I’m Still There!
Ronald A.N. Kydd’s Influence on Canadian Pentecostalism

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Introduction
In 1977 Ronald A.N. Kydd published a small pamphlet through the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) entitled, I’m Still There! A Reaffirmation of Tongues as the Initial Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the wake of a burgeoning charismatic movement and its reinterpretation of the ‘distinctive testimony’ of classical Pentecostals, and in response to James Dunn’s important study on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (1970) that endorsed the legitimacy of tongues but denied any causality with the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, I’m Still There was an apologetic; a defence of the doctrinal significance of the historical material in Acts. “Are tongues the initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit? I think they are,” wrote Kydd. “This is what the Scriptures teach, as I see it…I believe that what we adopted in 1928 rests on a sound interpretation of the Bible, and I want to say that - I’m still there.”


Kydd is no longer with the PAOC, but like the title to his apologetic, the evidence would suggest that he remains theologically, pastorally and prophetically present both within the denomination and on the international Pentecostal scene. Since 2000 he has served as a priest with the Anglican Church of Canada. He no longer teaches at a PAOC college but is a Research Professor of Church History at Tyndale University College. His influence can be attributed to his writings but also to his presence as witnessed in the countless students and parishioners who have been influenced by his humility and teaching, in particular on the work of the Holy Spirit.

Kydd is a notable and recognized scholar in Patristic studies as well as Charismatic/Pentecostal movements. With degrees from the University of Manitoba (1967), Lutheran Theological Seminary (1968) and the University of St. Andrews (PhD 1973), Kydd has published a modest number of books and academic articles that have been well received.\(^2\) He was also a well respected participant in the Roman Catholic–Pentecostal dialogue in the 1990s. Furthermore, he has served communities of Anglicans and Pentecostals through his teaching and pastoral responsibilities. His influence extends beyond his scholarly work and includes important contributions from his service to a number of church communities.

\(^2\) For a list of his publications, see the bibliography at the end of this article.
Scholarly Contributions

Kydd has made an excellent contribution to Pentecostal studies with a range of writings on the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, relationship between Pentecostals and evangelicals, the charismatic movement, charismatic gifts, pneumatology, and healing. Kydd also edited the *Eastern Journal of Practical Theology*, a publication of Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. When the editors of the *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* went searching for someone to write on a number of entries on the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Pentecostalism in Canada, and healing, they enlisted the expertise of Kydd. He was the foremost Canadian Pentecostal scholar at the time.

In particular, his two monographs, *The Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* and *Healing through the Centuries: Models for Understanding*, have been singled out as careful examinations into charismatic activity prior to the outburst of modern Pentecostalism.³ Both volumes ad-

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³ Kydd’s monograph, *The Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), (based upon his PhD dissertation) demonstrates that there is clear evidence of charismatic gifts operating in the church with intention well up until the middle of the third century. In the end Kydd suggests that a growing prestige among church leaders may have been the impetus for the later dissolution of charismata in subsequent years. Kydd’s thesis aligns itself well with Harvey Cox’s recent publication *The Future of Faith* (HarperOne, 2009). Cox divides church history into three major epochs: The Age of Faith, The Age of Belief and The Age of the Spirit. Accordingly the “Age of Faith,” drew to a close early in its history as the church grew in respectability and the actions of the Spirit gave way to an emphasis on right belief. Cox further argues that beginning in the twentieth century the recent resurgence of Pentecostalism is a
dress what one might consider a serious lacuna in Pentecostal scholarship. Along with the work of Donald Dayton⁴ they remind the church that modern Pentecostalism and the practices often associated with it did not fall silent in the years between the book of Acts and the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement. Whereas the brunt of recent Pentecostal scholarship has focused its attention on the last century of Pentecostal activity, Kydd has done the Pentecostal community a considerable service by filling in part of the story for the years prior to the twentieth century.⁵

Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church is an accessible revision of Kydd’s dissertation, which traces the charismatic activity in early patristic period to its eventual decline by AD 325 as the church strove for permanence and stability. In contrast to cessationist arguments, which ar-

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⁵ “The Pentecostal Movement has no such history; it leaps the intervening years crying, ‘Back to Pentecost.’” B.F. Lawrence, “The Apostolic Faith Restored,” reprinted in Three Early Pentecostal Tracts, ed. Donald Dayton (New York: Garland Pub., 1985), p. 12. This quotation by Lawrence, an early apologist for modern Pentecostalism, reflects the sentiments of the early Pentecostal pioneers at the dawn of the twentieth century. Kydd’s work has done much to dispel this myth.
gue that charismatic activity of the Spirit ceased with the completion of what became the New Testament canon at the end of the apostolic era, Kydd demonstrates from patristic sources that the charismata were present and operative until approximately AD 250 at which point they quickly waned. At the same time, his work challenges assumptions in some Pentecostal circles that Christian tradition is irrelevant to Pentecostal theology.

Structurally, Kydd’s work takes a chronological approach from the end of the apostolic era to the rise of the Constantinian church. Representative sources are used though how these sources are selected is uncertain. Are they truly representative of the time, or are they selected because of their discussions of various charismata? Nevertheless, the period of AD 100 – AD 150 shows a continuation of the type of spiritual gifts seen in the New Testament period. The Didache, for instance, discusses how to discern true prophets and the role of wandering charismatics, and Clement of Rome considers the function of spiritual gifts in the body of the church. In the early part of the second century the spiritual gifts continue in force as indicated with Ignatius of Antioch and the Shepherd of Hermas. The former consists of letters discussing the role of the Christian prophet and admonition to pray for revelations and spiritual gifts, the latter developing a complex understanding of the prophet (perhaps to the extent of a highly mystical form) and a discussion of what constitutes a prophet. For the middle of the second century, The Odes of Solomon and Justin Martyr are selected. In poetic fashion, The Odes accent the ecstasy or rapture
of the Spirit, which Kydd claims is the language of the prophet. Justin Martyr, however, is a philosopher and establishes a school of philosophy in Rome. Yet he teaches about spiritual gifts and indicates that Christians are in fact receiving different kinds of spiritual gifts.

When dealing with the last half of the second century the church becomes more diverse and must deal with institutional tensions. Kydd organizes the material around the activity of the charismata in fringe movements such as Montanism in Asia Minor and Celsus, in the centres of catholic Christianity with Irenaeus of Lyons and Eusebius of Caesarea, and in more heretical sources such as Theodotus and the Apocryphal Acts, giving a broad spectrum of the role of the spiritual gifts. Relegating the charismata to fringe and heretical movements is a common strategy used against the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, by outsiders as a way to exclude these renewal, but by insiders as a way to indict the institutionalization of the church for quenching the Spirit. Kydd demonstrates, however, that while associated with fringe and heretical groups the charismata were also noted by Eusebius of Caesarea as familiar in many churches explaining the quick acceptance of Montanism. In his dispute with Gnosticism, Irenaeus not only listed different gifts such as the casting out of demons, knowledge of the future, visions and prophetic speech, but mentions hearing the prophecies himself.

Following AD 260 the spiritual gifts appear to have diminished. They are still around but as the church becomes more organized as an institution they do not have a
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major place in the ministry and worship of the church. Kydd’s interest in the role of the charismata in the patristic period speaks to his broader ecumenical concern that wants to place Pentecostalism within the broader Christian tradition. In distinction with some of the anti-institutional tendencies of Pentecostalism in the United States, Kydd stands firmly in a Canadian Pentecostal tradition influenced by the Anglican Church of Canada through the person of J.E. Purdie, which sees itself as part of the historic church and respects Christian tradition.⁶

*Healing through the Centuries* is a comparative analysis of healing. It examines what Kydd refers to as divine healing or the “restoration of health through the direct intervention of God.”⁷ The book is sophisticated methodologically. Kydd’s case study of healing employs a variety of methodological techniques including historical and theological analysis, observation, interviews, secondary analysis, and archival research. What results is an exceptional study of healing as represented in the various traditions of Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. Kydd summarizes his research findings in six models that

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⁷ *Healing through the Centuries*, xv.
clearly illuminate the varieties of healing within orthodox Christianity.

The book consists of thirteen chapters which illustrate the six models. The models are described as confrontational, intercessory, reliquarial, incubational, revelational, and soteriological. Each model is clearly defined and supported with numerous case studies. Kydd’s analysis is well balanced revealing a view that is neither uncritical nor openly enthusiastic. He argues for the need to evaluate claims of healing along the following criteria: the event must have actually occurred, it must be something unusual and difficult to believe, it must have occurred in a setting of prayer and holiness, and the healing must avoid deceit.\(^8\)

What makes Kydd’s study relevant is the ongoing and current interest in the area of divine healing. For example, since writing his book healing ministries emanating from the ‘Toronto Blessing’ including Heidi Baker’s require ongoing analysis.\(^9\) Baker clearly states healing is related to the Father’s love, an idea found in Kydd’s work. Kydd states: “Divine healing has little to do with the rightness of all theological propositions any particular healer might believe and everything to do with the endless love of the Divine Person.”\(^10\) Future research on healing and its relationship to the love of God may in fact produce another model to be added to Kydd’s work.

\(^8\) *Healing through the Centuries*, xxxi.
\(^10\) *Healing through the Centuries*, xxiv.
For Canadian researchers there is also much in Kydd’s work on healing that is important. For example, Kydd writes about the healing ministry of Brother André of Montreal and the example he set as an intercessor in chapter six. Brother André is well known for the miracles associated with his intercessory prayer on behalf of those in need for divine intervention in Quebec during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Other examples include brief analyses of Gordon Atter’s view on divine healing in relation to the soteriological view of healing and the atonement. Atter was a professor at Eastern Pentecostal Bible College of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). Also worth noting is Kydd’s archival research to show the view of PAOC leaders on William Branham’s controversial healing ministry. Kydd even follows up claims of healing related to Kathryn Kuhlman’s ministry by interviewing a Canadian who was healed during a meeting. In sum, *Healing through the Centuries* is a must read for scholars of Pentecostalism which makes an important contribution based upon his ecumenical approach.

Currently, he is working on another monograph with a working title “Finding Pieces of the Puzzle: A Fresh Look at the Christian Story.” The emphasis is on global church history, particularly the non-western story. Similar to *Healing through the Centuries*, each chapter is centred on one or two representative people of greater or lesser influ-

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11 *Healing through the Centuries*, 209-10.
12 *Healing through the Centuries*, 173, 177, 179, 180.
13 *Healing through the Centuries*, 189.
ence. For example, the work will include the missional outreach of lesser known figures: Aluopen who takes the gospel to the Tang court in China in 635, Afonso, King of Kongo in early sixteenth century, Argula von Grumbach, who defended Lutheran ideas in the 1520s, and W.J. Seymour leader of the Azusa revival in Los Angeles, 1906-1909. Overall, Kydd’s scholarly writings make an important contribution to Pentecostal studies in Canada but also more broadly through his international reputation.

**Roman Catholic – Pentecostal Dialogue**

We move closer to Kydd’s influential status when we consider his ecumenical contributions on a global platform. From 1990 to 1998, he was a member of the “International Pentecostal-Roman Catholic Dialogue” serving as secretary of the Pentecostal team from 1991. With the other members of the dialogue, he was presented to Pope John Paul II in 1997. Commenting on the opportunity, Kydd says: “The overall experience was one of the most enriching of my professional life. I found myself in places I had never seen before grappled with ideas I had only nibbled on previously, and met extraordinary levels of scholarship and Christian grace in members on both sides.” In 1993 he was also invited along with three

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15 The quotation is based on personal correspondence with Kydd. The International Pentecostal - Roman Catholic Dialogue began in the autumn of 1970 with the late David DuPlessis (Pentecostal) and Rev. Killian Mc Donnell (Roman Catholic) serving as co-moderators.
other Pentecostals to sit as an observer in the historic con-
vening of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order in
Santiago, Spain.

Given the historical inimical attitude of Canadian Pen-
tecostals toward Roman Catholicism in general, Kydd’s
participation with the Roman Catholic–Pentecostal dia-
logue and his invitation to take part in these discussions
has set him apart as a scholar of Pentecostalism, and a
major Canadian Pentecostal thinker on the international
and ecumenical stage. These ecumenical concerns can be
seen in his irenic approach to Christian tradition in both
monographs, where he demonstrates the vitality of char-
ismata in patristic Christianity and highlights healing in
multiple sectors of world Christianity, not just the healing
movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in
North America. Add to this his considerable contributions
to Pentecostal–charismatic and non charismatic educa-
tional institutions,¹⁶ and one might start to appreciate the
lasting contribution Kydd has made to both Canadian and
international Pentecostalism. More to the point, I know of

They continued to meet yearly until 2004. The final reports on their
discussions can be found at http://www.pro.urbe.it/dia-int/pe-rc/e_pe-
cr-info.html (accessed March 31, 2010).

¹⁶ In addition to teaching in classical Pentecostal institutions,
Kydd served as adjunct faculty member in the School of Religious
Studies, University of Saskatchewan, St Paul University (where he is
a Research Professor of Church History), McMaster Divinity College
and Tyndale University. Currently he is a member of a multi-
disciplinary, multi-national research team working out of McGill.
With a budget of $2.5 million the research project is a seven-year
project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research
Council of Canada, examining the global economy around the Indian
Ocean.
no other Canadian Pentecostal scholar who has traveled so freely within the Pentecostal and broader Christian tradition. Kydd, in this sense, is Canada’s Mr. Pentecost.  

Serving the Pentecostal-Charismatic Community

In addition to his scholarly work Kydd briefly served as acting president of a denominational Pentecostal Bible College (Central Pentecostal College), served two congregations as a pastor and was president of the Society of Pentecostal Studies (1988). My own experience with Kydd began in 1984 while I was a young Pentecostal pastor serving in a small community on the North East shores of Quebec. In the fifth year of ministry in fledgling English Presbyterian and French Pentecostal congregations, I made the journey to District Conference, where Kydd, who at the time was pioneering a church in Kanata a suburb of Ottawa, was the conference speaker. In summary Kydd called the audience of pastors, spouses and lay leaders to reassess how they were coping denomination-
ally with success.\textsuperscript{20} Drawing on the biblical figures of Peter (Acts 10:9-13:5), Jeremiah (9:23-24) and Ezekiel (2:3-7; 3:7-9) he pushed for an alternative imagination in an effort to stave off the numbing effects of complacency that frequently partners with institutional success. Citing the latest statistics he informed the audience of Pentecostal leaders: “I have good news. We are the fastest growing Christian group in Canada. We have grown 53.7% in ten years. We are operating some of the largest churches numerically in the country. Socially and politically the PAOC can no longer be ignored. But our success has not come without a price. Time will tell how we cope with this success.”

As a young pastor listening I was hooked, not only by the timely message but also by his ability to weave almost seamlessly the world of scripture with my own world horizon. Effortlessly he slid between the two worlds with passion, erudition\textsuperscript{21} and humility.\textsuperscript{22} Suddenly I was no longer the pastor of two small churches in North Eastern

\textsuperscript{20} Kydd was undoubtedly influenced by his own work on the Pre-Nicene fathers and the dramatic shift beginning in the middle of the third century towards an institutionalizing church. Without voicing it directly I suspect Kydd was wondering if the PAOC could avoid the mistakes of the historical past.

\textsuperscript{21} As a graduate of a Pentecostal Bible College the irony of course is that we were encouraged to rightfully ‘divide the truth’ while being warned almost simultaneously that too much occupation with ‘knowledge’ is the surest way of spiritually draining an individual. Kydd defied this stereotype.

\textsuperscript{22} As I listened recently to some of Kydd’s former students, one characteristic that repeated itself perhaps more than anything else was his humility. It simply occurred too often to be dismissed as an isolated subjective response.
Quebec, but I was on the frontier of the early years of Jehoahim’s reign (609-598 BC) faced with the real temptation of believing any real peace or success that we achieve is the result of our own efforts and not the result of the God of creation and Sinai.23

Kydd’s message was frighteningly simple. Is our boasting in ourselves or God? With prophetic humility, he chimed, “Be not deceived.” We are at a cross roads – a cross roads however, with alternative options. Ministry may be tough, but like Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea as we heed the Spirit and remember what it was like to experience God,24 we will discover fresh ways of reconstructing the world alternatively. That summer after the 1984 conference I resigned my position as pastor and returned to university with new enthusiasm to pursue a graduate degree in theology, in part, because I was wrestling with

23 Kydd’s style of exegesis, similar to that of biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann, demonstrates an ability to weave the contemporary and historical into a seamless fabric.

24 Kydd himself related his own watershed moment while working in a Bible Camp in Manitoba as a young counsellor. He relates: “One afternoon when pretty well everyone was asleep I went over to the chapel, entered through the back door and began to walk down the aisle toward the front. Suddenly I was struck with a vivid sense of God’s presence. As I moved down the aisle I had the sensation of actually pushing through a tangibly-real presence. The moment was ‘awe-filled.’ Since then I discovered something about the Old Testament understanding of God’s glory (a sense of density, weight, almost substance), but I knew nothing about that then. In fact, it feels slightly sacrilegious to write about it, and I can only point toward the experience and never really describe it fully. There have been many, many other times when I have felt God’s presence strongly, including last night during a lecture on the history of the Church. But the power of that experience in ‘65 has remained indelibly.”
some of my own issues of faith and was now convinced one could be a scholar and not lose my enthusiasm for the Christian faith.

My next encounter with Kydd occurred in 1990 when again he was speaking at the District Conference of Eastern Ontario and Quebec. I was on staff at one of the larger churches in the Province of Quebec and wondered if Kydd would offer a verdict on the progress of the PAOC during the previous six years. In 1990 the National Office of the PAOC launched a new marketing campaign for the ten years leading to the new millennium. 1990 to 2000 was labelled the Decade of Destiny, but from Kydd’s perspective a decade with ominous clouds looming ahead. Kydd began by reviewing the progress of the PAOC over the previous six years. His verdict: Missions is being curtailed by a lack of funds. Most of our present church growth is transfer growth. We have embraced the secular world. And to the remaining few who still believe we are resident aliens and not of this world, Kydd lamented “Hogwash.” We are as trapped by the dominant philosophy of our day as anyone else: narcissistic materialism.

For Pentecostals the normal response in such matters is to internalize the dilemma and try to fill the altars with calls to repentance in hope of returning to the so-called

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25 I am indebted to Kydd for providing his sermon notes for both the 1984 and 1990 District conferences. I am also indebted to Marla Williamson, an administrative assistant who transcribed Kydd’s notes into type so I could read them.

26 Pentecostal Testimony (March 1990).

27 This includes Kydd and others who have come from the United Church of Canada and are counted as converts.
golden age of Pentecostalism. In contrast, Kydd externalized the dilemma by asking what is the Spirit saying to our church? “If we actually yielded to the Spirit, what might happen? In particular what might the Spirit do about racial inequality, poverty, gender or the environment? Can we again find the voice to resist societal pressures within the Pentecostal tradition that would white wash these problems? Are we following society or are we resisting society? Fads come and go. We need a clear-headed leadership that is not afraid to make decisions, that encourages theological training and is ready to teach in humility.” Again what struck me was not a sense that Kydd had discovered some new prophetic teaching. Instead the material was counterintuitive. According to the pundits of the time the PAOC was poised to break into new territory. Yet here was a voice that stood at the gateway warning all is not what it appears. He reminded the audience that success as a denomination may be a deceptive and most notorious enemy.

In 1995 I became a colleague with Kydd after I joined the faculty of Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. I was a young scholar trying to find my voice, while Kydd was a seasoned scholar wondering if his voice had been lost. I was enlightened to this awareness when on a cold winter

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28 Kydd noted that despite a decision to ordain women in 1984 few women find themselves in top levels of leadership, let alone on church boards. My own research, which would pick up this thread a few years later, revealed there were fewer women in credentialed leadership positions ten years after the decision to ordain women than before. Randall Holm, A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within the PAOC (PhD diss., Laval University, 1996).
night a couple of years later I serendipitously met him in the library of St. Paul University in Ottawa. Kydd was pursuing some research and I was simply browsing. Surprised to see each other we later retreated to a local restaurant for coffee; a coffee conversation that in biblical terms could only be described in hindsight as a lament.

For the record Kydd is a Pentecostal scholar if you understand Pentecostal as someone who is keen on hearing what the Spirit is saying to the church. But he is also intently committed to the church and broods over the common parishioner terrified that he or she does not have the strength to carry on. For two hours Kydd lamented about the state of the Pentecostal church in Canada, a state that in his estimation was not doing well in middle age. “I suspect we’ve grown fat and are deaf to the voice of the Spirit,” he worried. His cry was a cross between Jeremiah’s lament that cursed the position God had placed him in as a critic against a complacent Israel and that of Elijah who retreated to a cave wondering if he was all alone in his work as a prophet, a position he seemed to inherit by default. Kydd commented at length that Pentecostal leadership applauds what he has to say, frequently inviting him as a speaker, but then virtually ignores the warnings. At the end of the conversation with great clarity I remember asking him if he had it to do all over again would he? With resignation he answered, no. And then he added an appendage: “I am leaving it to younger scholars like yourself.” “Thanks, I thought to myself, I don’t remember signing up for that.” Less than a year later (1998) Kydd resigned from his faculty position and joined the
Anglican Church of Canada, serving at St Peter’s Anglican Church in Cobourg, Ontario.29

Since then Kydd has been significantly absent from Pentecostal circles. He has found a welcoming home in the Anglican Church that is benefiting from his academic acumen and his passion for the Spirit. Indeed, in the wake of his decision to leave the PAOC some Canadian Pentecostals might even find it surprising that he would even receive the recognition such as this that looks to celebrate and remember distinguished Canadian contributions to Pentecostal studies.

Of course such observations are based on the more than subjective criteria for what makes one influential. Within the PAOC and its relatively short tradition, the bar of influence has tended to privilege ministers with large, “successful” churches, defined usually be membership numbers and large budgets. On the opposite end is the value of academic reflection and orthodox teaching.30 While Kydd pioneered Kanata Pentecostal Church in Canada’s capital city, the church never obtained the kind of numerical status that would raise one’s national profile. On the other hand, while Kydd is a published scholar, ecumenical forerunner and former president of the Society of Pentecostal Studies I suspect few within the rank and file of the PAOC would even know of these accomplishments. And yet at the mention his name there is still

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29 Ironically there is a Facebook site dedicated to Pentecostals who have not yet become Anglicans.
30 This is not to say they are not valued, but in terms of influence they are rarely noticed.
a kind of reverence that is expressed in gratitude\textsuperscript{31} and mixed with regret, at least in some circles; regret that somehow he was the one who got away.

It has been twelve years since Kydd left home. Unfortunately the problems of the PAOC are arguably as pronounced as ever before. Issues of identity and consumerism haunt our denomination and yet I cannot help but overhear God’s exhortation to Elijah in flight away from Queen Jezebel, namely that there are others numbering in the thousands that are picking up the cause. Today Kydd may be physically absent in Pentecostal circles but his presence and influence both in Canada and abroad has been multiplied in the lives of the many that he has encountered.

**Bibliography**

**Monographs**


**Chapters in Books**


\textsuperscript{31} Facebook also includes a site reserved for the “Disciples of Ron Kydd.”


**Journals**


