

# Revivals, schisms and always something new

Evangelicalism appeared very strong as Canada entered the 20th century. On the 1901 census, 60 percent of Canadians identified themselves as Protestants and most of those would have identified themselves as "evangelical."

Still, some cracks were appearing. For example, Methodism had lost much of its revivalistic fervor, its growth rate was slowing down, and it was not "winning the west" in the same way that it had swept much of the Ontario frontier between 1800 and 1850.

Widespread acceptance by Protestants of the theory of evolution, adopted as a concept of development in all areas of human life, encouraged great optimism about the inevitability of human progress. In fact, it downplayed belief in a sinful mankind who needed salvation, or in a God who was active in human affairs.

Also by 1900, the spreading acceptance of higher critical methods of studying the Bible in some educational institutions was raising questions regarding the unique authority of Scripture.

The clear line of demarcation between liberal and conservative Protestants developed in the first decades of the century. Mainline denominations that once were committed to evangelical beliefs and priorities gradually shifted. Increasingly, evangelicals who promoted traditional views and principles were identified as conservatives.

It is tempting to focus on the decline of evangelicalism among mainline Protestant denominations. However, another theme throughout the century is the considerable vitality and growth among evangelicalism in other quarters. Revivals, immigration, schisms and a host of new institutions all played a role in 20th century church history. It is this second theme that concerns us here. It is in this vitality and growth – including schisms and new institutions – and the proclamation of historic Christian faith during the century – that we discern our shared heritage.

Robert Burkinshaw  
Professor of History, Trinity Western University

## WINNIPEG'S ELIM CHAPEL, 1910

In the summer of 1910 several families from Winnipeg's Westminster Presbyterian Church opened the Ellice Avenue Mission as a non-denominational community outreach. Best known among the early group were Sidney T. Smith and John Bellingham, who provided long-term leadership both within and beyond the church. Soon known as Elim Chapel, it developed as an independent church that became a focal point of an evangelical network that radiated across Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Several of Elim's members were influential in the early years of Winnipeg Bible Institute. That school was instrumental in the formation of the Canadian Sunday School Mission (CSSM), which initiated rural Sunday schools, churches and summer camps. One convert from a CSSM camp, Henry Hildebrand, studied at Winnipeg Bible Institute, attended Elim Chapel and became a CSSM "circuit-riding preacher." In 1935 he accepted the call to pastor a non-denominational chapel in Moose Jaw, Sask. and to establish a Bible school. The school, Briercrest Bible Institute, eventually became Canada's largest Bible college.

Elim Chapel remains a significant church near Winnipeg's downtown core. Winnipeg Bible Institute is now known as Providence College and Seminary. (Photos: Elim Chapel & Briercrest Bible Institute)



HENRY HILDEBRAND  
ELIM CHAPEL,  
PRE-1941 (L)



JOHN  
MCNICOL

## JOHN MCNICOL OF TORONTO BIBLE COLLEGE, 1906-1946

John McNicol (1869-1956) led and shaped Canada's first Bible college, Toronto Bible College (TBC) for 40 years. He was appointed as interim principal in 1906, then was principal from 1908 to 1946. Under his leadership the school (later known as Ontario Bible College, now Tyndale College & Seminary) became a major force in evangelicalism in southern Ontario. Enrolment during the McNicol era peaked at 380. By McNicol's retirement, well over 500 of its graduates had entered foreign missions and several hundred had entered the pastorate.

TBC shared many characteristics typical of the early Bible school movement in North America. It focused on the study of the Bible and the training of lay people, did not require high school graduation, and welcomed female students long before

seminaries did.

At the same time, TBC was very different from most Bible schools. Perhaps best known was McNicol's refusal to allow the school to adopt dispensationalism. Also unusual was that much of its support and many students came from evangelicals in mainline denominations. Although churches often sought TBC graduates as pastors, McNicol did not develop a pastoral program, believing that pastors ought to be trained in liberal arts and in seminary.

In response to disillusionment with the influence of liberalism on many denominational seminaries, TBC introduced a pastoral program in the mid-1950s. It merged with London College of the Bible and Missions in 1968 to become Ontario Bible College (OBC). Seminary training was introduced in 1976 with the founding of Ontario Theological Seminary, which, along with Regent College in Vancouver, is now one of the two largest seminaries in Canada.

(Photo: Tyndale College and Seminary)



T. T.  
SHIELDS

## AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON, "Canada's Gift to the Sawdust Trail"

In the fall of 1907 at a Pentecostal meeting in Ingersoll, Ont.,

## IMMIGRATION OF RUSSIAN MENNONITES IN THE 1920s

Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, more than 20,000 Mennonites left Russia for Canada between 1923 and 1930. Earlier waves of Mennonites had come, and two waves have followed since World War II. The wave in the 1920s was the largest.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance to evangelicalism of this wave of Mennonites. Mennonites form one of the largest evangelical groups in the nation in the late 20th century. The 1991 census noted that approximately 208,000 Canadians called themselves Mennonites. Thousands of people in other denominations have Mennonite roots. The strong Mennonite influence has helped the Christian "peace witness" gain a significant voice, and has contributed to the humanitarian, musical and educational dimensions of Canadian evangelicalism. (Photos: Conf. of Mennonites in Canada; Conf. of Mennonite Brethren Churches)



LADIES FELLOWSHIP  
NORTH END MENNONITE  
BRETHREN CHURCH,  
WINNIPEG, C. 1930

RUSSIAN MENNONITES LEAVING RUSSIA 1926

## CHARLES PRICE CAMPAIGN IN VICTORIA, 1923

The 7,000 people who packed the Willows Arena in Victoria, B.C. on April 23, 1923 cheered and waved a sea of white handkerchiefs as teenager Ruby Dimmick ran around the platform. They cheered again as her father, Rev. J. F. Dimmick, stated that a thorough medical examination had confirmed that his daughter had been completely healed of curvature of the spine, a shortened leg and bent ankle resulting from infantile paralysis.

The Ruby Dimmick story, which became internationally known through *Reader's Digest*, was just one of many coming out of the Charles S. Price evangelistic and healing meetings held that spring in Victoria. Endorsed unanimously by the city's ministerial association, the meetings drew crowds so large that up to 4,000 people were unable to gain entrance.

Price helped Pentecostalism move beyond its modest origins in Canada. A respectable, British-born Congregationalist minister in California, Price had been converted from his



CHARLES  
PRICE

skeptical, liberal views of the Bible at meetings of Aimee Semple McPherson. He began an itinerant evangelistic and healing ministry. After Victoria, he held even larger meetings that rocked the city of Vancouver with both enthusiasm and controversy. Conservative evangelicals, especially fundamentalist Baptists who were in controversy with liberal Baptists, welcomed Price and his emphasis on evangelism and the supernatural origins of the Bible. Liberal Protestants, however, expressed suspicion and eventually issued a report condemning the campaign.

Most fundamentalist Baptists repudiated Price the following year, not so much because of the healings but because of his claims that "speaking in tongues" was the evidence of the filling of the Spirit. That did not prevent several thousand people in Vancouver, many of them Baptists, from flocking to the city's burgeoning Pentecostal movement.

Without evangelists such as Price, it is unlikely that it would have grown to become one of the largest active evangelical groups in Canada, with 436,000 Canadians identifying themselves as Pentecostal in the 1991 census. (Photo: Courtesy of PAOC)

## UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA, 1925

More than 15,000 people crowded into Toronto's new Maple Leaf Gardens in June 1925 to celebrate the formation of the United Church of Canada. This union of the Methodist Church in Canada, the Congregationalist Church and the Presbyterian Church in Canada was the world's first major union of different denominational traditions. As such it was enthusiastically regarded by many as the "wave of the future" and as Canada's greatest contribution to worldwide Christendom.

Evangelicals viewed the development in different ways. Some supported it as the logical outcome of the interdenominational cooperation that had existed among evangelicals since the latter part of the 19th century. Cooperation included city-wide revivals, institutions such as the YMCA, foreign missions and social reform movements. To many, these cooperative efforts demonstrated the secondary nature of issues that divided denominations. Evangelical supporters also hoped that one large denomination would end wasteful competition.

Many evangelicals, however, especially Presbyterians, opposed the union, fearing that it would create a centralized institution that would crush the unique and valued features of the individual denominations. Conservative evangelicals also worried that the union movement was largely "liberal" in doctrinal orientation. The conservatives could not argue that the "Basis of Union" of the new church contained radical new doctrines, but they did believe that many unionists placed new meanings on the old words.

The United Church succeeded in becoming the nation's largest Protestant denomination. However, the 1925 union did not lead to additional major unions as its proponents had hoped.

## DEFEAT OF PROHIBITION IN ONTARIO, 1926

By 1918 every province had become officially "dry." Despite statistics indicating that prohibition reduced crime and alcohol-related problems, the success of prohibition was short-lived: within 10 years regulations fell in Quebec, B.C. and the Prairies.

Although the Maritime Provinces remained dry for several years longer, the Ontario re-election of Premier Howard Ferguson in 1926, on a platform to bring in

the end of the Prohibition era in Canada.

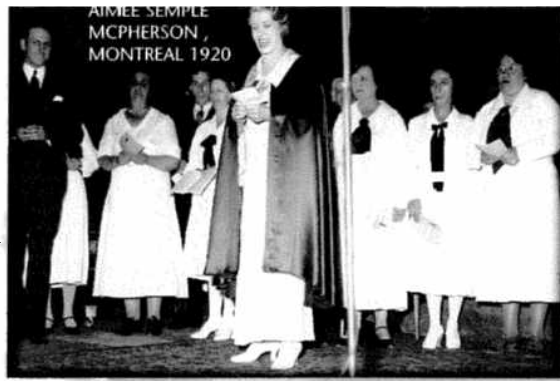
In working for Prohibition, many women and their supporters came to believe that votes for women were necessary to bring in social righteousness. Evangelicals tended to be staunch supporters of Prohibition and in this regard, at least, worked with "social gossellers." The defeat of Prohibition helped weaken evangelical support for attempts to reform society through social and political



HAMILTON  
W.C.T.U.



BANNERS OF THE  
WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN  
TEMPERANCE UNION



AIMÉE SEMPLE MCPHERSON, MONTREAL 1920

17-year-old farm girl Aimee Kennedy experienced the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and spoke in tongues. Within three years she had married evangelist Robert Semple, engaged in itinerant preaching, gone to China as a missionary and been widowed there. In 1912 she married Harold McPherson, who later divorced her because he did not share her call to evangelistic ministry. Her itinerant preaching, begun again in 1915 in Ontario, led her to Los Angeles in 1918, where she built the 5,300-seat Angeles Temple and became one of the most famous women in North America in the 1920s.

Her conversion came in Pentecostalism's formative years in Canada. She became the movement's most famous Canadian. Most of her ministry took place outside of Canada, but she did conduct successful Canadian tours. Her 1920 Montreal meetings are credited with establishing Pentecostalism on a significant footing in Quebec.

McPherson illustrates the role that women played in the Pentecostal movement, which stressed the gifts and callings of the Spirit, and was informal and fluid in structure. Her background in the Holiness movement was common among early Pentecostals. Their expectation that the Holy Spirit would work subsequent to conversion helped prepare them to receive the Pentecostal "baptism in the Spirit." (Photo: Canadian Press)

### FOUNDING OF PRAIRIE BIBLE INSTITUTE, 1922

In October of 1922 classes began at what became one of the world's most influential Bible schools. Begun by the initiative of farmers near Three Hills, Alta., Prairie Bible Institute (PBI) was led for 55 years by Leslie E. Maxwell, a dynamic Bible school graduate from Kansas. The school's enrolment became one of the largest in the world, by 1948-49 standing at more than 900 students.

PBI was not the first Bible institute in Canada, nor did it remain the largest. Yet for many Canadians PBI came to symbolize the Bible school movement, which played a large role in shaping Canadian evangelicalism. Its emphasis on a Bible-centred curriculum, its role in training thousands of foreign and home

missionaries, its requirement of a highly disciplined lifestyle for students, and its reliance on "faith" rather than bank financing, to greater or lesser degrees came to typify most Canadian Bible schools.

Several other Canadian schools surpassed PBI in size by the late 1980s, perhaps due to changes in leadership, or perhaps because it did not join with other Bible colleges in moving to degree-granting status until the 1980s. Nevertheless PBI remains a significant institution and has left its mark, particularly in training missionaries. In 1989 the school reported that more than 2,100 of its graduates were serving or had served as foreign missionaries.

L. E. MAXWELL (R) IN EARLY GROUP  
Photo (PBI Archives)



government-controlled alcohol sales; symbolically surfaced

### BAPTIST SPLIT, 1927

Canadian evangelicals did not suffer disruptive splits over modernist/fundamentalist battles to the same degree as their U.S. counterparts. Nonetheless, Baptists in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia did divide over the issues in the 1920s. The Ontario-Quebec schism of 1927, led by the gifted and contentious T.T. Shields, is the most famous, but the split in British Columbia occurred slightly earlier. Several churches in Alberta and the Maritimes left the Convention in the 1930s.

The focus was on Baptist institutions of higher education: McMaster University, then in Toronto, and Brandon College in Manitoba. Some conservatives raised concerns that these institutions harbored professors who no longer held to evangelical views of the inspiration and authority of the Bible and who also questioned other doctrines.

It seems clear that the majority remaining in the "old

conventions" held moderately conservative theological views. However, other conservatives, who eventually separated, were irate because the denominational colleges were not willing to expel modernists. Some analysts argue that strong personalities, especially Shields, were really at the heart of the divisions. Or that social changes causing the universities' middle-class supporters to desire more "modern" universities were the real cause. Both arguments contain much truth, yet it seems evident that very differing views of what constituted the essentials of the Christian faith were at stake.

The more conservative denomination known as Regular or "Fellowship" has become a significant group that equals or surpasses the old "Convention" in numbers in some provinces. In addition, some of the churches leaving the old convention eventually became important parts of other Baptist groups in Canada, including the Baptist General Conference and the Southern Baptists.

(Photo: Toronto Baptist Seminary)

### FOUNDING OF INTER-VARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, 1929

Representatives from three universities - Manitoba, Western Ontario and Toronto - meeting in Kingston, Ont., in September 1929, founded Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada (IVCF), inspired by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions in Britain. Howard Guinness, a graduating medical student from London, England, was sent to Canada by British students. He visited evangelical groups at universities across the nation in 1928-29.

Soon a national organization of evangelical university students developed. Denominationally very inclusive but doctrinally conservative, IVCF's purpose was to encourage evangelism, personal spiritual growth and, later, foreign missionary work. Noel Palmer became the first general secretary.

Until the 1960s, IVCF provided the only transdenominational network for evangelicals. Its network of students, staff and supporters was instrumental in the establishment of Regent College in Vancouver. It also played a significant role in encouraging students to serve as overseas missionaries.



NOEL PALMER (L) AND HOWARD GUINNESS  
(Photo: IVCF Canada)

## A CENTURY IN CANADA

- 1899-1902 - SOUTH AFRICAN (BOER) WAR
- 1903 - ALASKA-YUKON BOUNDARY DISPUTE SETTLED
- 1905 - ALBERTA & SASKATCHEWAN BECOME PROVINCES
- 1909 - GREY CUP DONATED BY GOVERNOR GENERAL EARL GREY FOR CANADIAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
- 1911 - ELECTION OF CONSERVATIVES AND A NEW PRIME MINISTER
- 1914-18 - WORLD WAR I
- 1917 - INCOME TAX IMPOSED AS "TEMPORARY" WAR-TIME MEASURE
- 1918 - WOMEN TAX EXEMPT FOR STATUS INDIANS OVER AGE 21
- 1919 - WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE
- 1919 - CANADA JOINS LEAGUE OF NATIONS
- 1921 - AGNES CAMPBELL MACPHERL, FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT WITHOUT BRITISH SIGNATURE
- 1923 - BALFOUR DECLARATION ACKNOWLEDGES AUTONOMY OF CANADA
- 1926 - DEFEAT OF PROHIBITION IN ONTARIO
- 1926 - STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER FORMALLY RECOGNIZES CANADA'S INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN
- 1929 - STOCK MARKET CRASH & BEGINNING OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION (CCF - FORERUNNER OF NDP)
- 1931 - FOUNDRING OF CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH FEDERATION (CCF) - ELECTION OF FIRST SOCIAL CREDIT GOVERNMENT AND WILLIAM ABERHART AS PREMIER IN ALBERTA
- 1932 - STATUTE OF WESTMINSTER FORMALLY RECOGNIZES CANADA'S INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN
- 1935 - FOUNDRING OF CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION (CBC)
- 1936 - CANADIAN UNITED NATIONS FORMS FIRST SOCIALIST TOTAL OF 22 YEARS IN OFFICE
- 1939-45 - WORLD WAR II
- 1944 - CCF ELECTED IN SASKATCHEWAN, FORMS FIRST SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN NORTH AMERICA
- 1945 - CANADA JOINS UNITED NATIONS
- 1946 - WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE KING RESIGNS AS PRIME MINISTER AFTER FIRST STATION IN MONTREAL
- 1948 - BEGINNING OF TELEVISION BROADCASTING IN CANADA; ELECTION OF PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES UNDER JOHN DUFFENBAKER
- 1950-53 - KOREAN WAR
- 1952 - FORMATION OF NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP), LED BY TOMMY DOUGLAS
- 1957 - ELECTION OF ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY
- 1959 - "QUIET REVOLUTION" BEGINS IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS
- 1960 - STATUS OF OFFICIAL DISCRIMINATION ON RACIAL GROUNDS IN CANADA INTRODUCED IN SASKATCHEWAN
- 1961 - FORMATION OF NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP), LED BY TOMMY DOUGLAS
- 1962 - MEDICARE INTRODUCED IN QUEBEC
- 1962 - END OF OFFICIAL DISCRIMINATION ON RACIAL GROUNDS IN CANADA
- 1963 - FEDERAL LIBERALS FORM MINORITY GOVERNMENT UNDER LESTER B. PEARSON
- 1964 - FREE TRADE IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY ESTABLISHED BY AUTO PACT WITH U.S.
- 1965 - CANADIAN IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS
- 1967 - CANADA'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION; EXPO '67 DRAWS 50 MILLION VISITORS
- 1968 - PIERRE ELLIOT TRUDEAU LEADS FEDERAL LIBERALS TO VICTORY
- 1969 - INTRODUCTION OF WHITE PAPER ON INDIAN AFFAIRS CONTRIBUTES TO INCREASING NATIVE ACTIVISM
- 1970 - ACCESS TO ABORTION UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS LEGALIZED IN PARLIAMENT
- 1970 - OCTOBER CRISIS IN QUEBEC; TRUDEAU INVOKES WAR MEASURES ACT

## A CENTURY AMONG EVANGELICALS

- 1906 - BEGINNINGS OF PENTECOSTALISM IN CANADA
- 1907 - APPOINTMENT OF JOHN MCNICOL AS PRINCIPAL OF TORONTO BIBLE COLLEGE (NOW TYNDALE)
- 1909 - BEGINNINGS OF PENTECOSTALISM IN CANADA
- 1910 - HOLINESS BIBLE COLLEGE, ESTABLISHED IN HERBERT, SASK.
- 1913 - HERBERT BIBLE SCHOOL, WESTERN CANADA'S OLDEST BIBLE SCHOOL
- 1916 - SPLIT IN HOLINESS MOVEMENT OF AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON (LATER, AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON)
- 1920 - MONTREAL MEETINGS OF AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON
- 1922 - FIRST CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE CHURCH AND FOUNDRING OF STANDARD CHURCH OF AMERICA
- 1923 - CHARLES S. PRICE EVANGELISTIC AND HEALING MEETINGS IN WESTERN CANADA, ESTABLISHED IN CRYSTAL CITY, MB
- 1925 - BEGINNINGS OF PRAIRIE BIBLE SCHOOL IN WESTERN CANADA
- 1925 - WM. ABERHART BEGINS UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
- 1927 - FOUNDRING OF NEW WAVE OF RUSSIAN MENNONITE IMMIGRATION TO CANADA
- 1929 - SPLIT AMONG CANADIAN BAPTISTS IN BC, ONTARIO AND QUEBEC OVER ALLEGATIONS OF MODERNISM
- 1933 - FOUNDRING OF BRIERCREST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF CANADA
- 1935 - PENTECOSTAL SCHOOL SUNDAY SCHOOL FOUNDED IN WINNIPEG
- 1938 - OSCAR LOWRY EVANGELISTIC BROADCASTS IN CALGARY
- 1939 - CONTINUING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CANADA
- 1941 - FOUNDRING OF BRANDON COLLEGE (MAN.) FORMERLY BAPTIST MISSIONARY ALLIANCE IN REGINA, SASK.
- 1944 - THOMAS CLEMENT (TOMMY) DOUGLAS, EX-BAPTIST MINISTER, LEADS CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH FEDERATION (CCF) TO VICTORY IN SASKATCHEWAN
- 1948 - WINNIPEG BIBLE INSTITUTE (NOW COLLEGE) BY THE CHRISTIAN AND CANADA ABLE TO GRANT BACHELOR'S DEGREES
- 1949 - PENTECOSTAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY BECOMES FIRST BIBLE SCHOOL IN CANADA
- 1954 - PENTECOSTAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY BECOMES FIRST BIBLE SCHOOL IN CANADA
- 1957 - HOLINESS MOVEMENT ENTERS QUEBEC
- 1959 - SECULARIZATION OF MCMMASTER UNIVERSITY, FORMERLY BAPTIST
- 1960 - THE NAVIGATORS CHURCH JOINS WITH THE FREE METHODISTS
- 1962 - TRINITY JUNIOR COLLEGE, FORMERLY BAPTIST
- 1964 - PIERRE BERTON'S THE COMFORTABLE PEW CRITICIZES THE "NEW CURRICULUM"
- 1964 - THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
- 1966 - SECULARIZATION OF THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA
- 1966 - REORGANIZATION OF ACADIA DIVINITY COLLEGE AS AN AGENCY OF THE UNITED BAPTIST CONVENTION
- 1967 - SERMONS FROM SCIENCE PAVILION AT EXPO '67 MONTREAL
- 1968 - REGENT COLLEGE, VANCOUVER, ESTABLISHED
- 1968 - ERNEST C. MANNING RETIRES AS PREMIER OF ALBERTA AFTER 25 YEARS IN OFFICE
- 1968 - BUT CONTINUES RADIO MINISTRY
- 1968 - REORGANIZATION OF ACADIA DIVINITY COLLEGE AS AN AGENCY OF THE UNITED BAPTIST CONVENTION
- 1968 - PIERRE ELLIOT TRUDEAU LEADS FEDERAL LIBERALS TO VICTORY
- 1969 - INTRODUCTION OF WHITE PAPER ON INDIAN AFFAIRS CONTRIBUTES TO INCREASING NATIVE ACTIVISM
- 1970 - ACCESS TO ABORTION UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS LEGALIZED IN PARLIAMENT
- 1970 - OCTOBER CRISIS IN QUEBEC; TRUDEAU INVOKES WAR MEASURES ACT

(cont'd over)

## THE 1960s

For many evangelicals, the 1960s were discouraging. The counter-culture revolution threatened longstanding moral and cultural values. Growing secularism, turbulence, and occasional violence accompanied rapid changes in Canada. Conservatives in the United Church were dismayed by the 1964 "New Curriculum" for Sunday schools, which challenged traditional views of biblical authorship and authority. Anglican conservatives were stung by Pierre Berton's critique in his 1963 book *The Comfortable Pew*. Major Protestant denominations began a numerical decline that has continued into the 1990s. And many saw the spreading charismatic movement as a divisive and threatening intrusion.

Yet the 1960s can be viewed as a decade in which some evangelical denominations grew rapidly and evangelicals launched significant new initiatives. The Navigators and Campus Crusade established themselves in Canada. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada was organized in 1964. Countering decades of increasing secularization in higher education, in 1962 the Evangelical Free Church established a Christian liberal arts college, Trinity Junior, now Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C. Today it is Canada's largest evangelical institution of any kind. Evangelicals also entered graduate education with the reorganization of Acadia Divinity College in 1966, the establishment of Regent College in 1968 and Canadian Theological College (now Seminary) in 1969.

Evangelicals also began to adjust to the charismatic movement. Views varied on particular beliefs and practices, but some non-charismatic leaders began to appreciate the vitality, evangelistic impact, and renewed emphasis on worship it brought to many churches.

Montreal's Expo '67 featured two Christian pavilions, one sponsored by Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant and Orthodox churches, and the other by evangelicals. The first featured searching questions and cooperation with other faiths; the second sought to gain interest in the gospel by demonstrations



of scientific wonders that illustrated spiritual truths, known as Sermons from Science.

Sponsored by a Montreal-based committee and led by Christian Brethren lay preacher Keith Price, the evangelical pavilion was supported by thousands of evangelicals across the nation. During

the summer of 1967 attendance averaged more than 5,000 per day. So great was the interest that the pavilion remained open for nine summers following Expo '67.

The pavilion was significant in several ways. It demonstrated that evangelicals saw their message in different terms than did the mainline denominations. It brought together tens of thousands of evangelicals from many denominations. Finally, some observers credit it with creating an openness that contributed to a significant wave of evangelical church planting in Quebec in the 1970s. (Photo: Christian Direction)

# Faith Today

## SNAPSHOTS

### Evangelicals in Canada 1900-2000

SELECTION AND TEXT BY ROBERT BURKINSHAW

PHOTO RESEARCH BY KRYSIA LEAR

We carry the past into our future, although the influence of our history may be unrecognized and unacknowledged, especially when a sense of national community is weak.

Among Canadian evangelicals the awareness of our shared history in Canada is vague at best. Yet events in one part of the family have affected us all, and become a common story, our common heritage. We profit by even an introductory grasp of the highlights.

together, have greatly affected evangelical life in Canada.

This list does not in any way comprise a full portrait of evangelicals. Nor does it encompass events within specific denominations, unless there was a spillover effect on others.

We might have included additional events, or wanted to name more people. Yet there's no question that these events and developments are of great significance in describing who evangelicals are on the brink of a new century.

For a selection of some elements that define Canadian evangelicalism in this century, we turned to Robert Burkinshaw, professor of history at Trinity Western University. *Faith Today* asked him to select crucial events and phenomena that, taken

Larry Matthews  
Managing Editor

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# EFC

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- 1971 - MULTICULTURAL POLICY ADOPTED BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
- 1972 - CANADA-SOVIET HOCKEY SERIES
- 1976 - ELECTION OF PARTI QUEBECOIS, LED BY RENE LEVESQUE, IN QUEBEC
- 1980 - REFERENDUM ON 'SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION' IN QUEBEC 60% 'NON' VOTE
- 1980 - TERRY FOX RUNS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF AND FUNDS TO FIGHT CANCER
- 1982 - NEW CANADIAN CONSTITUTION AND CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS PROCLAIMED
- 1984 - PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES UNDER BRIAN MULRONEY ELECTED
- 1988 - FREE TRADE AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH U.S.
- 1990 - MEECH LAKE CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD FAILS
- 1991 - CHARLOTTETOWN CONSTITUTIONAL ACCORD SIGNED
- 1992 - 7 PERCENT GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST) IMPOSED
- 1994 - ELECTION OF LIBERALS UNDER JEAN CHRETIEN
- 1995 - FEDERAL DEBT REACHES \$500 BILLION
- 1995 - NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH U.S. & MEXICO SIGNED
- 1997 - SECOND REFERENDUM ON SEPARATION IN QUEBEC NARROWLY DEFEATED
- 1997 - REFORM PARTY UNDER PRESTON MANNING REPLACES BLOC QUEBECOIS AS OFFICIAL OPPOSITION
- 1998 - DELGAMUJUKW DECISION OF SUPREME COURT RECOGNIZES ABORIGINAL RIGHTS TO LAND
- 1998 - FIRST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SURPLUS SINCE 1969-70 RECORDED
- 1976 - ONTARIO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (NOW TYNDALE SEMINARY) ESTABLISHED
- 1977 - 100 HUNTLEY STREET TELEVISION PROGRAM BEGINS BROADCASTING FROM TORONTO BY DAVID MAINSE
- 1979 - TRINITY WESTERN WINS RIGHT TO GRANT BACCALAUREATE DEGREES
- 1983 - FAITH ALIVE (LATER FAITH TODAY) FIRST ISSUE PUBLISHED
- 1986 - VINEYARD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CONFERENCE BAPTIST AND EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH SEMINARIES AT TWU
- 1987 - CHRISTIANWEEK FIRST ISSUE PUBLISHED
- 1988 - ASSOCIATED CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS (ACTS) BRINGS TOGETHER FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST, CONFERENCE BAPTIST AND EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH SEMINARIES AT TWU
- 1993 - MACLEAN'S-ANGUS REID POLL REPORTS 15% OF CANADIANS ARE 'EVANGELICALS'
- 1994 - "TORONTO BLESSING" - UNUSUAL MANIFESTATIONS AT TORONTO'S AIRPORT VINEYARD - DRAWS INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION
- 1998 - NEWFOUNDLAND ENDS CHURCH-ADMINISTERED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

## RADIO BROADCASTING, 1938

Lee Fosmark was pastor of the struggling Evangelical Free Church of Enchant, Alta. He helped initiate a major revival in western Canada when he invited Oscar Lowry of Moody Bible Institute to conduct a six-week series of evangelistic radio broadcasts on Calgary's CFCN in 1938. Listeners sent a staggering 5,700 letters to Lowry, many telling of their conversion. The Evangelical Free Church, which had become stagnant in terms of growth, capitalized on the new receptivity to the evangelical message and opened 11 new churches and 35 prairie mission stations by the mid-1940s. Prairie Bible Institute, which helped sponsor the broadcasts, doubled in enrolment between the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Canadian churches had been broadcasting services since the early 1920s, and people such as William (Bible Bill) Aberhart had gone far beyond simply broadcasting religious services. But radio was not Aberhart's main focus and, moreover, his programing began moving towards economics and politics. Lowry's broadcasts marked the beginning of "professional" broadcasting for evangelistic purposes. Lowry and other radio evangelists, such as J.D. Carlson, developed a format blending music, stories and sermonettes that appealed to thousands and helped evangelicalism become part of the popular culture of the Prairies.

(Photo: Evangelical Free Church of Enchant Archives)



REV. LEE AND HATTIE FOSMARK SINGING AT THE REDEDICATION OF THE ENCHANT FREE CHURCH IN 1951

## DUTCH CALVINIST IMMIGRATION, 1946-1961

Cooperation between the Dutch and Canadian governments after World War II resulted in large-scale immigration from the Netherlands during the 15 years after the war. The more orthodox Calvinists migrated in proportionately much greater numbers than did the general populace, partly because they viewed emigration as a "calling" to engage in developing less populated parts of the globe.

The 1991 census identified 119,000 Canadians as Reformed. The largest group was the Christian Reformed Church at about 85,000, followed by the Canadian Reformed Church at nearly 15,000.

The Dutch Calvinists, although not always comfortable being identified as evangelicals, exerted a unique and considerable influence on other Canadian evangelicals. Their view of the lordship of Christ in the larger culture led them to be very concerned with educational, political, economic and other social issues. They quickly developed schools that sought to integrate Christian faith into all the academic disciplines. They founded organizations such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada and Citizens for Public Justice. They

established organizations to provide personal and family counseling and housing for senior citizens and the mentally challenged. They also began their own graduate-level Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto in 1967, The King's College (now University College) in Edmonton in 1979 and Redeemer College near Hamilton in 1982.

The focus of many evangelicals began to widen, especially as they came to realize the secular drift of society's institutions, and they frequently looked to their Reformed brothers and sisters for guidance. At the same time, Reformed people were themselves influenced by Canadian evangelicalism. Many found evangelicalism's strengths in the expression of personal faith and evangelism to be attractive and began to incorporate greater elements of these into their own personal and congregational lives.



SEMINARY HALL, PREDECESSOR TO ACADIA DIVINITY COLLEGE

## NEWFOUNDLAND ENTERS CANADA, 1949

The entry of Newfoundland into Confederation in 1949 altered the composition of Canadian evangelicalism and added a unique, denomination-based educational system that lasted until 1998.

The Salvation Army "invaded" St. John's in 1886.

After some initial persecution, its enthusiastic revivalistic style gained wide acceptance in the colony, which was accustomed to Wesleyan revivalism. By

1991 it had grown to nearly 45,000 members, more than 7.5 percent of the province's population, a proportion more than 20 times that in the rest of Canada.

Pentecostalism was introduced to Newfoundland in 1911 by Alice Belle Garrigus, known as the "Founding Mother" of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland. She began by holding meetings at which reports of miraculous healings led to large crowds and numerous converts, including the mother of future premier Joey Smallwood. By 1991, about 40,000 people, or 7.1 percent of the population, were Pentecostal, the highest proportion in any province and more than four times greater than the Canadian average.

Newfoundland's unique system of education saw the government provide the funding but the major denominations – originally Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist – administer their own schools. Children of converts to the newer denominations found themselves excluded. Thus, the Salvation Army began establishing its own schools and in 1892 was granted government funding. The Pentecostals opened their first school in 1933 but full recognition and funding by the government were denied until 1954.

## SERMONS FROM SCIENCE AT EXPO '67

## ASIAN EVANGELICALS

The 1981 census tables on ethnicity and religion challenged the widely held stereotype that evangelicalism was primarily a white, European-based faith. In that year a Chinese-Canadian was 50 percent more likely to be a Baptist than was someone in the general population, and five times more likely than other Canadians to adhere to the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He or she was also just about as likely to be a Pentecostal or Mennonite as was anybody else in the nation. A 1993 report in ChristianWeek estimated that more than 36,000 Chinese Christians, the vast majority of them evangelical, attended 231 churches in Canada in 1993. Several denominational officials noted that their Chinese congregations were often among their largest, most financially stable and evangelistically minded churches.

Such figures point out the dramatic growth of evangelicalism among Canadians of Chinese descent. The first Chinese Christian church in Canada was established in 1892. By the 1950s slow growth had resulted in about 30 Chinese congregations. Changes to Canada's immigration policies in 1962 allowed increasing numbers of Asian immigrants, many of whom were Chinese evangelicals. Active evangelism and church-planting among both the immigrant and the Canadian-born Chinese population has led to considerable growth.

Increasingly, Asian Canadians other than Chinese also belong to evangelical churches. A 1992 study of British Columbia's Lower Mainland estimated that the region contained at least 103 evangelical churches with primarily Asian membership. About half of these were Chinese; the other half were Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino or Indo-Canadian.

## ANGUS REID POLL, 1993

The April 12, 1993 cover of Maclean's magazine carried the bold title "God is alive: Canada is a nation of believers." The controversial article, based on an extensive Angus Reid poll, surprised many Canadians because it found that belief in God and Canadians' identification as Christians were more widespread than expected.

The poll was also surprising for what it showed regarding the strength of evangelicalism. In line with census and other data, it found that eight percent of Canadians identified with evangelical (or conservative Protestant) churches. However, fully 15 percent met the poll's definition of "evangelical." Specifically, anyone who agreed with the following four characteristics was considered an evangelical: 1. *conversionism* – experience of and emphasis upon a conversion experience; 2. *crucicentrism* – the reliance for salvation on the death of Christ on the cross as a substitution for sinful humanity; 3. *biblicism* – a confidence in the Bible as inspired by God and the source of spiritual truth; and 4. *activism* – the expression of the gospel in active efforts to evangelize and otherwise help others.

Many were taken by surprise that so many Canadians met this definition of "evangelical"; they were even more surprised with the denominational makeup: eight percent were identified with evangelical churches, about two percent with mainline Protestant denominations, and fully five percent with the Roman Catholic Church. In other words, the results suggested that one out of every 20 Canadians was both Roman Catholic and evangelical.

In view of the deep-seated political and theological differences between evangelicals and Catholics for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, some challenged the poll's definitions. Others argued, however, that significant changes occurring within Roman Catholicism and increasing cooperation between Catholics and evangelicals on social issues such as abortion made such results less surprising.

## NATIVE EVANGELICALS

In the 1991 census a higher proportion of aboriginal people identified themselves with Christianity than did the general population. At 85 percent of 470,000 people, aboriginal self-identification with Christianity was three percent higher than that of the overall Canadian population and about the same as among those of British origins. Only slightly more than two percent of the native people identified themselves with a "native Indian or Inuit" religion.

Slightly more than half of the aboriginal people called themselves Roman Catholic. Anglicans, at 17 percent, were the second most numerous and were concentrated mainly in the Far North, among the Inuit. Just under seven percent identified with the United Church.

Several thousand identified themselves as either Baptist or Moravian, but nearly 20,000, or just over four percent, called themselves Pentecostal, a proportion two and one-half times larger

than that among the general population.

The Pentecostal revivals of 1907 in Winnipeg drew many Crees from the north, and the Price healing and 1923 evangelistic meetings in Victoria attracted crowds of native people in coastal B.C. Some observers argue that Pentecostalism's emphasis on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts has close affinities with the spiritually oriented world view of many native people. As well, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada has conducted vigorous outreach to native people.

Native evangelicals struggle with many of the same issues as do other aboriginal people. In addition, they deal with the ongoing issue of what aspects of their own culture can be incorporated into a biblical expression of Christianity and what elements might be contrary to it. In addition, the development of indigenous church leadership is crucial to the health and vitality of the native church.