

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 programming 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.

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

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.

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.

SECULARIZATION OF ACADIA UNIVERSITY, 1966

From its founding in 1838 Acadia University had been accountable to the United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces (UBCAP) and its predecessors. However, in 1966 the provincial government took over. UBCAP did control the newly established Acadia Divinity College, which has since become the main centre for the training of Baptist ministers in the Atlantic provinces.

Some people believe the secularization of the university was necessary, turning to the government because the school needed far more money than UBCAP was providing. Many faculty and alumni supported the move, fearing that conservatives in UBCAP would threaten academic freedom. Others, however, see it as the sad but inevitable result of the institution's drift toward liberalism.

Acadia is a fairly recent example of the many universities that were started by churches but became secular. Significantly, during the 1960s a counter-trend to the secularization of university education began with the formation of evangelical liberal arts colleges that eventually came to be able to grant university degrees. Today Atlantic Baptist University (N.B.), St. Stephen's University (N.B.), Redeemer College (Ont.), The King's University College (Alta.) and Trinity Western University (B.C.) are evangelical, provincially chartered,