



Vanguard of the New Age: The Toronto Theosophical Society, 1891-1945 (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion)

Gillian McCann

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Vanguard of the New Age unearths a largely ignored dimension of Canadian religious history. Gillian McCann tells the story of a diverse group of occultists, temperance leaguers, and suffragettes who attempted to build a Utopian society based on spiritual principles.

Members of the Toronto Theosophical Society were among the first in Canada to apply Eastern philosophy to the social justice issues of the period - from poverty and religious division to the changing role of women in society. Among the most radical and culturally creative movements of their time, the Theosophists called for a new social order based on principles of cooperation and creativity. Intrigued by this compelling vision of a new age, luminaries such as members of the Group of Seven, feminist Flora MacDonald Denison, Emily Stowe, and anarchist Emma Goldman were drawn to the society.

Meticulously researched and compellingly written, this careful reconstruction preserves Theosophist founder Albert Smythe's dream of a culturally distinct, egalitarian, and religiously pluralist nation.

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