are now being created and used on computers. The growing reliance of church institutions on born-digital records creation must be taken seriously as born-digital records of spiritual value are potentially being created daily.

Archives and Digital Culture: Perspectives from Three Church Archivists

To investigate further the connections between the spiritual work of church communities and digital culture, in the questionnaires that I distributed to three Canadian church archivists from three different Christian groups (Catholic, Anglican, and Mennonite), I asked each archivist about the ways in which digital technology and media are used within the communities in which they are or were archivists in.

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[14] Bob Stewart, "Nurturing the Spirit: Reflections on the Role of a Church Archivist," *Archivaria* 30 (Summer 1990): 111-113.
[15] MCC Canada Executive Office series, CA MCC s00016, Mennonite Central Committee Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Melanie Delva, who from 2005 to 2017 served as the Archivist for the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster as well as the Archivist for the Provincial Synod of British Columbia and Yukon, noted in her response to the questionnaire that the more the Anglican Church of Canada changes its structures over time, the more parishes and parishioners will rely on digital means of carrying out their duties, spiritual and administrative. With a shortage of clergy and staff as well as funding and resources within many parishes and dioceses, Delva found during her time as an Anglican archivist that digital technologies and platforms such as Facebook, because they required very little in the way of financial resources to use, became the default form of creating records especially by younger Anglicans. For instance, while conducting Diocesan Youth Movement (DYM) meetings, council members would record their meetings not using conventional paper meeting minutes, but instead through a group Facebook chat which allowed for more flexibility in terms of who could participate in the meeting. Delva noted that this definitely led to some struggles when it came to archiving DYM meeting minutes – their meeting minutes were all recorded within a Facebook chat thread. It is not only those Anglicans within Generation X/Y that Delva noticed this dramatic shift towards the creation of digital records for spiritual and administrative purposes, though. Even Anglican bishops have blogs and Twitter feeds from which they shepherd their flocks.[16] It is imperative, therefore, for church archivists to maintain an awareness of the ways in which the church community they are serving are using and interacting with digital culture and technology. If a church archivist is aware of church councils and committees conducting their activities via email, social media, or on computers, then they can more easily determine which born-digital records of spiritual value should be acquired and preserved.

In his responses to the questionnaire, Conrad Stoesz, Archivist for the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg, brought up the fact that, while other church communities such as the Anglican Church are very open to relying more on digital means of communication and records creation within their communities, there is still, in some parts of the Mennonite community, a division in the acceptance of digital technologies in daily living. According to Stoesz, some Mennonite communities "see digital technology as opening up ourselves to too many outside and non-Christian influences… It is not only negative influences but a reliance on the outside world,

[16] Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #5. See Appendix.

and an erosion of community life is what more tradition-minded Mennonites are concerned about. There are some Mennonite communities today that are not part of the electrical grid."[17] This brings to mind what technology scholar Stephen Garner labelled as the "technology as oppressor" view of electronic technology, a view in which digital technology is seen as an ethical and moral threat to authentic community interactions and human spirituality.[18] Despite this being the stance taken in some Mennonite communities, Stoesz also notes that many more Mennonites view digital technology in very positive terms, seeing it as a tool with great potential for use within Mennonite church communities. He uses a current example to illustrate. As I write this thesis (in the first half of 2020), all public worship has been cancelled in Canadian churches due to the outbreak of the deadly virus known as COVID-19 which means that Christians cannot gather together for Sunday worship at the moment. In past decades, this would have been the end of the discussion, but due to the proliferation of online digital video streaming technologies, many churches are currently live streaming church services into the homes of their members. Stoesz mentions that he has participated in church services and small group discussions via Zoom.[19] Church archivists having an understanding and awareness of how digital technologies are being used for spiritual purposes such as communicating spiritual messages and connecting virtually with community members for the purpose of maintaining bonds of community and spirituality is very important, as I have already mentioned, in determining which born-digital records have long-term spiritual importance. What Stoesz describes concerning the usage of digital communication technology for spiritual ends is a more obvious example of digital record with spiritual value.

Rodney Carter, Archivist for the St. Joseph Region of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph in Ontario observes that while the religious sisters for whom he is archiving do not have any obvious or overarching negative attitudes towards the use of digital technology (Carter notes that they do have a website)[20] they also do not use digital technology to any significant extent. Using Stephen Garner's categories of interaction with digital technology, such a scenario can be labelled as embodying the "technology as neutral" perspective. Carter explains that since the community's charism is primarily focused on providing healthcare and not on evangelization

[17] Conrad Stoesz, Answers to Questionnaire, April 2020, Question #5. See Appendix.
[18] Cloete, "Living in a Digital Culture," 2-3.
[19] Conrad Stoesz, Answers to Questionnaire, April 2020, Question #5. See Appendix.
[20] Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, April 2020, Question #5. See Appendix.

efforts, the use of digital technology within or in addition to their spirituality is extremely limited.[21] Unlike parishes or church congregations, who for the most part are interested primarily in preserving and spreading their spiritual way of life, and thus generally have many opportunities to use digital technology to accomplish this mission, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph do not see so much of a need for digital technology in their spiritual endeavours. Carter notes that while he feels that he is not fully knowledgeable enough to comment on how the community connects their spirituality and digital culture, concerning their use of digital technology he says:

> From my vantage point, the congregation is not very involved with digital culture and technology. They use email for communication, of course, and create digital documents and photographs etc. but as an organization they are not terribly engaged. There is a fairly rudimentary congregational website but they do not have a presence on Facebook or other social media platforms (although the museum at the congregation's motherhouse does have Facebook and Twitter pages). While there is some information on vocations on the congregation's website and the information shared is often couched in the Sisters' spirituality and mission, but that is about the limit of how they are using digital technology for spiritual ends.[22]

Perhaps this lack of interaction with digital technology will change within the community as time moves on as has already been the case in other religious communities in recent years. Such lack of interaction with digital technology by the members of the community does, in the end, put a cap on the digital preservation efforts of Carter as the community's archivist. This, of course, does not mean that born-digital records are not being created by the community, but only that digital culture has less to do with the life and mission of the community than it does with many other church communities and institutions, especially relating to an internet presence.

Modern church communities and institutions will, on the whole, however, only continue to increase their use of digital technology and media for spiritual purposes in service to the spiritual life of their communities as has can be seen in the examples given above. These digital and online records, although perhaps seemingly mundane in that they often show a routine use of digital technology, in many cases really do capture the spiritual actions and enthusiasm of community members and institutions. Much valuable information can be learned about the priorities, functions, and activities of a church community or Christian organization by scrolling

[21] Ibid., Question #5. See Appendix.
[22] Ibid., Question #5. See Appendix.

through their websites and social media accounts. It flows from the argument of my thesis to ask: why are churches not taking seriously the preservation of such digital records that so obviously serve important spiritual purposes in the life of the community and reveal their spiritual activities? With the conclusions made in my first chapter in mind, that church records serve a spiritual function within church communities, churches must not ignore the existence and spiritual value of records created and sustained by digital technologies and media.

Digital Spirituality

The first section of this chapter looked at how digital technology and records are used by church communities to fulfill their spiritual mission. This next section will look beyond such connections between digitality and spirituality and attempt to reflect on the possibility of an intrinsic spirituality of the digital. Besides the fact that digital technology can assist in the practice of spirituality in the modern world, does digitality itself have its own form of spirituality that can be said to complement or even enhance traditional spirituality as practiced by members of certain church communities? Such reflections are intended to catch the spiritual imagination of leaders and members of church communities with reference to my urgent call for archival digital preservation. To begin to consider digitality, specifically the usage and preservation of digital records, as related to spirituality, I hope to present digital preservation as a natural continuation and complement of the archival spirituality already associated with church archives.

The Effects of Technology on Records

In order to establish any such possible relationship between digitality and spirituality, it will be necessary to first discuss how digital technology has affected and continues to affect the creation and meaning of records. With changes in writing technologies there always come changes in the records that are created by these technologies. One of the most striking and obvious examples from history is the shift in western societies from primarily oral communication to communication through written means on either parchment or paper: a shift from "writing on the wind" to writing on a more rigid medium.[23] That the later invention of the

[23] Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1991), 57-59.

printing press and the typewriter marked a change in the kinds of records that were created is also clear.[24]

In the twentieth century, with the arrival and evolution of the computer and word processing technologies, again there appeared a change in the records that were created. Using word processing software on a desktop computer allows for a new flexibility that did not exist in earlier forms of record-creating technologies, a flexibility that allows the creator to change and duplicate records with relative ease.[25] The text that the computer user sees with their eyes on the computer screen is only visible because the computer has converted strings of bits into pixels through layers of software and hardware. The movement from the creation of digital text in a word processor, to its storage, and to its retrieval can take only a matter of milliseconds. The speed at which a digital record can be created and recreated is astounding compared to any other previous form of technology, and it is this change in speed that has played a large role in the change in relationship between humans and their records, specifically those of the electronic type.[26] Matthew Kirschenbaum suggests that before the advent of word processors, typing on a typewriter only allowed for the user to remain in the present moment of typing their thoughts one page at a time. Word processing allows users to understand what they are writing as a whole, with the entire document of multiple pages being instantly visible and changeable to them as they continue typing. Word processing has changed what theorists call the "sense of the text" for users of the technology. It changes how users mentally perceive the words on the screen and their relationship to those words.[27] Along with the "frictionless" nature of digital writing, word processors also make available to writers the ability to make immediate revisions and rearrangements, which has inspired in creators of digital records an increased spontaneity. One can start writing and editing text at the top of the page and immediately jump to the bottom to do the same. Anything that comes to mind can be typed out with the knowledge that it can be changed at anytime in the future. What has been previously referred to as "pre-writing" (that is, engaging in a certain amount of preparation work *before* sitting down to create a paper

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[24] Hugh Taylor, ""My Very Act and Deed": Some Reflections on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs," *The American Archivist* 51, no. 4 (Fall 1988): 465.
[25] Bolter, *Writing Space*, 34.
[26] Ibid., 42.
[27] Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Technology Changes How Authors Write, but the Big Impact Isn't on Their Style," The Conversation, July 26, 2016, https://theconversation.com/technology-changes-how-authors-write-but-the-big-impact-isnt-on-their-style-61955.

document) is therefore no longer seen as a necessity to users of word processors. The possibilities for the digital writer seem infinite; nothing is set in stone.[28] The effects that word processing technology has on the human psyche and creative imagination have immediate effects on the kinds of records that people will create using this technology.

It should be noted that although computerized word processing is often today viewed as the inevitable next step from the typewriter in its varied forms, probably because the computer keyboard is so similar in physical resemblance to typewriters, those who used the first word processing systems found that the freedom it offered them had more similarities with the freedom and flexibility afforded to one writing on a piece of paper. While typewriting offered some ease of transcription, it was very rigid in the execution; writing on a piece of paper, on the other hand, allowed for the writer to make notes in the margins, cross words out, and write in between the lines.[29] Jay David Bolter, noting the dynamic nature of the digital text and how easily it can be interacted with by users, has even drawn similarities between digital records and oral records. Hugh Taylor has written about this by likening electronic messages to oral communication in how they both have the ability to "constantly modify without leaving behind a clear record"; it thus becomes increasingly difficult to discern what is the "original text" in this very fluid and interactive environment.[30] Those who listened to the tales of Homer in ancient Greece, for example, were able to affect his narration by their applause or disapproval, thus confusing any knowledge of Homer's original narrative. Today, a similarly immediate interactive relationship exists in the realm of digital records (particularly online) between creators and users that did not exist with the written word, a medium that has long been frozen in time.[31] It is here that the concept of "remediation" is seen clearly. Although digital word processing is a new record-creating technology, it still retains and rearranges elements of previous technologies whether it is in its physicality (the use of keyboards, for example) or its less tangible similarities such as the fluidity of thought connected to its use.[32]

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[28] Michael Heim, *Electric Language: A Philosophical Study of Word Processing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 152-153.
[29] Manuel Portela, "'This Strange Process of Typing on a Glowing Glass Screen': An Interview with Matthew Kirschenbaum," *Matlit* 4, no. 2 (2016): 268-269.
[30] Hugh Taylor, "Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift?," *Archivaria* 25 (1987): 16-17.
[31] Bolter, *Writing Space*, 59-60, 65.
[32] Taylor, "Transformation in the Archives," 19.

It is clear then that computers and their associated word processing software did not replace older writing technologies entirely but have either existed alongside them or shared some of their features.[33] This suggests that, although the advent of the computer and word processing was revolutionary for the future of records in the sense that it changed the way they were made, stored, and used, the evolution of these technologies was not independent of human culture and agency. Centering the history of digital records technologies on the machines themselves can lead us to totally ignore the human behind the machine. While it is necessary to understand the technical history behind digital records, it is equally, if not more important to understand the relationship that humans have with writing technologies and digital records. Invention and development of any technology is driven by human desires and needs within a specific time, location, and culture. While technology does build upon previous technology, this process has a context within human culture and use of technology.[34]

Faith and Technology

With an understanding of how technology affects the records that are created using that technology, we will also consider a few other preliminary points. We will first look at a common counter-notion to my argument in this chapter: that digital culture, and modern technology as a whole, should not and cannot be viewed through the lens of any form of spirituality – it must, many would argue, be viewed through a modern secular lens. This secular view of modern digital technology is wrongly founded on the assumption that religion or spirituality had nothing to do with the historical development of science and technology, as Mark Coeckelbergh points out.[35] Although secularization did historically occur and has coloured out perspectives on both the natural and the supernatural, several scholars have argued that secularization never really developed deep roots in the creation and development of modern technologies. Even the historical roots of modern science can be seen, in a certain sense, as "a spectacular fusion

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[33] Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Track Changes: A Literary History of Word Processing*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 244.
[34] Michael S. Mahoney, "The Histories of Computing(s)," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 30, no. 2 (2005): 122; Greg Bak, "Media and the Messengers: Writings on Digital Archiving in Canada from the 1960s to the 1980s," *Archivaria* 82 (Fall 2016): 56.
[35] Mark Coeckelbergh, "The Spirit in the Network: Models for Spirituality in a Technological Culture," *Zygon* 45, no. 4 (December 2010): 959.

between religious thought and natural philosophy."[36] The history of the development of technology, for the most part, shows a history "not of disenchantment [with religious principles] but of transformation; the spirit was never eliminated in the first place."[37] One scholar asks the question then:

> Can theology – that communal process by which the church's faith seeks to understand – can theology aim at understanding technology? Can we put the words God and technology together in any kind of meaningful sentence? Can theology guess what God is doing in today's technology? Or by our silence do we leave it utterly godless? Can we have a theology of technology that comprehends, gives meaning to, dares to influence the direction and set limits to this explosion of new powers?[38]

In what ways has spirituality been preserved in the digital realm that we are so familiar with today? In discussions concerning both theology and technology, metaphorical language must often be utilized to try and describe unseen realities. Metaphors and symbols are necessary instruments for when humans want to understand and simplify complex situations or concepts.[39] In discussing the early history of personal computers, for example, the language of "magic" was utilized to describe the capabilities of such technology in the lives of their users. From 1979 to 1989, *Time* magazine published 63 articles that used explicitly either magical or spiritual language of some kind: metaphorical terms such as "conjuring", "sorcery", "communion", "baptism", and "high tech heaven" were all used to help users better understand what it was that computers actually did and how they relate to and interact with them.[40] There are also other "shared" concepts between religion and digital culture and meaning, such as how both religion and technology reveal to us our mortality and finitude, while at the same time creating in us a longing for an escape from death through an offer of eternity. Technology, in a way, is meant to compensate for our finitude; some have theorized that humans "upload" themselves into the digital world of computers, escaping the confines of earthly existence, and giving a sense of

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[36] Ibid., 959-960.
[37] Ibid., 960.
[38] Stephen Garner, "Hacking the Divine: A Possible Metaphor for Theology-Technology Engagement," *Colloquium* 37, no. 2 (2005): 1.
[39] Ibid., 4.
[40] William A. Stahl, "Venerating the Black Box: Magic in Media Discourse on Technology," *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 235.

"eternity". "In its engagement with finitude and death, technology becomes almost explicitly religious'.[41]

A central belief of Christianity is that all human beings are created *imago Dei* (in the image of God) because both God and humans have the ability to reason and thus relate in meaningful ways to other rational beings, including God.[42] There is also the aspect of functionalism: that because God has a creative spirit, so also do humans have the ability to create. When looked at with respect to the digital, humans are co-creators in not only the physical world, but also in the digital world, where, from the Christian perspective, God can still be seen as working and moving, just as he is in the physical world. Humans, then, as they create within the digital world, are co-creating alongside God, leading to the perfection of creation.[43]

There is also the concept that Amanda Lagerkvist has called a "netlore of the infinite" which she argues has arisen as a theme of digitality in and through contemporary digital memory practices. Lagerkvist argues that what has arisen from modern digital culture is a renewed relationship and awareness of the infinite.[44] Christian theology places strong emphasis on the infinite: God is infinite, so is life after death. In Christianity, a person pursues the infinite, an exercise in spiritual meaning-making which can also be considered an act of self-preservation on the part of the person. Lagerkvist argues that a parallel form of pursuing of the infinite can be seen in the meaning-making practices of personal digital archiving. Data is conceived of by many today as eternal, with someone's personal data, such as on social media, having the potential to exist long after that person has died. When someone archives or preserves such data to exist long into the future, some see what amounts to a form of digital afterlife.[45] The idea that digital data can exist forever is, of course, a gross misunderstanding on the part of many. This makes the comparison between digital data preservation and the afterlife (which certainly is, according to most Christians, eternal) fall apart on many levels. Lagerkvist also notes that through studying social media posts surrounding the death of a family member or friend that there also seems to be a sort of belief that the dead can be reached through digital media; that the

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[41] Coeckelbergh, "The Spirit in the Network," 960-961.
[42] Stephen Garner, "Hacking the Divine," 9; Genesis 1:27 (NRSV-CE)
[43] Ibid., 10.
[44] Amanda Lagerkvist, "The Netlore of the Infinite: Death (and Beyond) in the Digital Memory Ecology," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21, no. 1-2 (2015): 188.
[45] Ibid., 189-190.

act of using digital media, especially via the internet, and seeing images and text surrounding the deceased, allows the user to experience eternity, heaven, and the sacred. Such popular views and experiences of the digital world, as Dick Houtman and Stef Aupers suggest, have led to the rise of "religions of Modernity", that is, popular forms of religiosity within a techno-spiritual framework.[46]

Looking at these different aspects of what could potentially make a digital spirituality, while leaving much to be desired in the way of developing a definition of what this exactly entails, does provide some connections that can encourage churches and their archives to see digital technology, digital culture, and digital records preservation within a spiritual context. Although such forms of digital spirituality are not directly related to traditional Christian forms of spirituality, they do share some characteristics that can cause one to appreciate a potentially unique role for digital culture within the mission of church communities and its unique relationship to the practices of church archives.

Conclusion

All the above explorations in the relationships between digital culture and technology and spirituality do have consequences for church archives. There is not, as of now, much movement when it comes to "crossing the digital divide" within most church archives (not to mention all the other non-religious archives of the world that are in the same situation) caused by the digital revolution of recent times.[47] If a connection can be created, a convergent set of spiritual principles be discovered, or a continuation be established between the spirituality of former times and of the digital culture we live in today, the millions of born-digital records created yearly by church institutions could perhaps be seen through new eyes. If the spirituality of these digital records can be firmly established in the minds of church archivists and leaders not only on the level of the spiritual content that they contain but also on the level of a spirituality of digital culture and technology itself, then perhaps more effort will be put into preserving these digital records for future generations. The spiritual elements associated with digital technology and

[46] Ibid., 191-192.
[47] Timothy J. Meagher, "Crossing the Digital Divide, Alone and Together: The View from the Catholic University of America," *American Catholic Studies* 113, no. 1/2 (Spring 2002): 51.

records will serve as good and meaningful frameworks or contexts to better understand the mysterious connections between the material and the immaterial, the natural and the supernatural, the secular and the spiritual.

Chapter Three: Long-Term Digital Preservation

Introduction

For the past several decades, creation and use of digital information has exponentially increased across much of modern society in many parts of the world. In almost every part of our own society today – including government, business, education, and other cultural institutions – digital ways of working have become standard and, in many cases, nearly ubiquitous. Newer forms of information and communication technologies are initiating a flood of digital records into the working and living environments of millions of people. Organizations, especially, in this situation therefore have begun to have a greater necessity to maintain and use digital information in fulfilling their organizational mandates, and people who use these records are more widely demanding that digital information produced by such organizations be more easily accessible over longer periods of time.[1] It is in response to these technological changes in modern records creation and the new demands for access to these digital records that many organizations, both large and small, have started to seriously consider and implement digital preservation systems and programs. The goal of any such digital preservation program is "to maintain the object of preservation for as long as required, in a form which is authentic, and accessible to users."[2] A digital preservation program implemented by an organization has the obligation to preserve what is both necessary for internal organizational or managerial functions and also what is desired for use by internal and external individuals or groups. The ability of either internal or external end-users to access digital information should be considered the most important reason behind the implementation of any digital preservation program.[3]

This rapid shift into an information environment dominated by digital records and information has certainly not spared Christian churches either. This society-wide change in the creation and use of information has meant, consequentially, that the need for implementing long-term digital preservation systems and programs in church archives has become all the more urgent. As has been discussed already in the previous two chapters of this thesis, church

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[1] Adrian Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation: A How-to Guide for Organizations of Any Size* (London: Facet Publishing, 2013), 20; Ross Harvey and Martha Mahard, "Mapping the Preservation Landscape for the Twentieth Century," Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture 42, 1 (2013): 5.
[2] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 193.
[3] Ibid., 49.

institutions and communities have as their primary mandate to ensure that their spiritual message and ways of life continue far into the future. A necessary part of this mandate means that churches must properly create and preserve records of spiritual value.

Church records serve a necessary function in the spiritual mission of a Christian church or community. Church records not only serve an administrative purpose but also document a church's activities and experiences, preserving its traditions and convictions for the spiritual benefit of future church members, and reminding them of the spiritual mission of their community.[4] The urgent call at the heart of this thesis for the long-term preservation and accessibility of born-digital church records relies upon recognizing the enduring spiritual value of many of the digital records created by church communities. They function as vital means for encouraging the spiritual lives of individual church members as well as propagating the church's spiritual mission as a whole. In today's digital world, for the spiritual mission of churches – to preserve and spread their message and way of life – and church archivists – to collect, preserve, and make accessible church records for the benefit of the community – to continue into the future, greater attention must be given by church leaders to the preservation of born-digital records of spiritual importance in their archives.

Some Challenges Associated with Digital Preservation

Digital preservation, unlike the preservation of non-digital records, brings with itself some unique challenges. Digital records, without proper preservation, generally have shorter lifespans than non-digital records and so they must be appraised and preserved as closely as possible to the moment of their creation to avoid losing metadata, having records become disassociated from the processes of their creation, and the dangers associated with bit rot and other forms of degradation that effect digital information.[5] Along with the reality that digital objects are less stable than non-digital records, there is also the issue of technological obsolescence. Many digital records, as they exist upon entering the archives, are dependent upon the technology on which they were created to make them not only accessible to users but also to make them meaningful in terms of providing them the proper display of the digital information

[4] As I have laid out in the two previous chapters, such "non-spiritual" values, like administrative value, very often overlap with the spiritual value of a church record. An archival record can have multiple simultaneous values attributed to it, including spiritual value.
[5] Harvey and Mahard, "Mapping the Preservation Landscape for the Twentieth Century," 5-6, 9-10.

or in terms of providing the necessary context for the information such as metadata. This means that along with the digital objects themselves, it is often necessary to also preserve the proper hardware and software for the information.[6]

Another challenge that archivists should take into consideration is, that while creating a strategy to preserve already existing and incoming born-digital records, they must still take the necessary time and effort to preserve non-digital records which they will undoubtedly continue to acquire. Balancing the two different forms of preservation (non-digital versus digital) in dedicating time and resources is a large challenge for many archives and quite often one must be prioritized. The time that archivists are currently working in could be considered a transitional time between predominantly paper-focused archiving to primarily digital-focused archiving; because of this, archival repositories should, ideally, not devote more than half of their infrastructure to non-digital records and should think of digital archiving as a core function of their mandate.[7] With this balancing act in mind, one can also see not only the technical challenges associated with digital preservation but also the human challenges. Not all digital filing systems are created equally; an employee can create a wonderfully organized file structure to hand over to the archivist, while another employee could have simply thrown together their files in a (sometimes seemingly) random fashion. Digital files could also be stored in different kinds of storage systems upon arrival. The archivist's time may be taken up by excessive amounts of work in contextualizing these records, thus taking away from time that could be spent elsewhere.[8] The balancing of priorities is a constant concern foremost in the mind of the archivist.

In the end, however, the primary impediment to digital preservation is not a lack of technology; in the past several decades, the development and availability of adequate technological support for digital preservation has been on the increase. The major challenge, then, rests with how an institution or community chooses to approach their own digital preservation. Before preservation technology can even be discussed, those in places of administrative and financial authority within the community must act, understanding the

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[6] Michele V. Cloonan, "Preserving Records of Enduring Value," in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, eds. Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2010): 81.
[7] Harvey and Mahard, "Mapping the Preservation Landscape for the Twentieth Century," 7-9.
[8] Chris Zaste, "Another Bit Bytes the Dust: The Technological and Human Challenges of Digital Preservation," (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2016), 16, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace.

importance of digital preservation and the means by which long-term digital preservation strategies can be implemented.[9] While implementing the technological requirements for a long-term digital preservation strategy will never be easy, this is no reason for any institution to set these concerns for digital preservation to the side. True, there will never be a "silver bullet" or one-size-fits-all solution to the ever-evolving landscape of the digital; what is needed then is a readiness from all different groups – church leadership, church archivists, and laity – to take on the challenge.[10]

Why Archival Digital Preservation?

So why then should a church institution begin the process of implementing a long-term digital preservation strategy? Even the brief discussion above about the many challenges associated with properly preserving digital records and information could make it seem like an insurmountable task, especially for the average church archive today. According to one survey conducted with 154 church archives, 74 of them reported having an archival staff of only one (which includes part-time archivists). Another similar survey showed similar results: almost one-half of the surveyed 235 church archives had only one archival staff member.[11] Can church archivists, often working on their own with limited time and resources really be expected to begin the long and difficult process of implementing a long-term digital preservation strategy in their church archive? There are also church leaders to think about when advocating for digital preservation strategies. While it is natural to think of church institutional structures as organizations interested in spiritual matters, it must be admitted that they also have other concerns such as finances, facilities, staffing, and other day-to-day administrative responsibilities. Why would church leaders, who, perhaps, can barely manage to keep their congregation, diocese, or community afloat in financial terms even consider taking on such a time and money-consuming task as digital preservation? They have "stakeholders" other than

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[9] Patricia Galloway, "Preservation of Digital Objects," *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 38, no. 1 (2004): 552.

[10] Henry M. Gladney, "Long-Term Preservation of Digital Records: Trustworthy Digital Objects," *The American Archivist* 72 (Fall 2009): 434. Gladney offers in this article a detailed walk-through of the different parts of a trustworthy digital repository.

[11] Youngok Choi and Emily Nilson, "The Current Status of Catholic Archives: A Survey Report," *The American Archivist* 82, no. 1 (2019): 96-97.

records creators, managers, and users to keep content that can appear to be far more important to maintaining the church as an institution as well as its members.[12]

There are also issues surrounding a lack of knowledge concerning archival preservation in general among church leaders which may contribute to the lack of movement in granting the proper funding and resources for digital preservation systems and programs. Melanie Delva tells one humorous story that displays this lack of understanding well: "I remember a Bishop coming to me and saying 'did you get all those emails I sent you for the archives?' and when I said no, he told me he had enabled the Outlook 'Archiving' function and thought that meant they were automatically sent to the archives. It became clear that we needed not only a digital preservation infrastructure, but also a robust training and implementation program, for which there were also no resources."[13] Rodney Carter adds to this by saying, that while there may be a lack of understanding on the part of church leadership as Delva's story clearly shows, there is also an underlying unwillingness "to devote the necessary resources to ensure the human and technological resources are devoted to implementing digital preservation," which is a massive hurdle to overcome.[14] Stoesz notes that "central to the question of digital preservation is resources. When support for archives is already soft, it can be difficult to see how the investment in the kinds of funds for a good digital preservation can be obtained."[15]

It is the argument of this thesis that the challenges noted above, far from steering them away from digital preservation, should inspire churches and their archives to think of ways to more actively develop dynamic solutions for the preservation of such important historically, culturally, and ultimately spiritually valuable information that will only continue to increase as time moves on. The situation in which many church archival repositories currently find themselves with regards to the many challenges of digital preservation, while at once bringing about a sense of hopelessness, should also produce within church archivists and those who lead church institutions and communities a sense of obligation that far outweighs any hopelessness. This is an obligation not only to the present (as is the case with church leaders who value good

[12] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 47-49.
[13] Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #6. See Appendix.
[14] Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #7. See Appendix.
[15] Conrad Stoesz, Answers to Questionnaire, April 2020, Question #6. See Appendix.

recordkeeping and archival practices that positively effect church management and finances),[16] but also to the distant future.

While I have made my main arguments in the first and second chapters of this thesis concerning the fundamental spiritual value of church archives and the intersections with digitality, there are still many approaches that a church archivist can take when it comes to advocating for access to more money and resources to implement a digital preservation program. It must be acknowledged that, however much church leaders and administrators may value the spirituality of their institution or community, they may not see how records, especially born-digital records, have a place in preserving this spirituality. Approaches taken by church archivists in advocating for greater church resources to be invested into church archives and records management will depend upon who it is they will be speaking with and what their priorities are for the community. While it will certainly be necessary to include within advocacy the spiritual value behind church archives as I have expressed in the first chapter of this thesis, it may also be necessary to include other important reasons why archives are maintained. This can include concrete reasons such as evidence preservation for purposes of institutional memory and accountability on the part of church leadership.[17] If digital preservation techniques are taken seriously, digital files will retain their reliability, integrity, and authenticity, protecting them from any negative alterations and the loss of sensitive or important data. Any proper digital preservation strategy will allow the necessary contextual evidence and other metadata to be preserved which will certainly make the preservation of evidentiary information easier.[18] As some might frame it, these points of advocacy are more practical than the more ephemeral points surrounding archival spirituality. This third chapter will itself be dealing with the more practical elements involved in digital archival preservation. While these practicalities are essential to any long-term digital preservation strategy, they must never be separated from my analysis in the first and second chapters of this thesis. Practical solutions to initiating a digital preservation strategy in a church archive must only exist within the wider framework of archival spirituality and digitality. While finding the right balance when attempting to communicate the importance

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[16] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 29.
[17] Daniel Elves, "Advocating Electronic Records: Archival and Records Management Promotion of New Approaches to Long-Term Digital Preservation," (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2012), 62, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace.
[18] Gladney, "Long-Term Preservation of Digital Records," 405-406, 416.

of long-term digital preservation is not the main focus of this thesis, it must nevertheless not be ignored as an essential step towards executing a long-term digital preservation strategy.

The Current State of Digital Preservation in Church Archives

Before outlining some practical options for church archives to use in implementing a long-term digital preservation solution, it will first be important to see what the current situation is surrounding digital preservation in church archives in North America.

When it comes to Catholic archives in North America, according to one 2017 survey, 87 of 154 church archives surveyed said that they have included in their collections born-digital materials while another survey showed that 86 of 235 church archives had born-digital records in their collections.[19] On the face of it, it may seem that around half of the church archives surveyed were using resources to collect and preserve born-digital records in varying capacities, but having born-digital records within your collection is one thing; actively collecting and preserving born-digital records is another thing entirely. The same surveys, in fact, show that only 3% of those church archives surveyed had a written digital preservation policy, while 14% said that they had one in development. While it seems that more church archives are beginning to take seriously the acquisition of born-digital records, it is also clear that any sense of a long-term digital preservation strategy or even a systematic management plan in many of these communities is all but non-existent.[20]

Archivist Rodney Carter notes that "digital preservation in church archives ranges generally, from what I know of my peers and colleagues, from non-existent to rudimentary, with only a few larger institutions serving as outliers and actually having some digital preservation strategies in place. My archives, specifically, falls within the rudimentary column."[21] Carter acknowledges that there is certainly an awareness on the part of church leadership of the urgent necessity for digital preservation strategies in church archives, but that there is a lack of expertise as well as technical and financial resources being put towards such an endeavor. Carter continues: "there has been no discussion of this that I am aware of at my congregation's General Council level. There is a General Archives and they may be involved with digital preservation of the high-level records but that is not a discussion that has been had with me."[22]

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[19] Choi and Nilson, "The Current Status of Catholic Archives," 102.
[20] Choi and Nilson, "The Current Status of Catholic Archives," 102-103.
[21] Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #6. See Appendix.
[22] Ibid., Question #6. See Appendix.

Archivist Melanie Delva has a similar story to Rodney Carter and many other church archivists. She says that within the Anglican Church of Canada, "there has always been discussion [surrounding the implementation of digital preservation strategies], and most of it (in my experience) revolves around themes of helplessness, fear and in some cases, despair."[23] Delva notes that many diocesan budgets do not provide enough funding to church archivists to even meet the lowest standards of digital preservation; she stresses that Anglican church archivists are often simply trying not to lose what they currently have in terms of digital records and preservation systems.[24] While such stories are also heard from non-church archivists, it is most distressing for myself to hear this from church archivists. If church archivists are not given the proper tools to do their work, much of the spiritual heritage of churches could potentially be lost.

Digital preservation certainly requires great amounts of effort in preserving not only digital content but also the context of digital information, which includes technological context and other forms of metadata. If a proper digital preservation program is not implemented, however, as seems to be the case in most church archives in North America, any digital information that is acquired by the archives will likely be of little value to users since it will lack much of the context necessary to preserve its meaning. This situation would also result in the loss of digital information over time and increase the eventual cost of migrating information onto a new system once the old system becomes obsolete. The long-term costs of inaction would far outweigh the costs of implementing a digital preservation program.[25] The catastrophe that could potentially occur within a church institution due to ignoring digital preservation is perhaps the only way some would even consider the necessity of a digital preservation program.[26] By this, I am referring to church administrators and other leaders and not church archivists *per se*, since most church archivists would gladly move to avoid such an archival, institutional, and spiritual disaster if only they were given sufficient money, time, and resources.[27]

As is noted in the 2012 version of *Managing Diocesan Archives and Records*, "managing electronic records is no longer an option" but rather a necessity for every archive, whether

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[23] Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #6. See Appendix.
[24] Ibid., Question #6-7. See Appendix.
[25] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 64.
[26] Ibid., 41-44.
[27] Choi and Nilson, "The Current Status of Catholic Archives," 103.

associated with a church or not. The time for implementing proper long-term digital preservation strategies and systems within church archives has already begun.[28] While the position of born-digital records in the spiritual vitality of a church community can easily be seen, it is also easily seen that most church archives have not yet made properly preserving such spiritually valuable records a priority. The immense spiritual value of these records coupled with the lack of any concrete action in archival preservation lends itself to painting a bleak picture for digital church records. There are no other options than to boldly pursue the implementation of long-term digital preservation strategies in church archives. There are, however, some rays of hope in the current landscape of digital preservation in church archives.

Several examples of official digital preservation policies and strategies can be found laid out in the archival policies of various churches across North America. One such example can be found on the website of the Anglican Archdiocese of Toronto's website which gives a brief paragraph of information that provides some basic records management guidelines for Anglican parishes throughout the archdiocese. It suggests that parishes protect the integrity of born-digital records through password protection and migrating valuable documents into read-only file formats such as PDF. Mention is made of some kind of system by which parishes can transfer digital records to the diocesan archives, but no detail is given concerning what this system actually is.[29]

While this example provides very little information about the digital preservation strategy of the archdiocese, there are other examples that do. For instance, the United Church of Canada has in recent years released two archival policy and procedure documents. The first from 2005, "Archives and Recordkeeping: A How-to Guide for Congregations and Conferences," out of 60 pages, allows four pages to lay out a denomination-wide standard for archiving digital records. The guideline highlights the urgent necessity of digital preservation in United Church congregations, referring to the fact that many archivally valuable documents are often published on websites and transmitted through email. Such records must not be forgotten or deleted but

[28] Maria Mazzenga, "The Brave New Digital World of US Catholic Archives," *Catholic Library World* 84, no. 4 (June 2014): 250.
[29] "Electronic Records," Anglican Diocese of Toronto, https://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/archives/information-for-parishes/electronic-records/.

should be properly managed so that they can eventually be transferred to the archives.[30] Regarding methods for digital preservation on the congregational level, the guideline highlights migration and emulation as the two to be favoured by United Church records managers. To facilitate either migration or emulation strategies, the guideline suggests that records managers apply descriptive metadata to documents as near as possible to the moment of their creation.[31] In 2013, the United Church of Canada released another archival policy and procedure guideline with five pages out of 40 dedicated to digital recordkeeping. This guideline expands from the previous one to include naming conventions to be used in file and folder names and guidelines for altering or redacting digital records. Records creators are to save final versions of digital records in read-only formats and move them into a designated shared repository in the proper classification scheme which will determine the life cycle of the record.[32] It seems from these digital preservation policies and procedures that the United Church of Canada has in recent years been developing a simple yet potentially effective digital preservation strategy. Although very simple in their presentation, these policies provide the information necessary for congregational records managers and records creators to preserve authentic and reliable digital records in a common repository.

In 2017, the United Methodist Church published their most recent "Guidelines for Managing Records of the Local Church." Two dense pages of guidelines for digital records preservation are provided. Emphasis is made on migrating digital records that are still in use by employees to newer or more secure formats overtime, especially when operating systems or software are upgraded. Moving files from obsolete hardware and various kinds of electronic media is also encouraged by the guideline. Mention is also made of the importance of records creators organizing their computer filing systems using consistent naming conventions and retention periods. Creating backup files is also highly recommended by the guideline as an important way to preserve digital records for the future.[33] The supplementary "Guidelines for

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[30] United Church of Canada Committee on Archives and History, *Archives and Recordkeeping: A How-to Guide for Congregations and Conferences* (United Church of Canada, 2005), 41-42. http://uccarchiveswinnipeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/Archives-and-Recording-Keeping-How-to-Guide-2005.pdf.
[31] Ibid., 43-44.
[32] United Church of Canada, *Records Management Policy and Procedures Manual* (United Church of Canada, January 31, 2013), 17-21. https://www.unitedchurcharchives.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Records-Management-Policy-and-Procedures-Manual.pdf.
[33] United Methodist Church General Commission on Archives and History, *Guidelines for Managing Records of the Local Church* (United Methodist Church General Commission on Archives and History, 2017), 7-8. http://s3.amazonaws.com/gcah.org/Resources/Guidelines_Publications/Local-ChurchSched-2017.pdf.

Managing Electronic Records" also touches on more detailed policies and procedures concerning digital recordkeeping within the United Methodist Church. One section covers the guidelines surrounding the actual transfer of digital records to the United Methodist archives. For digital computer files, two methods of transfer from congregations and other agencies to the central archive are indicated in the guideline. The first method is to access the General Commission on Archives and History's (a branch of the United Methodist Church that manages archival and historical matters; GCAH) cloud file management system. Once the digital files are uploaded to the cloud storage area, the GCAH downloads the files and places them in their official trustworthy digital repository. The second method of transfer is to do so via a USB-based hard drive instead of using the cloud-based system.[34]

While it is reassuring to see several large church denominations officially enacting proper digital preservation policies and procedural strategies, only some mentioned actual systems or programs that allow the policies to produce long-term results. The next section in this chapter will go through some of the possible software programs that church archives can use in strengthening their digital preservation and records management policies.

Some Practical Solutions to Implementing Digital Preservation Strategies

This chapter has already proposed some of the reasons why church leaders and archivists, working together, should prioritize the long-term preservation of digital records in their archives. The overarching reason for such action is really the underlying theme of this thesis: that all records created by church communities and institutions, whether digital or not, have immense spiritual value for maintaining the mission of the community. And if this fundamental reason were not enough (it was, remember, the primary focus of the first two chapters of this thesis), this chapter has also highlighted some of the less spiritual reasons to implement digital preservation policies. Whatever reason one emphasizes, it is essential to know what kinds of practical solutions and tools are available to the average church archive to pursue digital preservation in earnest. Such practical considerations can often bring into clearer focus the urgent call to digital preservation.

[34] Ibid., 7.

Open Archival Information System (OAIS)

There are many models that a church archive can utilize in creating a digital preservation program, into which can be applied any number of preservation methods, techniques, and tools. One of the most common and flexible models in use today by archives of all sizes is the Open Archival Information System (OAIS). OAIS is a reference model for creating a digital preservation program and is therefore not to be taken as a digital preservation program in and of itself. Developed in the 1990s by the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, this reference model was created in response to a need for greater uniformity in digital archiving. To this end, OAIS presents a small number of unifying concepts which can be built upon or fitted to the specific needs of any archival repository. OAIS is intended to offer archivists a simplified model that gathers various and isolated digital preservation activities into one single reference model for easy customization.[35] One of the first key concepts in a digital preservation program that follows the OAIS reference model is to, upon accessioning digital objects, create a standard Submission Information Package (SIP).[36] Once a SIP enters into the archival repository, it is transformed into one or more Archival Information Packages (AIP) which contain content information and its associated preservation description information. Once a user requests access to the archival content they desire, which could be contained within any number of AIPs, a Dissemination Information Package (DIP) is created with all the content and context that is necessary for the user's purposes.[37] These three concepts for information preservation (SIPs, AIPs, DIPs), because they are merely conceptual entities, can take on many different forms in many different archives according to the resources available to the archive itself and the needs of the creators and the users.[38] While OAIS can and is used by a wide array of different archives from governments to companies to community organizations, such a model is no less ideal for a church archive that may only have one archivist on staff, with limited resources and time to

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[35] Tyler McNally, *Practical Digital Solutions: A DIY Approach to Digital Preservation*, (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 2018), 24, University of Manitoba Libraries MSpace; Christopher A. Lee, "Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences,* Third Edition, eds. Marcia J. Bates and Mary Niles Maack (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2010), 4023-4024, 4027.
[36] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 131.
[37] Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, *Reference Model for an Open Archival System (OAIS)*: *Magenta Book* (Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, June 2, 2012), 9, 11, https://public.ccsds.org/pubs/650x0m2.pdf.
[38] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 131-132.

dedicate to digital preservation. The flexibility of OAIS to fit organizations of various sizes and mandates is one of its greatest strengths and therefore should be seriously considered by church archivists and church leadership when implementing digital preservations strategies in church archives.

Central to the OAIS model is the concept of the Designated Community, that is, the group or community identified in the mandate of the archive as their core or primary constituency – those who are most likely to understand the information within a particular archival repository.[39] The archive keeps this Designated Community in mind when creating the Representation Information that is used to place the records into context. The Knowledge Base of the community will dictate what kind and how much contextual information (or Representation Information) will be needed for the Designated Community of archival users to derive meaning from the records.[40] Within the archival literature, "community" is often based on self-identification.[41] It can sometimes be difficult for a community archive to come to any agreement over who exactly is a member of the community. Under OAIS, determining the parameters of a Designated Community is crucial since it is the needs and values of that community that will determine what records have archival value. In this regard church archives have an advantage over other community archives in that they in some ways have a concrete and easily recognizable community that they serve, since the majority of their Designated Community will often be registered members of that specific church or community of churches. A Mennonite archive will serve primarily Mennonites in a congregation or region, for example, so the way that a Mennonite archive will utilize the OAIS reference model can be tailored to the specific needs of that specific community. This can be accomplished because they share a "frame of reference or orientation that coalesces around shared interests, common causes or collective experiences."[42] This does not, however, exclude others from using these records as well. Now, while such commonalities shared within a church community often have to do with shared theology and religious practices (in the case of Mennonites, the common beliefs of adult baptism

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[39] Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, *Reference Model for an Open Archival System (OAIS)*, 1-11.
[40] Ibid., 2-3 – 2-4.
[41] Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy and the Mainstream," *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 71-86.
[42] Grant Hurley, "Community Archives, Community Clouds: Enabling Digital Preservation for Small Archives," *Archivaria* 81 (Spring 2016): 132.

and non-violence), this can not always be said of things such as language, ethnicity, education levels, and social standing. Such challenges to determining the boundaries of Designated Community of a church archive should always be taken into consideration so as to most effectively serve the needs of the community.

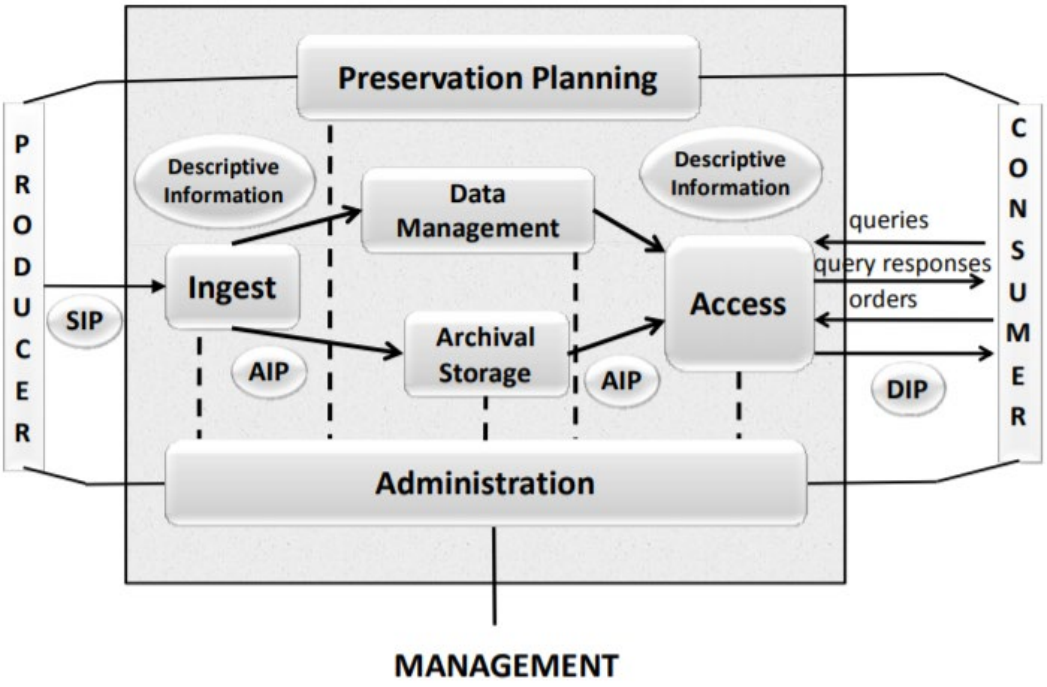

Figure 4-1: OAIS Functional Entities[43]

Using OAIS as a foundation around which to build a digital preservation system, it is of equal importance to utilize the proper technologies such as various kinds of hardware and software to do the actual preserving. There are many digital preservation software package options for archives which range from low-cost and simple[44] to high-cost and complex.[45] The best solution for the average church archive, considering what has already been said about the general lack of staff, money, and resources in most church archives, is to use open-source software packages that, while free to use, do require some additional computer resource development to support the open-source tools. Low-budget options such as these are sure to make it less of a burden on church leaders who are reluctant to provide the finances to church

[43] Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, *Reference Model for an Open Archival System (OAIS)*, 4-1.
[44] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 64-66.
[45] Ibid., 67-69.

archivists for preservation projects. Open-source software packages offer churches a solution that is flexible enough to mould to their archival needs, even if these needs should change over time.[46] Assistance for resource-limited church archivists may be found in various places, but one example is the Preserving Digital Objects With Restricted Resources Project (POWRR). POWRR project staff, through various funding grants, are able to host professional institute workshops where archivists from small to mid-sized archival institutions can learn much needed skills that will aid them in introducing long-term digital preservation strategies into their archives. Each institute workshop event accepts up to 30 archivists where they will experience hands-on technical training and opportunities to consult with experts in the digital preservation field. Attendees are also encouraged to form communities of archival practice in which archivists will be able to find support for their work, which will be based on personalized and practical preservation plans devised during the institute workshops.[47] In her article, "Working with Legacy Media: A Lone Arranger's First Steps," Elizabeth Charlton provides an overview of the steps she took when beginning a digital preservation project at a small religious archive, having limited resources and little knowledge concerning digital preservation techniques. Charlton utilized a free, open-source suite of preservation tools introduced by the Society of American Archivists, which is available to anyone online. The suite includes FTK Imager and BitCurator which are used for disk imaging. Besides easy access to these professional preservation tools, Charlton also had access to an informal group of lone arrangers from different institutions who meet regularly to discuss various archival subjects.[48] No matter what kind or grade of software is chosen by a church archivist for the task of digital preservation, it will always be necessary for them to first acquire some applicable knowledge and experience. This can be acquired through professional workshops like the ones offered by POWRR, through informal archival communities like the one Charlton was a member of, or through personal research, trial, and error.

Archivematica

[46] Ibid., 66-67.
[47] "About POWRR," POWRR, August 22, 2017, https://digitalpowrr.niu.edu/.
[48] Elizabeth Charlton, "Working with Legacy Material: A Lone Arranger's First Steps," *Practical Technology for Archives* 1, no.6 (June 2016). https://practicaltechnologyforarchives.org/issue6_charlton/.

One prominent example of a digital preservation software suite that can be used by church archivists is Archivematica, an open-source processing and preservation system that takes in digital records and packages and stores them as SIPs according to the best digital preservation practices in the most stable open-source formats available. Archivematica also creates long-term preservation copies (AIPs) of the digital information as well as access copies to be given to users (DIPs).[49] While Archivematica as a software suite is capable of producing the necessary information packages according to the OAIS model and converting digital objects into stable formats, an example of an even more low-budget application of these principles can be seen at the University of Manitoba's College of Medicine Archives. Instead of using the functional pathways provided by the Archivematica software, the archivists at the College of Medicine Archives manually moved digital information towards preservation and access formats in ways that mimicked Archivematica's software.[50] If even Archivematica is too much of a burden on a small church archive, there are, then, other ways to follow the OAIS model in digital preservation. Archivematica does require some form of solid technical support to keep it functioning, however, which may become too much of a resource and expertise burden for many smaller church archives.

There is also the issue of smaller church archivists who feel that there is currently not enough reason to invest in a program such as Archivematica. Archivist Rodney Carter notes that while the ideal for a church or religious community archivist would be to implement a robust digital preservation system such as Archivematica for their digital collections, he feels that, in light of the current scope of the digital records that he is dealing with in the Religious Hospitallers' archive, it is unnecessary at this time to do so. Most of the Religious Hospitallers' digital archival records are in fact not born-digital but are instead primarily digitized photographs, textual documents, and other file types. He also mentions that such an implementation project would require of him the requisite knowledge to use the system;

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[49] Natalie Vielfaure, "Digital Preservation: How UM Libraries Are Confronting the Challenges of Record Keeping in a Digital World," University of Manitoba Libraries - RSDS Blog, November 29, 2018. https://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/researchservices/rsdsblog/Digital-Preservation-How-the-Libraries-are-Confronting-the-Challenges-of-R.

[50] Tyler McNally, "Practical Digital Preservation: In-House Solutions to Digital Preservation for Small Institutions," Bloggers! The Blog of SAA's Electronic Records Section, January 23, 2017, https://saaers.wordpress.com/2017/01/23/practical-digital-preservation-in-house-solutions-to-digital-preservation-for-small-institutions/; For a more in-depth and complete view of Archivematica as a system, see: McNally, "Practical Digital Solutions."

knowledge that he does not currently have. In terms of the born-digital records of the archive, Carter mentions that he tries to get access to the computers of outgoing local superiors of the Order in order to make copies of their files which include mostly textual records and photographs. Although Carter creates backups of the archive's digital records using the program TeraCopy to create checksums with the copies being validated to ensure their integrity, there is seemingly little immediate need to invest in something like Archivematica considering that the majority of the types of records being preserved are not born-digital.[51]

With these challenges to implementing digital preservation systems in mind, smaller church archives who have similar struggles to the Religious Hospitallers' archive, do have the option of utilizing Archivematica through services such as the ARCHIVESCANADA Digital Preservation System (ACDPS), governed by the Canadian Council of Archives. Instead of church archivists simply running the Archivematica program on-site as a digital preservation model, which can often be too expensive and, due to a lack of supplemental technical training, too complex for many church archivists, using Archivematica as a cloud-based service can be a far more reasonable option for most. Under contract with the Canadian Council of Archives, Artefactual can provide the technical support required to properly run Archivematica as a digital preservation system in smaller archives with less available funds and resources. ACDPS is equipped to provide archives – especially those without the technical support resources to sustain Archivematica on their own – access to a preservation service that ensures sustainable long-term accessibility to authentic digital records and digital information objects. A subscription to the ACDPS services will allow archives to more efficiently preserve digital collections through Archivematica and the tools offered through the Access to Memory (AtoM) software in partnership with Artefactual Systems Inc.[52] A subscription to ACDPS can cost between $9,950 to $11,900 per year, depending on which service package is chosen, and also allows church archivists to communicate with digital preservation software specialists with expert knowledge of implementing and using the service.[53]

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[51] Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #7. See Appendix.
[52] "Digital Preservation," Canadian Archival Information Network, http://www.archivescanada.ca/ACDPS.
[53] "Service Benefits," Canadian Archival Information Network, http://www.archivescanada.ca/ACDPSdetails#Service%20Benefits.

Another similar cloud based Archivematica as a Service approach can be found with the Council of Pacific and Prairie University Libraries (COPPUL) in Canada. Although COPPUL is a consortium of several Canadian universities, the idea of also forming a consortium of like-minded churches or religious communities into one collaborative cloud-based digital preservation community is one that may be beneficial for smaller church archives seeking to pool resources and expertise. COPPUL, hosted on the University of British Columbia's EduCloud service, allows member institutions to use Archivematica without having to install the digital preservation software themselves and setting up the necessary storage infrastructure.[54]

While not itself a digital preservation system, the Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID), modelled on AtoM, similarly utilizes the power of numbers and open source software in managing the digital records of several member institutions within the Mennonite community in Canada. If church archives should decide to utilize the Archivematica as a Service model within the context of a consortium, it would most easily take a denominational form like MAID, since, as has been seen already in this chapter, an easy way to decide the parameters of the Designated Community for a church archive (or group of archives) is to follow denominational lines which most often follow theological distinctions. In this way, church archive digital preservation consortiums would effectively preserve the unique and distinct spiritualities within their own denominations and communities.

There is today, however, also interest among some archivists from different denominational groups who see the value in broadening the membership within such potential digital preservation consortiums. Melanie Delva notes that during her time as an Anglican archivist, there were little resources available to her, which prevented her from utilizing a digital preservation program of any kind. She found ways of at least backing up digital records on a small external hard drive, but nothing in the way of an actual preservation system. In relation to what has already been seen concerning consortium and cloud based digital preservation systems, Delva sees a possible solution to the lack of archival resources within denominational boundaries:

> I really, truly believe that all the church/religious/faith archives in Canada need to band together on this. There is no other way. What would a joint, ecumenical/interfaith TDR

[54] Hurley, "Community Archives, Community Clouds," 145-146.

> look like? I may be dreaming too big here, but that's what I longed for more when I was there [as an archivist] – much like the world has come together more and more in the face of climate crisis, I think the archival community – particularly not-for-profit and faith archives will need to do likewise to face the crisis of digital records in their repositories, because I don't think it is melodramatic to say that it is at crisis pitch.[55]

In whatever way a church archive decides to use Archivematica in the end, it is nevertheless a very valuable and necessary tool for implementing a proper long-term digital preservation system. Archivematica, in creating information packages requires that essential content and contextual information be included. An essential aspect of any digital preservation program therefore is the collection of metadata, that is, "data about data". Metadata describes a record in several different ways and there are different types of metadata such as administrative, descriptive, preservation, technical, and use metadata.[56] Following the OAIS model, we can see that different types of metadata are required for different stages of the digital preservation process from creating a SIP to providing a DIP. This metadata is required in order to provide the necessary context, reliability, and accessibility that is needed to preserve the meaning of digital information and to provide the best access for users in the future. If careful attention is not given to the integrity and authenticity of digital objects during the process of digital preservation, they will be of very little use to archival users especially in terms of the evidentiary value of records.[57] A digital object is considered authentic if it is reliable, has integrity, and is usable; all of these characteristics of authenticity require the documentation of preservation metadata.[58] So, it is not only long-term preservation that must be taken into consideration, but also the long-term accessibility of such records for a trustworthy digital repository to exist.

One standard that can be followed by an archival repository for maintaining preservation metadata is PREMIS, a standard that is OAIS-compliant and helps archivists most effectively document all preservation interventions and management that may occur over time. Some examples of preservation metadata to be documented is the metadata made from the creation of a bit-level copy and the creation of checksums. The documentation of metadata from preservation events following the PREMIS standards will ensure that the authenticity of digital information

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[55] Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020, Question #7. See Appendix.
[56] Anne J. Gilliland, "Setting the Stage," in *Introduction to Metadata*, ed. Murtha Baca (Los Angeles: Getty, 2016), 1-19.
[57] PREMIS Editorial Committee, *PREMIS Data Dictionary for Preservation Metadata*, *Version 3.0* (PREMIS Editorial Committee, November 2015), 258-259. https://www.loc.gov/standards/premis/v3/premis-3-0-final.pdf.
[58] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 193-196.

can be preserved within the archival repository connected with the digital objects themselves.[59] An added benefit of PREMIS is that it is intended to be a free, open standard community resource for anyone to use as a basis for metadata preservation. It, like OAIS, was designed to be flexible to each repository's unique digital preservation strategies and technical capabilities. This also means that PREMIS can be easily combined with other preservation standards to cover complimentary functionalities not included in the PREMIS framework.[60] In fact, the developers of PREMIS did not presuppose that a preservation system would utilize only one metadata schema; there are many different metadata schemas available (including MODS, Dublin Core, and EAD) as well as for technical metadata (including AES, MIX, and EXIF).[61] Archivematica's PREMIS implementation is meant to allow for a detailed record of a digital object's nature, provenance, and level of preservation upon ingest into a repository. By implementing the PREMIS Data Dictionary when using Archivematica, metadata information surrounding a record's format, technical characteristics, when, how, and by whom it was created, and so on can be recorded in a highly detailed and structured form.[62]

BitCurator

Although using Archivematica alone may seem to be enough when establishing a digital preservation program, since it is very adept at creating SIPs, AIPs, and DIPs, which are the fundamental building blocks of an OAIS-based digital preservation program, as well as extracting and creating the metadata necessary to maintain the digital information's meaningful qualities for users, other software suites should not be ignored when pursuing a digital preservation project. For instance, while Archivematica is capable of performing extraction, analysis, and characterization of disk images, tools such as BitCurator and Forensic Toolkit (FTK) are often used with write-blockers to move information from external media into disk

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[59] PREMIS Editorial Committee, *PREMIS Data Dictionary for Preservation Metadata*, 2-3.
[60] Rebecca Squire Guenther, Angela Dappert, and Sébastien Peyrard, "An Introduction to the PREMIS Data Dictionary for Digital Preservation Metadata," in *Digital Preservation Metadata for Practitioners: Implementing PREMIS,* eds. Angela Dappert, Rebecca Squire Guenther, and Sébastien Peyrard (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 28-29.
[61] Peter McKinney, "Conformance with PREMIS," in *Digital Preservation Metadata for Practitioners: Implementing PREMIS,* eds. Angela Dappert, Rebecca Squire Guenther, and Sébastien Peyrard (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 253-254.
[62] Mark Jordan and Evelyn McLellan, "PREMIS in Open-Source Software: Islandora and Archivematica," in *Digital Preservation Metadata for Practitioners: Implementing PREMIS,* eds. Angela Dappert, Rebecca Squire Guenther, and Sébastien Peyrard (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 234.

images that can then be processed properly by Archivematica upon ingest.[63] Once a proper disk image has been created and ingested into Archivematica, the process of bitstream preservation begins. Before any digital information can be made into SIPs, AIPs, and DIPs, however, the information must be quarantined so that any infected or malicious content can be detected, preventing it from eventually entering the repository and destroying its contents.[64] Archivematica then runs algorithms to produce checksums for every individual digital object. Every digital object has its own unique bitstream which differentiates it from every other digital object. If even one bit differs from one digital object to another, we can be sure that they do not contain the same information. These checksums are preserved so that they can be referenced in the future if any unwanted change occurs to any of the digital information being preserved.[65]

As already mentioned, BitCurator is one of the most common and useful tools that can be used together with Archivematica. Like Archivematica, BitCurator is a free, open-source software suite. It performs tasks such as disk imaging and file system analysis; it reduces the risk of inadvertent changes to file content through the use of write-blocking, creates authentic copies of content through disk imaging and hashing, captures original file system metadata, records chains of custody, and identifies duplicate files, to name a few of its functions.[66] Unlike Archivematica, which is a software suite that creates information packages for ingestion into an archival repository, BitCurator is meant to fulfill pre-ingest necessities to ensure the continued authenticity and integrity of digital information. The information created by BitCurator will be included in the SIPs that Archivematica creates, which includes a bit-level copy and checksums for all the digital objects of the SIP.[67] Because Archivematica migrates the original digital objects into open-source formats, there is the potential for some information to be lost in the process. This is the risk that comes with any kind of format migration, no matter what software is used. Most importantly, BitCurator can be used to create bit-level copies of digital information, and this information will be stored along with the AIPs in the archival repository. To detect any further degradation or any other change in the digital information within the archival repository,

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[63] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 229; Artefactual Systems Inc., *Archivematica Digital Preservation System Information Sheet* (Artefactual Systems Inc., 2019), 6. https://www.artefactual.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Archivematica-information-sheet-2019.pdf.
[64] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 133.
[65] Ibid., 140.
[66] "BitCurator Project: BitCurator," BitCurator. http://bitcurator.net/bitcurator/.
[67] Brown, *Practical Digital Preservation*, 218.

fixity checks should be done routinely, which will produce new checksums. Fixity checks verify that a digital object has not been altered or corrupted, thus ensuring that any attack upon archival authenticity does not go unnoticed. The metadata created from these preservation interventions should also be properly documented according to PREMIS guidelines.

The end goal of any digital preservation program should be to provide long-term access for users to authentic digital information. After all the requirements are met for the creation of a SIP, such as creating a bit-level copy, creating checksums, and including all the necessary metadata, the digital information is ingested into the archival repository. The digital information, now in the form of an AIP, should then be monitored and the proper metadata be preserved if any interventions should occur during the life of the records. It is only after this process that a user can find, request, access, and read digital information, which takes the form of a DIP. A user must be given a DIP that includes access to both the bitstream (the Data Object) that encodes the content as well as the associated Representation Information needed to interpret the bitstream into meaningful information (the Information Object). The Data Object, interpreted through the Representation Information, yields the Information Object.[68] While all of this is on the technical side of things, the process of using software such as Archivematica and BitCurator based on the OAIS model is of relatively low financial cost to a church. It would also require only a minimal amount of technical knowledge on the part of the archivist if, for instance, Archivematica be used through hosted services such as COPPUL.

Website Preservation

Before concluding, I will briefly discuss website preservation as another important area of digital preservation for church archives to consider when planning and executing a long-term digital preservation strategy. In the previous chapter, I discussed the ways in which churches use their online presence to serve the spiritual needs of their members by using the specific example of St. Mary's Cathedral's website as an example. Using the Internet Archive database,[69] it can be seen that although the parish's website has changed its interface, content, and aesthetics since the first capture in 2009, the website has not changed in its spiritual functions for the community.

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[68] Ibid., 244, 248; Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems, *Reference Model for an Open Archival System (OAIS)*, 2-4.
[69] Internet Archive, https://web.archive.org/.

Captures of the website can be viewed beginning in 2009 and periodically until 2020. Much of the 2009 website capture is dedicated to conveniently providing information concerning upcoming parish events, Mass times, and information on obtaining various sacraments and participating in various faith formation programs. Every capture on the Internet Archive from 2009 to 2020 indicates that the basic design as well as the basic kinds of information available on the website remained constant until sometime after 2016, when the website was remade into its current form. All the while, though, the purpose of the parish website has remained the same: to provide parishioners and others with a convenient place to acquire information concerning the life and activities of the parish.

The fact that the website has been captured at various points in the past decade by the Internet Archive opens up the question: is the Internet Archive a reliable preservation tool that can be used by church archivists for preserving church websites and other online records? In this way, does the Internet Archive present itself as a low-cost option for online digital preservation that might be worked into a larger archives system or policy? If church archivists can rely on the Internet Archive to periodically capture and preserve their online records and website material, could they then focus their resources on preserving non-web-based digital information being created in church offices and by church employees?

The downloading and preservation of web content for the Internet Archive is done primarily by automated agents, or "crawlers", which are controlled by algorithms. Rob Kitchin, in his studies of internet algorithms has said that "just as algorithms are not neutral, impartial expressions of knowledge, their work is not impassive and apolitical. Algorithms search, collate, sort, categorise, group, match, analyse, profile, model, simulate, visualize and regulate people, processes and places. They shape how we understand the world and they do work in and make the world through their execution as software, with profound consequences."[70] With this being the case, that algorithms and the work they do to crawl the internet and preserve webpages for the Internet Archive are very much governed by the biases of the individuals who code them into existence, perhaps it would not be best for church archivists to simply leave it to the Internet Archive's algorithms to preserve their web presence and its accompanying information. To leave

[70] Rob Kitchin quoted in: Ed Summers and Ricardo Punzalan, "Bots, Seeds and People: Web Archives as Infrastructure," *CSCW* (Feb. 25-March 1, 2017): 823.

this aspect of digital preservation in the hands of outside individuals and algorithms might risk the loss of content that the church community may find uniquely important to their lives and spiritualities. If church archivists were to rely solely on the Internet Archive crawlers to preserve their web content, much would be lost. The Internet Archive's collection of preserved websites is very broad and shallow when taken as a whole; most websites are only crawled a few times a year and usually only at a certain depth.[71] For instance, while the interface of the St. Mary's website was fully interactive and functional in the captures, many PDF links, such as the weekly parish bulletins, were not captured at all. Such "flat crawls" reduce the contextual depth of a capture, with such dead-end links destroying any sense of original order and provenance. Web archives also do not usually provide users with any contextual documentation concerning any changes in domain names or any chains of custody behind websites' creation, which can call the overall authenticity and reliability of each web capture into question.[72]

With the weaknesses of Internet Archive crawling algorithms in mind along with the biases of their developers that will most likely not line up with local church archivists, other ways to fill in the gaps left by these automated systems must be considered by church archivists who wish to preserve their community's online presence. Archivists can use web archiving tools such as Archive-It, ArchiveSocial (primarily a social media archiving solution), and Hanzo (an archiving software suite that helps control data from websites) to both automatically and manually capture their community's websites, social media accounts, and other digital records found online. Archive-It is provided and serviced by the Internet Archive as an open format tool that archives can use to capture and preserve webpages in the Internet Archive. These captures are preserved alongside captures made by Internet Archive's automated crawlers, which then allows for a more representative record to be preserved.[73] Such preservation of online material does, however, require significantly more knowledge and training in information technology than most church archivists currently have; collaboration between archivists and technical staff would be required if such preservation work were to be undertaken at most church archives.[74] In

[71] Ian Milligan, Nick Ruest, and Jimmy Lin, "Content Selection and Curation for Web Archiving: The Gatekeepers vs. the Masses," *JCDL* (June 19-23, 2016): 110.
[72] Susanne Belovari, "Historians and Web Archives," *Archivaria* 83, no. 1 (2017): 75-76.
[73] Colin Post, "Building a Living, Breathing Archive: A Review of Appraisal Theories and Approaches for Web Archives," *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture* 46, no.2 (2017): 73.
[74] Ibid., 74.

fact, for any long-term digital preservation policy or plan to work as desired within a church archive, it would be best for archivists to consult and collaborate with professional technical staff. In this way, a church's digital preservation system, in whatever form it takes, will be founded upon a sound technical foundation so that it will be able to adapt to any changing conditions surrounding records acquisition and management, thus surviving well into the future.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out some of the challenges associated with digital preservation in church archives as well as provided some practical and technical recommendations. Without going into many of the specifics involved in carrying out a digital preservation strategy from start to finish, I hope to have at least presented a solid starting point from where church archivists will feel free to make adjustments specific to their environment. Beginning with preservation standards such as OAIS and PREMIS will provide church archivists with the framework necessary for creating an archival workflow upon which to base their preservation strategy. Using these preservation standards as a grounding, applying preservation suites such as Archivematica and BitCurator to a preservation strategy will be far easier for church archivists, especially those who are beginning to develop new preservation strategies from the ground up. As it currently stands, there are still many challenges facing digital preservation in church archives, ranging from technological challenges to a lack of institutional resources. What is required to overcome many of these challenges is for church archivists to gain an understanding of the tools and resources already available to them. This, along with gaining a fuller understanding of the spiritual value of born-digital church records, will make the challenges involved in implementing digital preservation in church archives much less intimidating.

Conclusion

And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"[1]

This biblical passage is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Christian community living in the ancient city of Rome. In its context, Paul is telling the Roman Christians that the gospel message of Jesus is meant for all people, at all times, and in all places, "for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"[2] With that being said, St. Paul then asks rhetorically in verse fourteen: how are people going to know and believe this gospel message unless they are told about it by someone who is sent forth? As indicated elsewhere in the scriptures, Christians *have* been sent forth with the responsibility to bring this gospel message to the attention of others, as Jesus clearly stated to his followers: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations… teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."[3] It is for this reason that St. Paul, quoting from the Prophet Isaiah,[4] then praises the feet of those who move to bring the gospel to others: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!". Now, of course, St. Paul is using the figurative language of Isaiah here to reveal to his readers the immense spiritual good brought about through spreading the Christian message to others. For St. Paul, the passing of this message from one person to another is a beautiful sight to behold.

Now, most church archivists may never appear on the mountain side bearing good tidings for the inhabitants below, to keep with St. Paul's metaphor. Most of the time, a church archivist, and the work that they do for a church community or institution may never be seen or known by most outside the archive. This work done by church archivists, far from excluding them from the spiritual activity and mission of a church community, does in fact, as I have argued in this thesis, positions them as critical contributors to the long-term preservation of the Christian message and life in its archival records. While not necessarily the ones who themselves proclaim the Christian

[1] Rom. 10:15 (NRSV-CE).
[2] Rom. 10:12-13 (NRSV-CE).
[3] Mt. 28:19-20 (NRSV-CE).
[4] Is. 52:7 (NRSV-CE).

message, church archivists do, through their work of preservation, provide pastors, preachers, and others with the necessary spiritual material. It is in this way that church archivists can be said to exhibit, in an indirect way, a pastoral role in the community. Many records created and used by church institutions and communities, no matter how seemingly mundane, have intrinsic spiritual value that must be preserved by church archivists for the spiritual good of believers and non-believers alike. And since we currently live in a world in which digital means of creating and accessing information have become the norm for many, even within many church communities and institutions, it is imperative that church archivists not let this growing group of born-digital records of spiritual value be lost. As the keepers of spiritual records, church archivists must take seriously the task of digital preservation by familiarizing themselves with the various resources and tools available to them in implementing long-term digital preservation strategies.

This thesis is my urgent call for church archivists to pursue strategies for the long-term preservation and accessibility of born-digital church records in their collections. If churches are to most effectively follow St. Paul's spiritual motto of becoming "all things to all people", that is, to bring the Christian message of good news to all people for their spiritual good, church archivists will need to better realize the practical ways in which they can better lay the archival foundation. I hope that my brief exploration of the spiritual value of church archives, the connections between spirituality and digitality, and the various digital preservation tools available will thus inspire church archivists towards pursing digital preservation in their repositories. The goal of this thesis was to show that ignoring the preservation of digital church records would be to ignore the preservation of sizable portions of the spirituality and mission of many church communities. Ultimately, if churches are to fulfill their spiritual mission most effectively, church archivists must play their part and quickly act upon the need for increased efforts in digital preservation.

Remember the days of old,
consider the years long past;
ask your father, and he will inform you;
your elders, and they will tell you.[5]

[5] Deut. 32:7 (NRSV-CE).

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Appendix: Answers to Questionnaire

Melanie Delva, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020

1. How did you become a church archivist? What events in your life lead up to this? Was there anything in your childhood that pointed you in the direction of being an archivist, or did this movement towards archives come later in life? Was there anything that lead you to specifically choose church/religious archives over other kinds of archival work?

In total honesty, I needed a job! I grew up in an evangelical, fundamentalist church and pretty much left the church for a bit. When I graduated with my MAS, I needed a job and the Anglican Church was hiring. They were clear that I didn't need to be Anglican, they just wanted a good, professional archivist. So, I was hired and the rest is history…

…and yet, for me as a person of faith – a Christian – I can't help but wonder about this trajectory in my life. In the course of being the Archivist for the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster and Provincial Synod of BC & Yukon I had a spiritual awakening, and experienced a renewed/restored faith.

I was raised in a home that valued both information and history very highly. Though I did not grow up thinking "I want to be an Archivist when I grow up", it made total sense and surprised no one when I took that route.

2. How do you perceive your role as a church archivist in terms of spirituality or religiosity? Would you see your role as a church archivist in terms of ministry and evangelization? How so?

I ALWAYS referred to my work as a ministry. Always – on several levels:

- Ministry to researchers – many call needing family/genealogical records – sometimes immediately after the death of a family member, some to try to make connections to a family they never got to meet, some because they were getting married and needed proof of baptism. I walked with people at some of the happiest and most devastating moments of their lives – this was particularly true in my work with survivors of the Residential School System. It was not only ministry to them, but the ministry of learning from them to begin to shed light on things for others who didn't understand.
- Ministry to the church as a body – in keeping the story. Our faith is all about story. The whole Bible is story-telling. We need story to understand where we have come from, to learn from our mistakes, to see – maybe for the first time with 20/20 vision – the way that God has been present in our story – as imperfect as it is.
- Ministry to other archivists – certainly in the years when Church archivists were dealing with records production for the TRC, we struggled a lot. It was hard work and a huge amount of emotional labour. I saw my role to support and "minister to" my colleagues who were struggling.

- Ministry to the wider public – though I don't know that I would call myself an "evangelist", I was aware that my conduct and the spirit I brought to my work would reflect on the Church I serve. Many folks who use the archives had nothing to do with the Church. Though I had no desire to "convert" anyone, I was conscious of trying to embody the teachings of Jesus (service, speaking up for the marginalized…) in my interactions with the public.

3. Have you developed or adopted a big picture understanding of an archival theology or philosophy? If so, how has your understanding changed over time? How has this affected the way you approach your work?

I would say that for me, the archival work helped me to understand and live into my faith more intentionally and with more integrity. Because of the nature of the records, I was forced to eat down to the bare bones of who Jesus was and what he taught us to be and how to live in the world. The archival work shaped my faith, and that in turn shaped my archival work. I hope that makes sense (happy to talk more about it if necessary)

4. Do you think that Christians generally see the spiritual or religious value of church archives? How have you gone about increasing the awareness of the spiritual value of church archives among church leadership and laity?

No, I can say (with a laugh!) that the average Christian would not necessarily see the spiritual or religious value of archives. When explained to them (and I spoke about it often), it makes total sense, but folks didn't seem to be able to get there on their own very often!

5. Do you see any connections between the spiritual work of church communities and digital culture? How involved with digital culture and technology is your own church/community? To what spiritual ends is digital technology used?

100% yes – especially social. Christendom is over. The model of the Church of England "parish church" in every neighbourhood with its own priest and staff and it being the centre of that little community is all but disappearing. The future of the church (in my opinion only) is in home churches, outreach, subversive social action based on scripture. Gen X/Y Millenial Christians are connecting on FB, IG, Zoom, Slack etc. Towards the end of my tenure at the Anglican Archives, the DYM (Diocesan Youth Movement) said they couldn't send me minutes because they just did their meetings through a group FB chat. That taught me a lot. Resources are scarce in the church these days, but these free platforms allow for a lot of work. Church (paper) newspapers are not long for this world and all our news is going digital. Bishops have blogs (*gasp!) and twitter feeds!

6. What is the current state of digital preservation within church archives generally and at your archives specifically? Has there been any discussion about it among church leadership or among the laity? Has the discussion changed over time? How involved are you in this conversation?

There has always been discussion, and most of it (in my experience) revolves around themes of helplessness, fear and in some cases, despair. Where at one point, we were able to begin

thinking about how we could address these things in our denomination, now the conversation (from my perspective) is more about damage control and what are the absolute minimums that can be achieved to spare the crucial…and how do we decide what the "crucial" is at the same time as we are trying to deccolonize and make sure that under-represented groups and oppressed voices are being heard?? There is no money for the kinds of systems that would be needed to meet even the lowest ISO standards on this type of stuff. We couldn't even hope for that. We're trying not to lose it ALL. We also do not have the personnel to do training on digital record-keeping. I remember a Bishop coming to me and saying "did you get all those emails I sent you for the archives?" and when I said no, he told me he had enabled the Outlook "Archiving" function and thought that meant they were automatically sent to the archives. It became clear that we needed not only a digital preservation infrastructure, but also a robust training and implementation program, for which there were also no resources.

7. What digital preservation efforts are you currently involved in within your own archive or institution? What systems and tools are you using or would like to use? What would you propose for the future with regards to digital preservation in church archives?

I am no longer working in archives (but did for 12 years). There wasn't a lot I *could* do. I bought a small, external hard drive where I backed up as much as I can. Towards the end of my tenure I tried to find a suitable way to at least back things up. There was no digital preservation program aside from trying not to lose it all. It's embarrassing to admit, but it was really the best we could do at the time. I know there are more options for folks now. I really, truly believe that all the church/religious/faith archives in Canada need to band together on this. There is no other way. What would a joint, ecumenical/interfaith TDR look like? I may be dreaming too big here, but that's what I longed for more when I was there – much like the world has come together more and more in the face of climate crisis, I think the archival community – particularly not-for-profit and faith archives will need to do likewise to face the crisis of digital records in their repositories, because I don't think it is melodramatic to say that it is at crisis pitch.

Rodney Carter, Answers to Questionnaire, February 2020

1. How did you become a church archivist? What events in your life lead up to this? Was there anything in your childhood that pointed you in the direction of being an archivist, or did this movement towards archives come later in life? Was there anything that lead you to specifically choose church/religious archives over other kinds of archival work?

Becoming the archivist for a religious congregation was by no means deliberate. (Here, and throughout my responses, I will consider "church" as referring to my employer – a congregation of women religious. While faith-based and tied deeply to the Roman Catholic church, they are separate from the church's hierarchy and, as a result, my approach to answering these questions may not align to that of someone who worked for a Diocese or Archdiocese). I joke that I exhibited archivally-inclined traits from a young age (spending hours upon hours organizing baseball & hockey cards; ensuring that my comic books were carefully put away in plastic sleeves with acid-free backing boards, despite not knowing really what that meant) but I didn't consider it as a possible job until late in the last year of my undergraduate degree.

Two things occurred at that time which steered me in this direction: I had a professor who was a former photo archivist, so I was introduced to the notion of archival work through her, and my partner, who always knew she wanted to be a librarian, attended a graduate school fair and brought back some brochures from various "library schools". I was browsing one of them which advertised an archival studies stream and thought to myself "Oh! You can study to be an archivist" and when applied to that school along with her, I applied to the Faculty of Information Studies. Had we ended up at a different school for our graduate degrees, I likely would have enrolled in a different program. It was a good fit for me, however, and my undergraduate specialization in art history (with a minor in history) prepared me very well for archival work. I had an extensive background in thinking about the contexts of production of cultural objects and it was easy to transition from thinking about art to thinking about archival fonds.

Honestly, I ended up in a religious archives as that was the first full time job on offer. We were ready to leave Toronto after our getting our degrees and when a job opening appeared back in the city where we did our undergraduate degree, we jumped at it, figuring it would be harder for me to find an archives job than for my partner to find a library job. I applied for the job in March of our final year and started immediately after the end of classes in May, prior to actually finishing my degree (I was slow to get my thesis finished so didn't actually graduate until the following year). I was the only archivist in my cohort to get a full-time job straight out of grad school so I counted myself very fortunate.

I attended Catholic elementary and high school and attended Catholic Church (including serving as an altar boy for a period of time) when I was a child so I had some familiarity with the Church. I also took some courses on the social history of religion during my undergraduate degree so I was a pretty good fit for the position despite not being a Catholic myself (the question was never asked and I didn't divulge it one way or the other at the start

but I later found out that none of my five predecessors as archivist for the congregation were Catholic so it was never considered to be an essential qualification and I really just continued the trend).

2. How do you perceive your role as a church archivist in terms of spirituality or religiosity? Would you see your role as a church archivist in terms of ministry and evangelization? How so?

As an atheist and not a religious or spiritual person, I do not view my work as an archivist in these terms. Similarly, I do not see myself as having a role in evangelization.

While my work does not fit directly with the congregation's ministry - healthcare and, to a lesser extent, education - it does preserve the records which document their ministry from its foundation to the present day. My role of the archivist, then, is to maintain the evidence of the congregation's work and to support that work.

In this, the work of a religious archivist is no different from most other archivists: the archives serves to support the operation and administration of the sponsoring body.

3. Have you developed or adopted a big picture understanding of an archival theology or philosophy? If so, how has your understanding changed over time? How has this affected the way you approach your work?

I am not sure what is meant my an "archival theology" but I am very interested to see how someone might articulate that.

I did my graduate work in the early-2000s which was arguably a highpoint for archival theory. Postmodernist thinking inflected all of my academic work and it formed the basis for my understanding of archives. From the start, it was a given for me that archives are non-neutral spaces of power that are willfully constructed to preserve some voices at the expense of others.

This remains the bedrock of my archival philosophy and it has become more nuanced as theory has evolved and as I've thought more deeply about archives over the years. However, the demands of work and life have left much less time to devote to thinking about archives than when I was in school.

In doing archival work, this theoretical framework sits in the background. When it comes to the fore it is particularly in appraisal and description where I try to critically ask who is being featured in my appraisal decisions and in the archival descriptions and what is being left out, overlooked, or otherwise elided. Omissions (willful or otherwise) are necessarily going to happen but, by employing a critical lens to my own work, I at least attempt to be somewhat self-reflexive in this and, where possible, address some of the issues I find.

4. Do you think that Christians generally see the spiritual or religious value of church archives? How have you gone about increasing the awareness of the spiritual value of church archives among church leadership and laity?

I think very few Christians think about their church's archives at all and fewer would see any spiritual value in them. Those who do see value in archives are typically interested in the historical, particularly genealogical, value of the records.

This question presupposes, somewhat, the idea that there is spiritual or religious value to religious archives. The case for spiritual or religious value is easier to make for religious art but I am having a difficult time envisioning a similar approach for religious archives. Perhaps this stems from me not being a member of the faith as I am not looking for these values in the archives.

Where someone might be looking for spiritual value, I think it would be personal and idiosyncratic. For me, and for the archives I work with, I do not see this being present. Perhaps this would be different for someone who worked with records that were used in the cause of a saint, where they were looking to the records by or about key figures as a source of the divine. Or, for the faithful, perhaps the records which contain the stories of founders of congregations or particular members of their religious community would have spiritual value for them, being inspirational texts.

So, ultimately, I do not try to increase awareness about the spiritual value of the archives. It difficult enough to try to make an argument in support for the historical value of archives to leadership. Rather than spending too much time on these "soft" values, it has been more effective to advance the argument in favour of the administrative and legal values of the archives in order to convince the sponsors that the archival program it is worthwhile to devote the necessary resources to ensure they are well maintained.

5. Do you see any connections between the spiritual work of church communities and digital culture? How involved with digital culture and technology is your own church/community? To what spiritual ends is digital technology used?

Being somewhat of an outsider to the church community, I don't think I am knowledgeable enough about things to comment on how they connect their spiritual work to digital culture. If I were to guess, given that the congregation is a rather traditional one and that their primary mission is healthcare and not evangelization, I think the connection is minimal at best.

From my vantage point, the congregation is not very involved with digital culture and technology. They use email for communication, of course, and create digital documents and photographs etc. but as an organization they are not terribly engaged. There is a fairly rudimentary congregational website but they do not have a presence on Facebook or other social media platforms (although the museum at the congregation's motherhouse does have Facebook and Twitter pages).

While there is some information on vocations on the congregation's website and the information shared is often couched in the Sisters' spirituality and mission, but that is about the limit of how they are using digital technology for spiritual ends.

6. What is the current state of digital preservation within church archives generally and at your archives specifically? Has there been any discussion about it among church leadership

or among the laity? Has the discussion changed over time? How involved are you in this conversation?

Digital preservation in church archives ranges generally, from what I know of my peers and colleagues, from non-existent to rudimentary, with only a few larger institutions serving as outliers and actually having some digital preservation strategies in place. My archives, specifically, falls within the rudimentary column.

I think there is certainly an awareness of the pressing issues faced with regards to digital preservation, but there is a lack of capacity to deal with them (expertise, technical and financial resources etc).

There has been no discussion of this that I am aware of at my congregation's General Council level. There is a General Archives and they may be involved with digital preservation of the high-level records but that is not a discussion that has been had with me.

7. What digital preservation efforts are you currently involved in within your own archive or institution? What systems and tools are you using or would like to use? What would you propose for the future with regards to digital preservation in church archives?

When local superior's leave office, I try to get access to their office computers and make copies of their files for the Archives. I am not always able to do so, however. I make backups of textual records and photographs from other Sisters, wherever possible, as well.

For the digital records in the archives (primarily scanned and original digital photographs, along with text documents and some other file types), backups are made using the program TeraCopy which creates checksums and the copies are validated to ensure their integrity but this is about the extent of things.

In an ideal world, I would like to implement Archivematica or some other robust digital preservation system but at the moment it is really not necessary given the scope of digital records I am dealing with (and I do not yet have the requisite knowledge to use the system).

For the future of digital church records, generally, I think there needs to be a willingness on the churches themselves to devote the necessary resources to ensure the human and technological resources are devoted to implementing digital preservation. Where the archives in general are so underfunded, this is will be a large hurdle to overcome.

Conrad Stoesz, Answers to Questionnaire, April 2020

1. How did you become a church archivist? What events in your life lead up to this? Was there anything in your childhood that pointed you in the direction of being an archivist, or did this movement towards archives come later in life? Was there anything that lead you to specifically choose church/religious archives over other kinds of archival work?

I grew up in a home that valued family, community, and church. We were very involved in church activities each week. That was not unique in my community. Most people went to church and many attended weekday events. Wed was youth night so teachers assigned less homework and only a very few sports events were on Wed because it was church night. I was steeped in an environment that understood church as central to life and that the church and the people the belonged to it were to have different values and actions than others. This understanding helps me appreciate some of the more tradition-minded Mennonite groups today. I learned Low German at home, English when playing with friends and then at school, and from grade 1 to 11 took high German as my second (or third) language (French was not even an option until grade 7). Having these language skills became very important for my future working in the Mennonite archives. I would not say I am fluent but I have more than a beginner understanding of high German and Low German.

My mother has a great memory for names, faces, and dates and is well connected with a wide array of relatives. In grade 11 an assignment we had was to do a family history project. I quickly learned that I really enjoyed it. I went with my mother to interview many older relatives including my great grandfather's sister. Having mom there was important, she knew the family connections and helped bridge the gap between me and a much older person I may never have talked to before. I would ask the questions and take notes as mom had follow up questions – she enjoyed this too. Some of the interviews were only in Low German. For the most part I understood most of it but at times there were hushed tones and words I had never heard of before and phrases that had hidden meanings. I tried to ask what was being talked about and was quickly hushed and told – later. Interviewing older people who have many life experiences includes negative experiences.

So the grade 11 history project got me interested. There was no Mennonite history class in my school. I tried to have a Low German class taught but that too did not turn out. I then went to Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now CMU) where I took Mennonite history classes, did an independent study on family history, and got a small job (1-2 hours a week) working in the archives responding to inquiries related to family history. In the mid 1990s there were grants archives were accessing to help with backlog reduction. After graduation from CMBC in 1994 and a year at U of Winnipeg, I continued working towards my BA while working (I think I got it in 1997). There were some grants for university students and in the mid 1990s I was hired several times under these programs building up skills and networks. I got married in 1996 and my wife and I were part of a small group at church made up of young adults like us. We met for socialization and Bible study. Many of us were looking for work as it was hard finding jobs. At this time I was working in a factory making counter tops. At one point in our sharing we were encouraged to ask and verbalize what we wanted so others

could pray for us. I knew what I wanted but never verbalized it. I said I wanted the job at the Mennonite Heritage entre as archivist. But there was no opening. That summer (1997?) I quite my full time job, with benefits, for a 2-month job in the archives. It was to be four months but because a technicality it was reduced to 2. When considering the future, if I knew earlier that the job was only 2 months I would not have been interested. But on the day I was to hand in my notice to my employer that I was quitting, I was told the job was only 2 months long. I was far enough down the road I felt I needed to go on and not turn back and handed in my notice. After those 2 months I bounced around working at selling books, at the Camps With Meaning Office, and as a pastoral intern. In the Fall of 1999 the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies received a grant. I applied and got the job. But in the Fall of 1999 the director at the Mennonite Heritage Centre resigned. The person who had been half time archivist at MHA and CMBS became acting director at MHA. I then was asked to be interim archivist at CMBS and the MHC. Then each organization went through their processes and I was able to land the permenant job as archivist at both centres. I carried on working half time at the two from 1999-2017 when in June 2017 I moved to full time at MHC. The MHA changed its name to Mennonite Heritage Archives (MHA) and I now lead the archival effort.

Why did I pick to work at the Mennonite archives? It is because it is about my people, my community, and about me.

2. How do you perceive your role as a church archivist in terms of spirituality or religiosity? Would you see your role as a church archivist in terms of ministry and evangelization? How so?

For the church, history is necessarily theology. The study of the past for people of faith is about looking for God working in the world, through miraculous means or through people. The cloud of witnesses written about in Hebrew chapter 11 is an important passage. The heroes of faith are mentioned and then the next chapter starts with “Therefore” because you have heard these things, remembers these stories from the past – now take courage for the present and chart your path accordingly. You should listen to an interview with me here https://www.mharchives.ca/features/still-speaking/. It is the first audio clip on the page where I am being interviewed about the new story telling feature I was working on.

In terms of evangelism, our mission comes out from who we think we are – our identity. And what shapes identity – but memory and the past. Here is an article I wrote on this theme. https://mbherald.com/a-future-found-in-history/.

3. Have you developed or adopted a big picture understanding of an archival theology or philosophy? If so, how has your understanding changed over time? How has this affected the way you approach your work?

At CMBC a professor kept telling us we are people of story – that we are shaped by narrative. I felt like I never really grasped what he was talking about. But I think I am starting to understand. Stories are part of who we are – what shapes us. It can met us where we are and wrench us our of the present and towards the future. Some talk about narrative ethics, that it is stories and their values that guide our ethics. So what the happens when we in society hear

a predominate non-Christian message? How does this narrative shape who we are, what we do, and our spirituality? See https://christianleadermag.com/looking-back-moving-forward/. Look for the section on Nickel Mines. See also the "Still Speaking" episode number 4 https://www.mharchives.ca/features/still-speaking/#nickelmines.

In 1991 as a young adult I was baptised at my church. This was during the Gulf War. Part of our discussions during catechism class to prepare us for baptism we discussed the Mennonite stance on war and peace. Some of us were concerned – would Canada enter the war, would there be conscription? What would our response be? I knew what our church's stance was, I was aware that my grandfather was a conscientious objector in WWII, that the government guaranteed exemption from military service for Mennonites. But we wrestled with these questions. I felt there was a poor understanding and appreciation for the church's belief in non-violence and very little appreciation/understanding of the conscientious objector story. Clearly there was not an understanding about our stories dealing with violence – we collectively have been neglectful of telling our story and allowed other stories to become the guiding narrative. I began to study the story of Canada's conscientious objectors in WWII. To make a long story short, in 2004 we got federal funding ($26,000?) to build the www.alternativeservice.ca web site. In 2005 I helped host a conference on COs in WWII. Papers were published in the 2006 edition of the Journal of Mennonite Studies. I wrote a chapter for the book Worth Fighting For, on Canada's peace identity and in 2015, and got a $38,000 grant to create a documentary "The Last Objectors" on the subject which was done in 2016. Each year I have a booth at the Red River Heritage Fair at the University of Winnipeg and the 300+ kids all come away knowing what a conscientious objector is. This comes from my valuing of story in our lives and my self understanding of being a Mennonite. In the words of the well-loved Canadian author Stuart McLean, "For the heroes we choose, whether real or imagined, whether from the world of fact or from the pages of fiction, will determine, to a greater or lesser degree, the things that we do, and if we allow them the privilege, the lives we lead." McLean agrees in the power of story.

4. Do you think that Christians generally see the spiritual or religious value of church archives? How have you gone about increasing the awareness of the spiritual value of church archives among church leadership and laity?

No I do not think that Christians generally see much value in church archives. I have worked at not only collecting and making accessible stories in the archives but also telling stories. I have spoken at a number of events (from Manitoba to BC) published in various places, helped create online resources and documentaries. (some of the links provided above are examples) The "Still Speaking" is one of these ways. It is telling stories not only from the archives, but making people aware of archives from an archivists point of view. For too long we have expected others to tell our (the archives) story. We need to capture our own voice and tell our own story as archivists. Some in the church community see the archives as a ball and chain – confining them to a specific past that they want forgotten.

5. Do you see any connections between the spiritual work of church communities and digital culture? How involved with digital culture and technology is your own church/community? To what spiritual ends is digital technology used?

Digital technology is another tool. Electricity, radio, bicycles, TV and now internet – these technologies have been embraced by some Mennonites and shunned – even to this day - by others. Some (many) within the Mennonite fold see great potential and use it daily. With our current COVID-19 situation I have attended church services via zoom and small group discussions via zoom. Others see digital technology as opening up ourselves to too many outside and non-Christian influences. Similar to how some Mennonites saw TV in the 1950s. It is not only negative influences but a reliance on the outside world, and an erosion of community life is what more tradition-minded Mennonites are concerned about. There are some Mennonite communities today that are not part of the electrical grid.

6. What is the current state of digital preservation within church archives generally and at your archives specifically? Has there been any discussion about it among church leadership or among the laity? Has the discussion changed over time? How involved are you in this conversation?

Central to the question of digital preservation is resources. When support for archives is already soft, it can be difficult to see how the investment in the kinds of funds for a good digital preservation can be obtained.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (Sample)

Individual Interview

Title of Study: I Have Become All Things To All People: The Spirituality of Church Archives and Digital Preservation.

Principal Investigator: Jared Warkentin

Research Supervisor: Greg Bak

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of this Study:

This research study is being conducted to study what makes church archives unique from other archives, looking specifically at the spirituality or religiosity behind church archives. This will also tie into the spiritual qualities of and reasons behind digital preservation in church archives. If church archivists wish to preserve the spiritual and evangelical motivations and goals behind the religious institutions they work for, greater attention must be given to the preservation of digital records of enduring spiritual value. Church archivists from different Christian traditions will be asked to describe their own archival spirituality or religiosity, their work surrounding digital preservation, what directions they would like to see church archives go in the near future, and other such questions. The answers given by the participating church archivists will be used in the researcher's thesis to give some more practical and personal information to fill in the gaps left by the scholarly literature.

Participants Selection:

You are being asked to participate in this study because as an archivist who is involved in the preservation of records of religious or spiritual importance, you will have a unique perspective on the religiosity/spirituality of church archives that is informed by your own experiences.

A total of three participants will be asked to participate.

Study procedures:

- The method of data collection for this study will be individual interviews.
- Participation in the study will be for however long you desire to answer the interview questions. Only one interview session will be required of you which may be about one hour in length.
- The Principal Investigator will either send the interview questions via email for the you to answer on your own time or will sit down one-on-one with you to ask the questions in

person. The method of presenting the interview questions will be your own decision beforehand.

- These questions will surround the religiosity/spirituality of church archives in general, your own views on the religiosity/spirituality of church archives, and their perspective on the intersections between archival religiosity and digital preservation with you also being asked about their own views/perspectives on digital preservation in church archives. These questions will help us to better understand the practicalities of archival religiosity/spirituality, that is, to see if or how church archivists conduct their work with any reference or adherence to religious/spiritual principles or methods.

- If you choose to conduct the interview one-on-one with the Principal Investigator, the session will be audiorecorded, and the recordings will be transcribed by the Principal Investigator. You could also choose to have the interview questions sent to them via email, so your answers would only exist in textual form.

- No one's name will be asked or revealed during the individual interview unless you agree to have your name revealed.

- If the interviews are audio-recorded, the recordings will be stored on a secure computer before and after being transcribed. Recordings will be donated to the University of Manitoba Archives with your permission; otherwise, they will be destroyed within a year of completing the transcriptions and the transcriptions will be included in the thesis with your permission or else destroyed a year after the completion of this evaluation.

- You may receive copies of audio-recordings and/or transcripts of your interview.

- Once your interview has been conducted and incorporated into a draft of the Principal Investigator's thesis, you will receive a copy of this draft for your overview and an opportunity to submit feedback and/or revisions regarding the information you provided. You will have until April 15, 2020 to submit feedback to the Principal Investigator. Please indicate below how you would like to receive the thesis draft (email or hard copy via regular mail) along with your contact information.

Method of Receiving Thesis Draft:_____ Send to:_____

(email address or postal address)

Risks and Discomforts:

Risks are no greater than in everyday life.

Benefits:

Being a participant may not help you directly, but information gained may help other people to learn more about church archives, digital preservation, and archival spirituality in the future.

Costs:

There is no cost to you as a participant in an individual interview.

Payment for Participation:

You will receive no payment or reimbursement for any expenses related to taking part in this study.

Confidentiality:

We will do everything possible to keep your personal information confidential. Your name will not be used at all in the study records unless your permission is given.

Some people or groups may need to check the study records to make sure all the information is correct. All of these people have a professional responsibility to protect your privacy. Quality assurance staff of the University of Manitoba and/or the thesis supervisor of the principle investigator may have access to your information to ensure the study is being conducted properly.

If an interview is audio-recorded, this recording will be stored on a secure computer. Transcriptions of these recordings will also be stored on the same secure computer. Interviews in textual form conducted via email will also be stored on the secure computer. None of this information will be transmitted electronically after this point. Only the Principal Investigator and possibly the Principal Investigator's thesis supervisor will have access to this information. All records will be kept in a secure area.

We may wish to quote your words directly in reports and publications resulting from this. Your words may also be quoted in the Principal Investigator's master's thesis. With regards to being quoted, please check yes or no for each of the following statements:

Researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me under the following conditions:	
☐ Yes ☐ No	I agree to be quoted directly (my name is used).
☐ Yes ☐ No	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published (I remain anonymous).
☐ Yes ☐ No	I agree to be quoted directly if a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal from the Study:

Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or you may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Questions:

If any questions come up during or after the study contact the Principal Investigator: Jared Warkentin at *******. You can contact the thesis research advisor, Greg Bak, at *******.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact The University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board Office at *******.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at ******* or *******. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's **Signature**_____ **Date** _____

Participant's P**rinted** N**ame:** _____ Page **3** of **3**