

THE CANADIAN 'ELECTRONIC CHURCH'

McMaster University

**The Canadian 'Electronic Church': The Development of Single-faith Broadcasting
in Canada**

By

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**In partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts,
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the advent and evolution of the Canadian 'electronic church' phenomenon as well as analyzing the creation of single-faith broadcasting in Canada. It analyzes the role the federal government has played in circumscribing and directing religious broadcasting in twentieth-century Canada. Methodologically, it departs from many important studies of religion in society by adopting a cultural rather than demographic approach. This approach draws attention to the inner workings of federal regulatory bodies and religious broadcasters; where both cultural forces during the twentieth-century, negotiated a place for religious broadcasting in Canadian society.

The argument suggests that during the twentieth-century, single-faith broadcasting in Canada and elements of the American 'electric church' phenomenon were circumscribed by federal regulatory bodies in order to ensure that some salient aspects of American fundamentalist religious culture and 'home grown' religious ministries focused on proselytization, did not transplant themselves in the Canadian broadcasting system. Due to some over-the-air radio disputes among religious broadcasters during the 1920s, all aspects centered on single-faith broadcasting and single-faith ownership of radio stations were banned in 1932, effectively placing the control over mass communications in the hands of the federal government. Thus, religious broadcasting and individual freedom were circumscribed in favour of ensuring social harmony and collective freedom. Although religious broadcasters never lost carriage rights to air their programs, they were banned from owning their own broadcasting licenses and were barred from owning their own radio or television station.

However, with the creation of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, the advancements in mass communications, and mounting pressure from religious organizations for more representation in the Canadian broadcasting system, the federal government decided to initiate a public discourse on religious broadcasting in 1982. Because individual freedom of conscience

and expression in matters of religion were guaranteed rights in the *Charter*, federal regulatory bodies eventually decided to fully deregulate their religious broadcasting policies in 1993. New technology and legislative provision combined to make it possible for Canadian religious groups to own satellite, radio and UHF cable channels. With this new freedom, power has trickled down to religious groups and individuals who are interested in developing a voice for religious radio and television in the Canadian broadcasting system. Many religious organizations, particularly evangelical Christians, have scrambled to fill the Canadian broadcasting system with their religious messages but, in doing so, have found that their religious identity and evangelical message have been challenged, tempered and eroded by the very forces that issued them their power in the first place.

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When there is no vision, the people perish...
Proverbs 29. v.18

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Archival Sources

CBSCEA	Canadian Broadcast Standards Electronic Archives
CCCIA	Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. Archives
CRTCEA	Canadian Radio and Television Electronic Archives
CRTCLA	Canadian Radio and Television Library Archives
CTSA	Crossroads Television System Archives
EFCEA	Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Electronic Archives
NAC	National Archives of Canada
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
PAOCA	Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives

Other

ACLJ	American Center for Law and Justice
ACORN	Animation and Consultation on Religious Networking
ASC	Advertising Standards Canada
BBG	Board of Broadcast Governors
CAB	Canadian Association of Broadcasters
CAIR-CAN	Canadian Office of the Council of American-Islamic Relations
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Christian Broadcasting System
CBSC	Canadian Broadcast Standards Council
CCCI	Crossroads Christians Communications Inc.
CCLJ	Canadian Centre for Law and Justice
CFAC	Canadian Family Action Coalition
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIN	Canadian Interfaith Network
CMP	Christian Multilingual Programming
CRBC	Canadian Radio Broadcasting Company
CRTC	Canadian Radio and Television Commission
CTS	Crossroads Television System
DTH	Direct-to-home Satellite
EFC	Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
ERDF	Emergency Response and Development Fund
EWTN	Eternal Word Television Network
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
IBSA	International Bible Students Association
IVCF	InterVarsity Fellowship of Canada
IPTN	Inner Peace Television Network
MTA	Muslim Television Ahmadiyya
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PAOC	Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
PICA	Pacific Interfaith Citizenship Association

PTL	Praise the Lord Network
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
TBN	Trinity Broadcasting Network
TTI	Trinity Television Inc.
VCF	Victory Christian Fellowship
VOAR	<i>Voice of Adventist Radio</i>
VOWR	Voice of Wesley Radio

In Canada, it is clear that moral pluralism-the moral mosaic -has won out. Whatever their personal preferences, Canadians are very reluctant to impose their morality.

Reginald Bibby

Greater emphasis in Canada has always been placed upon group and community rights than upon individualism, which seems to be the American norm.

George Rawlyk

It is unCanadian to attempt to persuade another Canadian of the superior virtues of one's faith.

John Stackhouse

Evangelicals in Canada have organized partly because of their governments also, as Pierre Trudeau would have it, removed themselves from the bedrooms of the nation and accepted a variety of moral behaviours that evangelicals have wished they would not accept.

John Stackhouse

The Christian Church is not a commercial television network. Though it has for centuries seemed to be largely an agency for the comfort of its congregations, it cannot survive unless, like its founder, it stirs up the people by making large numbers of them uncomfortable.

Pierre Berton

To speak is to risk being called a bigot.

Bishop Garnsworthy

Christian re-broadcasters take the CRTC to court



CRTC



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Religion has clearly performed great services for human civilization. It has contributed much towards the taming of the asocial instincts. But not enough. It has ruled human society for many thousands of years and has had time to show what it can achieve. If it had succeeded in making the majority of mankind happy, in comforting them, in reconciling them to life and in making them into vehicles of civilization, no one would dream of attempting to alter the existing conditions. But what do we see instead? We see that an appallingly large number of people are dissatisfied with civilization and unhappy in it, and feel it as a yoke which must be shaken off; and that these people either do everything in their power to change that civilization, or else go so far in their hostility to it that they will have nothing to do with civilization.¹

Sigmund Freud
The Future of an Illusion, 1961, p.47.

It was a beautiful summer's day in the Nation's Capital on 20 June 1981. On the grassy, green, and glistening front lawns of Parliament Hill, among the dancing fountain sprays and mists of the Eternal Flame, stood an impressive array of television and satellite equipment surrounded by an endless labyrinth of sprawling electronic cables and snake-like wires. Standing in front of the imposing Peace Tower, was the Reverend David Mainse's production and broadcasting team who was accompanied by a coterie of distinguished guests, seated just metres away from a 'make-shift' congregation who were sitting in chairs dotted across the lawns of Parliament Hill. Canada's most recognized religious broadcaster, the Reverend David Mainse, was preparing to address thousands of Canadians through television with a live telecast being broadcast from Parliament Hill in Ottawa. During the summer of 1981, Mainse's religious organization, Crossroads

Christian Communications Inc. (CCCI), was broadcasting the program *100 Huntley Street* daily to 25 Canadian cities from coast-to-coast in what was entitled the “Salute to Canada Tour.”²

The theme of the service being broadcast from Parliament Hill in Ottawa was “The Nation’s Capital.” David Mainse opened the service and the program live from Ottawa with a voice-over introduction affirmation, “This is 100 Huntley Street, coming to you today from Parliament Hill in our nation’s capital...”³

The telecast itself was a packed and powerful presentation of musical singing, readings, prayers and commentaries. In capturing the spectacle, the television cameras gave a breath-taking 360° visual tour of Parliament Hill showing the visual grandeur of the old CP Hotel, the Chateau Laurier, the War Memorial, the East and West blocks of Parliament, the old American Embassy, the Peace Tower and the weathered Victorian statues that paraded the lawns.

Mainse’s message was a nationalistic sermon in which he addressed the need for Canadian Christians to unify, pray and renew their spiritual vows. With exaggerated gestures and animated facial expressions that he had developed over the years, and the constant barrage of spiritual leaders giving their spiritual opinions to the captive audience, Mainse painted word-pictures of Canada’s greatness over the years and her strength as a spiritual beacon toward other nations and their peoples. Towards the end of the tele-cast, a soloist, Glen Rutledge sang “The Lord’s Prayer” in its traditional version,

¹ Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans., James Strachey (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), p.14.

² David Mainse and David Manuel, *God Keep Our Land*. (Toronto: Mainroads Productions Inc., 1981).

³ National Archives of Canada (NAC), “1981 Half Way Special (Salute to Canada),” narr. David Mainse. *100 Huntley Street*. Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., Toronto, 1981.

standing in front of the Eternal Flame with the backdrop of the Peace Tower where the Canadian flag was fluttering in the breeze. The telecast was indeed a visual masterpiece, one that brought obvious “oohs” of surprise and applause from the captive audience.

At the same time, a young Catholic Canadian, while sipping on her coffee, turns on the television from her suburban home in Ottawa and watches Crossroads Christian Communication’s Parliament Hill telecast. As she watches the program, she listens to a number of personal testimonies from ‘born again’ evangelicals. Almost immediately, she becomes convicted of theological and philosophical axioms such as sanctification, salvation, evangelism and the ‘Christo-centric’ message.⁴ Following this, she begins to watch other various televised evangelistic programs, starts to experience an immense array of emotions, and has varying degrees of emotional catharsis. Evidently, she becomes a ‘born again’ Christian three months later through Reverend David Mainse’s flagship program *100 Huntley Street*.⁵

The focus of this study is to view religion within the context of single-faith broadcasting in Canada, in twentieth-century Canadian society. This little narrative underscores the dramatic impact that television and evangelical religion can have on an individual. Indeed, the fusion of religious inculcation and proselytization with the medium of television and radio, has the immense capability to instantaneously transform an individual’s *weltanschauung* in a matter of seconds. The ability of one evangelical program to change an individual’s religious convictions raises some fundamental questions regarding the role that modern religious broadcasting plays in Canadian

⁴ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed., Helmut Gollwitzer (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), p.87-134. The ‘Christocentric’ message focuses primarily on the persona of Christ and Christ alone. Theological and philosophical theories such as natural theology are suspended from this system of thought.

society. During the course of the Parliament Hill telecast, care was taken to portray evangelical religion with the glories of Canadian patriotism and nationalism. By appearing in the national, public sphere through the secular medium of television, the show affirmed the ultimate power and ascending evangelical worldview. David Mainse's status as a single-faith broadcaster and his power to unite Christian Canadians in prayer was derived from years of television broadcasting and his position as CEO and founder of (CCCI). Yet, Mainse's remarks, on this occasion, were in no way overly evangelical and had they been, his effectiveness as a champion of the cause for Christian unity would have been undermined. In fact, much of Mainse's popularity and respectability among Canadians originated from his ability to disseminate the Christian message across trans-denominational lines. Therefore, controversial issues, differing theological outlooks and proselytization were dropped in order to ensure the success of the telecast. This illustrates the essential fragility of single-faith broadcasting at this time; it could wield considerable social power in the public sphere as long as it was not overly evangelical or fundamentalist. This study will look closely at how single-faith broadcasting in Canada lived and continues to live in this context. The objective of this introduction is to attempt to provide a mental construct with which the contours of both the authority and the fragility of single-faith broadcasting in Canadian society can be uncovered. Because single-faith broadcasting is primarily an evangelical phenomenon, an analysis on evangelical culture post 1960 is necessary to elucidate the background to this modern present-day movement.

⁵ Olga Treskot, interview by author, 31 August 2003, personal, Burlington, Ontario.

Canadian Historiography: Evangelicalism in late Twentieth-Century Canada

Over the last three decades, scholarly debate on the course, character and nature of evangelicalism in the latter half of twentieth-century Canada has, in the words of one Canadian historian, been absent “because the academic community has primarily only been interested in interpreting secular history.”⁶ Equally important, is the fact that television and the phenomenon of the electronic church and its impact on Canadian society has been left to the sphere of sociologists and the academic community quite frankly, as another historian has stated, “has not demonstrated that it is prepared to take the subject matter seriously.”⁷ Interestingly, there is a considerable amount of research concerning religion and its use of higher tech mass media in the United States but there are no real scholarly sources in existence in Canada. Much of the historiography on either Canadian evangelicalism or religious television or radio is sparse and much of the historiography on evangelical culture itself is fragmentary and has come in sporadic bursts at different times from journalists, sociologists and historians. Following the 1960s, Canadian Protestantism was subjected to an unprecedented backlash by the media, ushering in a tremendous wave of criticism upon institutional Christianity. Many researchers and scholars have been swept up in the bombardment of secularism, humanism, liberalism, modernism, capitalism, technological optimism and Americanization that characterized much of Canadian society during the late twentieth-

⁶ George Rawlyk, “Writing about Canadian Religious Revivals,” in Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer ed., *Modern Christian Revivals*. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 208. Renowned Canadian historian George Rawlyk believed that as a scholarly pursuit the analysis of evangelical culture in Canada has been severely neglected in the academic centres of Canada. In a personal interview with *Christian Week* editor Harold Janz in 1993, Rawlyk states that one of the only saving graces on the study of evangelicalism in Canada can be attributed, “through one press, Mc-Gill-Queen’s University Press....we’re publishing more books per capita about evangelicalism through one press....”

century. Consequently, much of the historical narratives, in this period, reveal that many of the authors who wrote about religion and Canadian society during this time made many sweeping generalizations about the impact of humanism, secularism and modernization on evangelical religion. As a result, many historians have come to regard evangelical religion in Canada post-1960 as a marginal force in Canadian society. Social historians (in the 1990s), however, have recognized the absence and gaps of Canadian evangelical historiography and have addressed some neglected areas on the impact of evangelical culture in modern Canadian society.⁸

Within Canadian evangelical historiography, the topic of evangelicalism post 1960 has received some attention. If one was to simplify the current historiographical debates, one could distinguish two broad lines of interpretation in which to view and assess the development of evangelical religion in the latter half of twentieth-century Canada. Its works can be divided into two approaches: the secularization approach, and the fragmentation theory or the 'reconfigured Canadian Protestantism' thesis.

On the one side of the debate are journalists and sociologists who might take as their slogan the title of Pierre Berton's book, "the comfortable pew"⁹ for they contend that secularism, humanism, modernization, commercialism, relativism, the privatization of

⁷ Jay Newman, *Religion vs. Television: Competitors in Cultural Context*. (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1996), p.4.

⁸ For some recent publications concerning evangelical culture in Canada post 1960 see John Stackhouse's, "The Protestant Experience in Canada since 1945," in George Rawlyk ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience 1760-1990*. (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 198-252. Stackhouse offers a view on evangelical culture post 1945 and also breakdowns most of the existing historiographical sources on evangelical culture post 1945. Also, see George Rawlyk., ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*. (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997) for a miscellany of articles concerning evangelicalism in Canada. For a general overview on evangelical culture after 1960 see John Webster Grant, *The Church In The Canadian Era* (Canada: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1972), Hans Mol, *Faith and Fragility: Religion and Identity in Canada* (Canada: Trinity Press, 1985).

⁹ Pierre Berton, *The Comfortable Pew*. (Canada: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1965).

religious practice, technological advancements and the process of *embourgeoisement* eviscerated Canadian Protestant culture during the latter half of the twentieth-century.¹⁰ As evidence for their contention, they point to the flood of American corporate mass culture that deluged Canadian institutional Christianity during the 1960s, which swept over into Canadian society. Many of these authors prognosticated that if Canadian Christianity did not transform into the new secular culture, that traditional Christianity would become a moribund hangover of a vanished world. Churches would become empty sepulchers and Christianity's power and influence in Canadian society would wane and eventually disappear. They believed that modern institutional Christianity abdicated its influential role in society.

Pierre Berton wrote the first journalistic survey that popularized the 'secularization' thesis. Berton's book *The Comfortable Pew* was published in 1965. In his examination of the Anglican Church and Canadian Protestant culture, Berton's objective was to "examine some of the areas where the Church was going bankrupt."¹¹ Berton's main contention in his book *The Comfortable Pew* is that institutional Protestant Christianity failed to accommodate the needs of the Canadian people in the areas of social issues,

¹⁰ Articles and books relating to Berton's book *The Comfortable Pew* and the 'secularization thesis' see Arthur Brydon, Warren Bruleigh, and Gordon K. Stewart, ed., *Why the Sea Is Boiling Hot: A Symposium on the Church and the World*, with a Foreword by Ernest Marshall Howse (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965). This book suggests that the United Church during the 1960s had gone through the process of *embourgeoisement* in every aspect of the Church's activities such as church finances, the state of the clergy, the suburban congregations and important social issues. Another book concerning the United Church and the controversy unleashed by Pierre Berton is Stewart Crysdale's book *Changing Church in Canada*, (Canada: United Church Publishing House, 1965). Also, see William Kilbourn, ed., *The Restless Church: A Response to The Comfortable Pew* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), which contains many articles concerning Protestant culture during the 1960s. William Kilbourn, ed., *Religion in Canada: The Spiritual Development of a Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), offers an appealing journalistic presentation of some of the issues that Protestant culture was facing during the 1960s and Stewart Crysdale and Les Wheatcroft, ed., *Religion in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), offers a series of scholarly articles depicting the nature of religion in Canadian society during the 1960s.

¹¹ Berton, *The Comfortable Pew*, p. 14.

religious teaching, and tele-communications. Although much of this book falls under the category of polemic scholarship, Berton does recognize that Protestant mainline denominations failed to use the medium of television effectively. Berton states, "The truth is that the Church has failed to come to grips with television, which it continues to treat and to think of in old-fashioned terms...the general suspicion that television is something "bad" [is] a snobbery.¹²" An example Berton uses was the controversy in 1964 over the CBC airing a modernized version of the Resurrection story called "The Open Grave." This much-publicized incident in the spring of 1964 revealed how the Anglican Church had lost its power to communicate the Christian message and also revealed its archaic way of thinking when the Anglican Bishop of Toronto and others attempted to stop the airing of the Easter message. The bishop's actions made the Protestant Church look like a bunch of bizarre ministers focusing on doctrinal aspects of the Easter message and applying an anachronistic penchant for applying authority in aspects that were far beyond their sphere. Berton's analysis does touch on this important aspect; that the Church's failure to adapt to technology would result in the loss of influence and power in Canadian society for Protestant denominations.

Although much of the 'secularization thesis' contains certain truths to its analysis, there are two major problems within the first wave of historiography that posit the 'secularization' school of thought. The first major problem is that many of the surveys on evangelical religion are polemic articles and much of these sources contain obvious generalizations and small 'tidbits' of information that yield little, if any, analytical analysis. The second major problem is that journalists, not historians, have written much

¹² *ibid*, p.118.

of the historiography on the secular school of thought. Although this approach is articulated by important books and articles by Pierre Burton, William Kilbourn, Stewart Crysdale, and many others, this school of thought has utilized the 'secularization thesis' as an intellectual 'dumping ground' in order to explain the phenomenon on the contemporary state of evangelical religion in Canada.

The second major school of historical interpretation examining the course of evangelical culture in the latter half of the twentieth-century is provided by social historians. Many of these historians have focused on what is known as the 'fragmentation thesis' or variant sub-debates of this school of thought. Although the historiography of this school of thought is limited, a scholarly debate utilizing this school of thought concerning the course of evangelical culture can be formulated. The themes of this school of thought are derived primarily from Reginald Bibby's book *Fragmented Gods*, published in 1987.¹³ In formulating his argument, Bibby used the amalgamation of six comprehensive research projects based on a series of interrelated surveys that examined religion in the context of contemporary social and cultural developments. Bibby's main premise in his book is that Canadian Christian culture during the 1970s and 1980s fragmented into small denominational entities which struggled to maintain their congregations and cultural relevance in Canadian society. Bibby maintained that religion in Canadian society, at this time, had become nothing more but a smorgasbord of dishes "broken into pieces and offered to religious consumers in piecemeal form."¹⁴ From a dramatic drop in church membership and attendance to the decline in the Canadian

¹³ Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada*. (Canada: Irwin Publishing, 1987).

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.85.

churches' authority on social and moral issues, Bibby, (like Berton before him), found that Canadian Christian culture had failed to provide leadership and vision concerning everyday life in Canadian society revealing that the Canadian Christian churches' authority and ability to give direction to society had been seriously eroded. Bibby believed that, "Religion, Canadian-style, is mirroring culture,"¹⁵ and that "...a religion that merely reflects culture is without a unique message-it is only a mirror."¹⁶ If Berton was the first to popularize and substantiate the view that Canada's religious institutions and denominations had lost their power in Canadian society, Reginald Bibby's book *Fragmented Gods*, thirty-three years after Berton's criticisms, cemented the 'secularization thesis' into orthodoxy revealing the fragments and failure of Christian churches to adapt to modern society. Nevertheless, Bibby does maintain that there are a few religious institutions that have attempted to assert moral authority on society. For instance, Bibby states, "...notably the Roman Catholic Church, along with Conservative Protestants and Mormons, do sometimes say what culture doesn't want to hear... The point is that they make an effort to stand up against culture."¹⁷ Bibby also claimed, that despite the fact that other denominations became fragmented, Conservative Protestantism, represented by the denominations such as the Pentecostals and the Baptists, were at least able to maintain their numbers and preserve their theological outlook on society.

Much of the attention of 'fragmentary thesis' has been focused on the impact of modernization on religion; however, studies by George Rawlyk, John Stackhouse, Robert

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.233.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.256.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 255.

Burkinshaw and many others assert that a separate conservative Protestant ethos emerged from the hegemonic influence of modern mass culture. Although most of these scholars do not dispute much of Bibby's 'fragmentation thesis,' they do contend that evangelicalism in the latter-half of the twentieth-century did not simply disappear or transmute into an ineffectual 'fragment.'

John Stackhouse specifically addresses the character of evangelicalism since the 1960s in his book *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, published in 1993. Much of his study analyzes the growth and development of evangelical institutions embodied in the vitality of evangelical Bible colleges, theological seminaries and evangelical organizations where evangelicals came together and supported them in the latter half of the twentieth-century.¹⁸ Stackhouse maintained that Canadian evangelicalism in this era had not lost, "its commitment to doctrinal orthodoxy, personal spiritual vitality, and the priority of evangelism in the church's mission."¹⁹ Using the 'church-sect' model in analyzing the nature of evangelicalism in Canada,²⁰ Stackhouse has argued that Canadian evangelicalism during the latter half of the twentieth-century was characterized by two identities. On one hand, segments of Canada's evangelical community wished to abstain from mainstream society while the other half wanted to work progressively within Canadian society to effect change. Stackhouse believed that Canadian evangelicalism at this time was not relegated to the sidelines of culture as an

¹⁸ John Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character*. (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.112-113.

²⁰ Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch developed the fundamental concept of the 'church sect' model. For more information regarding this model see Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. E. Fischhoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963); Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Church*, trans. O. Wynn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956).

exclusive sect nor was it burgeoning as an organized and collective front in Canadian society.²¹ Moreover, he opined that a largely informal network of evangelical Christians and institutions were attempting to re-engage Canadian society at a number of levels. Although Stackhouse believed that evangelicals were somewhat “united” he also believed that they were also fragmented and ineffectual in exacting change in Canadian society.²² For instance, Stackhouse states, “evangelicals in Canada had not been welded into a coherent movement by strong leadership, national institutions, or compelling issues....even toward concerns common to all evangelicals separated them into definite subgroups.”²³ Also, in an article entitled “Who Whom?” Stackhouse presents a sobering account on how Canadian evangelicalism in the latter-half of the twentieth century has been unable to influence Canadian society as a whole.²⁴ Although Stackhouse believes that the organizational accomplishments of the evangelical community during the latter half of the twentieth-century were admirable, he believes it was no where near to Canadian evangelical triumphalism.²⁵

Andrew Grenville’s article, “The Awakened and the Spirit-Moved: The Religious Experiences of Canadian Evangelicals in the 1990s,” also attempts to reveal that evangelical culture in contemporary Canadian society retained much of its religious identity in the wake of modernization.²⁶ Focused on the responses by evangelicals

²¹ *ibid.*, p.16.

²² John Stackhouse, “More Than a Hyphen,” in George A. Rawlyk & Mark A. Noll ed., *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States*. (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), p.392.

²³ *ibid.*, p.386-7.

²⁴ John Stackhouse, “Who Whom?: Evangelicalism and Canadian Society,” in George Rawlyk ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.69.

²⁶ Andrew Grenville, “The Awakened and the Spirit-Moved: The Religious Experiences of Canadian Evangelicals in the 1990s,” in George Rawlyk ed., *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*.

concerning their religious experiences contained in his survey research, Grenville argued that religious experience “still shapes and sustains the character of evangelicalism and is a tremendously important aspect of the Canadian evangelical experience in the 1990s.”²⁷ Moreover, Grenville also suggested that evangelical religious experience is more influential to Canadian evangelicals than evangelical leaders and organizations such as the EFC and IVCF.²⁸ Although Grenville’s article sheds some light on the modern religious experiences of evangelicals in Canada, much of its conclusions are already anticipated in John Stackhouse’s and George Rawlyk’s analysis on evangelical culture in Canadian society during the latter half of the twentieth-century.

The theme of a separate Protestant ethos occupies a central role in George Rawlyk’s book *Is Jesus Your Personal Saviour*, published in 1996. In this study, Rawlyk examines the quintessential nature of Canadian evangelicalism in the 1990s.²⁹ In order to formulate his argument, Rawlyk used a compilation of surveys and a collection of oral testimonials to demonstrate that the study of modern Canadian evangelicalism cannot simply be defined using a declension thesis.³⁰ Through his analysis of these surveys, Rawlyk contends that the Canadian evangelical community comprises sixteen per cent of the Canadian population and that the contemporary state of Canadian evangelicalism is still a formidable force in Canadian society.³¹ According to Rawlyk, these surveys revealed that many Canadian evangelicals still have strong theological outlooks and that their adherence to evangelical axioms and beliefs are strong. Rawlyk also contended that

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 431

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 429.

²⁹ George Rawlyk, *Is Jesus Your Personal Saviour?: In Search of Canadian Evangelicalism in the 1990s*. (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press), 1996.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 224.

Canadian evangelicalism must also be understood by giving the populist elements of Canadian society a historical voice in their experiences with evangelicalism and that the study of evangelicalism in Canada cannot simply be viewed by studying the “so-called elite voices” in society.³² This “bottom up” approach characterizes much of *Is Jesus Your Personal Saviour*, as Rawlyk allows Canadian evangelicals to comment on their personal and charismatic experiences.

The only single work that has directly challenged Bibby’s ‘fragmentary thesis’ is Robert Burkinshaw’s book *Pilgrims in Lotus Land*, published in 1995.³³ Burkinshaw sought to provide a counter-argument against Bibby’s claim that evangelicals during the late twentieth-century, as a proportion of the population in Canada, declined in numbers.³⁴ Using the province of British Columbia as a lens in which to view and access the course of evangelical culture in the latter half of the twentieth-century, Burkinshaw concluded that evangelical culture in British Columbia did in fact flourish as its numbers increased over the years in proportion to the population in Canada. By using census data, church membership and participation records and documenting the growth of evangelical institutions in British Columbia, Burkinshaw believed that Conservative Protestantism represented a significant force in British Columbia. Although Burkinshaw recognizes that Conservative Protestantism grew from 7.1 percent to 8.1 percent of the population from 1961 to 1981, he also warns that, “the mistake should not be made, however, of interpreting these gains as representing a strong thrust into secular culture. They merely

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*, p.225.

³³ Robert K. Burkinshaw, *Pilgrims in Lotus Land: Conservative Protestantism in British Columbia, 1917-1981*. (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.3.

held it at bay.”³⁵ Overall, the work is a comprehensive overview and snapshot of the developments in evangelical culture from 1917 to 1981 in British Columbian society which attempts to fill in the gaps concerning Canadian evangelical historiographical interpretation.

These two positions of interpretation concerning the course of evangelical culture in Canadian society, contribute to a better understanding on some of the historical developments of evangelicalism in Canada. The history of Canadian evangelical culture in the latter half of the twentieth-century largely remains limited to works produced by Canadian social historians addressing the pre-World War II years. The themes of single-faith broadcasting and religious radio are not consistently or principally represented among the chapters, articles, or major research monographs. Works in evangelical culture after 1945 focusing specifically on evangelical culture are few and far between, as are interpretive connections to single-faith broadcasting and/or Canadian religious television and radio. The intersection of single-faith broadcasting, religious radio and television and evangelical culture within Canada historiography remains under-researched.

American Historiography: American Religious Television and the ‘Electric Church’

Before examining the historiography of the American ‘electric church,’ it will be valuable to consider in overview the extent to which American religious television has been subjected to empirical analysis and evaluation.

The first wave of historiography concerning research into religious television and American society has been described by one historian as “scattered and piecemeal.”³⁶

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.258.

³⁶ Peter Horsfield, *Religious Television: The American Experience*. (New York: Longman Inc., 1984), p.83.

According to Peter Horsfield, early research into religious television has been primarily characterized by a wave of academic dissertations and a mass of privately commissioned studies produced by religious agencies for their own 'in-house' use.³⁷ Because most of the academic community does not have access to the former body of research, academic dissertations form the backbone of the first wave of academic historiography concerning religious television and American society. This wave of scholarly research on the development of American religious television has sought to address one important question: What impact does religious programming have on American culture? Many early American researchers and scholars have attempted to tackle this question by analyzing the nature of the targeted audience in order to determine the extent of a religious program's outreach as well as determine its impact on society as a whole.³⁸ Although many of these dissertations are informative and apply empirical research and social science in their studies, no schools of thought, studies or books collated this body of research into any comprehensive statements.

Despite the sporadic academic dissertation wave that characterized much of the research concerning religious television in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, the field of study in religious television exploded in the late 1980s and its momentum has continued

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Dissertations, books and surveys relating to this first wave of historiography have come primarily from academic dissertations written at different times (although there are some exceptions). One of the first publications concerning religious television and applying social science is E.C. Parker's; D.W. Barry; and D.W. Smythe, *The Television-Radio Audience and Religion*, (New York: Harper and Row), 1955, which surveyed 3,559 households in order to determine the effects of religious television on American society. With the exception of the former book, most information concerning religious television has come from a "Dissertation wave." For more information concerning this 'dissertation wave' and its wide range of topics, useful analysis and annotated bibliographies are provided in Peter Horsfield's, *Religious Television: The American Experience*. (New York: Longman, Inc., 1984, pgs (79-87); George H. Hill's *Airwaves To The Soul*. (California: R&E Publishers), 1983, refer to Appendixes, and Razel Frankl's, *Televangelism: The Marketing of Popular Religion*. (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press), 1987, pgs (12-20).

well into the early 1990s. Much of the academic interest and research into religious broadcasting was created by a surge of evangelical influence in American society during the late 1970s and early 1980s. With the election of evangelical President Jimmy Carter in 1976, an increase in religious fundamentalist television programming, the surge of a New Christian Right and the creation of the Religious Round Table and Moral Majority movement by televangelist Jerry Falwell in 1980, which began to influence American social policy and politics, many Americans began to wonder why fundamentalist evangelicals had quickly risen to such a high level of social and political power in such a small matter of time. Consequently, this surge of evangelical influence in American society during the late 1970s, characterized by the influence of American fundamentalist religious programming, force-fed the growth of academic interest in the field of religious television. As Peter Horsfield explains, "because religious broadcasting had risen to the level of social and political controversy.... funds were allocated for social research into the phenomenon."³⁹ Undoubtedly, this development changed the nature of American religious historiography concerning religious television.

After the surge of conservative evangelicalism and the rise of evangelical programming in American society during the late 1970s and 1980s, scholarly analyses of the electronic church phenomenon have heightened dramatically from which a large amount of studies have been drawn from the fields of media sociology, religious studies, history, cultural anthropology, philosophy, mass communication studies, and interdisciplinary approaches. Because of the breadth of this information and the variety

³⁹ Horsfield, *Religious Television*, p.82.

of approaches to the study of religious television and the electronic church, this historiographical presentation will only briefly delineate a small number of influential studies concerning the phenomenon of the electronic church.⁴⁰

One of the first books to take notice of the new 'electric church' phenomenon was Ben Armstrong's study *The Electric Church*, published in 1979.⁴¹ In his examination of the religious broadcasting explosion of the 1970s, Armstrong coined the concept of the 'electric church.' Armstrong defines his concept of the 'electric church' as a revolutionary new form of worshipping which originated in a grass-roots movement aimed at revitalizing the older Christian churches and empowering them to keep up with modern society in order to prepare for the return of Jesus Christ.⁴² Armstrong believed that this phenomenon was a revolution just as dramatic as Martin Luther's ninety-five theses and that its development was completely praiseworthy. Armstrong believed that "Penny for penny, per capita studies indicate there is no better way to reach the largest number of people with the life-changing news of Jesus Christ than through radio and television."⁴³ In addition, Armstrong claimed that 130 million people tune into radio and television in order to watch religious programs.⁴⁴ Although much of Armstrong's work yields pertinent information regarding the rise of American televangelism in American society, many of his assertions touched off a storm of academic debate. Similar to the publication of Berton's *The Comfortable Pew*, Armstrong's *The Electric Church*, caused

⁴⁰ For a miscellany of scholarly articles concerning the electronic church, see Quentin Schultze ed., *American Evangelicals and the Mass Media: Perspectives on the Relationship Between American Evangelicals and the Mass Media*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990. Also, see Robert Abelman and Stewart Hoover eds., *Religious Television: Controversies and Conclusions*. (New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1990.

⁴¹ Ben Armstrong, *The Electric Church*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers), 1979.

⁴² *ibid*, p.11.

⁴³ *ibid*, p.135.

many historians to demystify many of Armstrong's assertions, especially many of Armstrong's enthusiastic claims about the importance and the impact the 'electric church' phenomenon had on American society at this time.

The first work that directly challenged many of Armstrong's assertions concerning the American 'electric church' is Jeffrey K. Hadden's and Charles E. Swann's book *Prime Time Preachers*, published in 1981.⁴⁵ This book was the first comprehensive and descriptive study that explored the development of the electronic church in the United States and provided the academic community with an objective explanation concerning the phenomenon. Hadden's and Swann's *Prime Time Preachers*, approaches the electronic church from a combined sociological and theological analysis. In their study, Hadden and Swann examined the audience characteristics of the electronic church by using Arbitron data drawn from the month of February 1980, in order to gauge the audience size of evangelical programs and to reveal what type of people were watching these programs. According to Hadden and Swann, Ben Armstrong's estimate of 120 million religious television viewers in an average week was grossly overestimated. Using Arbitron data, Hadden and Swann found that only a little over 20 million actually tuned into televangelist broadcasts during any given week,⁴⁶ and that most of these viewers were primarily based in the Bible Belt and made up of females over the age of fifty years.⁴⁷ In addition, Hadden and Swann also noticed that the total audience size for electronic religious programs actually declined from 1978 to 1979 and from 1979 to

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey Hadden and Charles Swann, *Prime Time Preachers: The Rising Power of Televangelism*. (United States: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1981).

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 62.

1980, with a net loss of 2 million viewers.⁴⁸ This evidence lends credence to the fact that the electric church and its viewers are not as powerful as religious broadcasters have claimed. Although Hadden and Swann found that the electronic church was not as powerful as many Americans claimed, they realized that the New Christian Right and televangelists possessed a powerful technology in which they were able to launch their own social and political agendas.⁴⁹ Hadden and Swann regarded the electric church as an expression of a counterculture of the Right, intent upon restoring Christian morality in American society.

Another book which tackled many of Armstrong's premises, is Peter Horsfield's book *Religious Television*, published in 1984.⁵⁰ Horsfield specifically addresses the social impact of the dominance of a very small number of televangelists in television and reveals a number of empirical studies on religious broadcasting. For instance, Horsfield notes that in 1979, more than half of all national airings of religious programs were accounted for by only 10 major evangelical programs.⁵¹ Horsfield attributes the success of the fundamentalist televangelists to the decrease in government regulation concerning religious broadcasting, certain social conditions, technological advancements and general trends in evangelical religious culture.⁵² In addition, Horsfield utilized marketing information provided by Nielsen ratings to reveal that this 'electric church' phenomenon was "a specialized programming service for a specialized audience."⁵³ Horsfield found that the projected electric church audience was between 10 to 15 million individual

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.55.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 201.

⁵⁰ Peter Horsfield, *Religious Television: The American Experience*. (New York: Longman Inc., 1984)

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.10.

⁵² *ibid.*, p.23.

viewers⁵⁴ and that the electronic church phenomenon arose due to evangelical groups within Christianity adapting and affirming the place of television in American society while mainline churches sought to resist this imposition of this form of culture.⁵⁵

Horsfield's assertions on the relation between religious television and American culture are particularly interesting. Horsfield argues that evangelical programming has acquiesced to the "normalizing" tendency of commercial television by conforming to the standards and demands of television's economic and formatting standards. Ultimately, Horsfield believed that this 'electronic church' phenomenon "created a situation of injustice in the representation of religious faith on the media of social communication....Their willingness to pay for air-time.....reinforced and contributed substantially to the commercialization and consumerization of religious faith."⁵⁶

William Fore's book *Religion and Television*, published in 1987, takes a historical and philosophical view of the relationship between the American mass media and religious television.⁵⁷ Fore argued that the medium of television has usurped the roles formerly reserved for the Christian church. Fore disparaged about a cultural shift in American life from what he calls a "religious center" to a "technological center;" and asserted that rather than challenging this displacement, the electronic church actually has hastened it through an uncritical adoption of the commercial broadcasting system's practices and values. In Fore's words, "The electronic church is great show business, a terrific audience

⁵³ *ibid.*, p.165.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.109.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.67.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.166.

⁵⁷ William F. Fore, *Television and Religion: The Shaping of Faith, Values, and Culture*. (United States: Augsburg Publishing House), 1987.

grabber, and very much in tune with the times. But its popularity is more of a sign that it has become just part of TV's entertainment package with a religious gloss."⁵⁸

Quentin J. Schultze's *Televangelism and American Culture*, expresses a similar tone to Fore's analysis of the 'electronic church,' which suggests that televangelism is the most characteristic and remunerative expression of American religion."⁵⁹ Schultze has de-emphasized some of the positive aspects of televangelism as he uncovered the intertwining relationship and interplay between mainstream American values and the particular ethos of American televangelism in which he referred televangelism as, "the flagship of American religion, setting the style and tone of local and denominational church life."⁶⁰ Schultze believed that televangelism is a natural hybrid of American materialism, hedonism, consumerism, ethnocentrism and that, "televangelism's sins, then, are also the sins of American culture."⁶¹ In Schultze's analysis of the mythical values of American culture and the messages disseminated from televangelists he concluded that televangelism must be brought under the critical purview of the Christian Church in order to ensure that it actually reflects the Word of God and the work of his people.⁶²

Another survey that reveals that evangelicalism has undergone some fundamental changes through its adoption of modern mass communications is Razelle Frankl's

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.114.

⁵⁹ Quentin J. Schultze, *Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), p.11.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.12.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.248.

Televangelism: The Marketing of Popular Religion.⁶³ Frankl analyzes the ancestry of the electronic church and traces it back to nineteenth century revivalism characterized by the ethos of Charles Finney, Dwight Moody, and Billy Sunday and argues that evangelical broadcasting is a hybrid of revivalism and television. Frankl believed that televangelism has become the new social institution for revivalism which is distinctly different from traditional forms of evangelical practices.⁶⁴ According to Frankl, this new hybrid of revivalism embodied in the electric church, no longer emphasizes the inspirational and spiritual needs of its audience. Rather, in Frankl's analysis on the fundraising techniques of religious broadcasters, the electric church has become an institution that is intermeshed with, "the imperatives of television (standardized, formularized program formats; rationalized bureaucratic production system) to market their programs."⁶⁵

The theme that presents the importance of televangelism to its targeted audience occupies a central role in Stewart Hoover's book *Mass Media and Religion*.⁶⁶ Hoover's book is a qualitative study that uses a compilation of oral testimonials and surveys of "700 Club" members to reveal the importance that this program has on the lives of its supporters. Hoover's study uses an empirical, rhetorical and sociological approach in which he attempts to place the experiences of individual electric-church viewers within the greater context of the electronic church phenomenon. According to Hoover, these oral testimonials reveal that the relationship between the program "700 Club," and its viewers

⁶² *ibid.*, p.226.

⁶³ Razelle Frankl, *Televangelism: The Marketing of Popular Religion*. (United States: Southern Illinois University, 1987).

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p.5.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p.145.

⁶⁶ Stewart Hoover, *Mass Media Religion: The Social Sources of the Electronic Church*. (United States: Sage Publications, Inc., 1988).

show how American evangelicals have strong theological outlooks and that their adherence to the 'electric church' compliments and enlightens their other religious commitments.⁶⁷ Hoover also contended that the electronic church must also be understood by giving the common individual a historical voice in their experiences with the electronic church. This populist approach characterizes much of *Mass Media Religion*, as Hoover allows American evangelicals to comment on their personal and charismatic experiences in relation to the electronic church. The book is unique as it offers a macro and micro approach to the study of the electronic church as it focuses on individual experiences and the greater implications of the electronic church in American society.

The scholarly study concerning the electronic church in American society is characterized by a variety of scholarly approaches drawn from a wide array of academic fields. Because of the breadth of the research concerning this phenomenon, it is very difficult to collate every academic perspective into a comprehensive and organized statement, where quite literally, there are numerous schools of thought contained in this academic discipline. Therefore, this paper has only offered a small sample of studies that have assessed the electronic church phenomenon. That being said, one commonality seems to present itself in every study of the American electronic church: What impact has the American electronic church had on American society and how does it have the ability to influence social, political and cultural life in the United States? Given the geographical proximity of Canada to the United States, as well as the cultural and religious interpenetration of these two countries, American studies concerning religious television

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.213.

offer this analysis with a sound reference in which to view the phenomenon of religious television and the advent of single-faith broadcasting in Canada. This paper will reveal that evangelical broadcasting is a trans-border phenomenon and an improvisational religious creed which fuses principles of Judeo-Christian thought, American fundamentalism, biblical dispensationalism, exegeticalism, technological optimism, and modernism into its religious tradition.

Outline of the Argument

The analysis that follows will attempt to construct and delineate the creation of single-faith broadcasting in Canada and the advent of the Canadian 'electric church.' The first two chapters are arranged as a complementary pair: the first two investigate the development of single-faith broadcasting in Canada while the final chapter offers a case study in evangelical broadcasting using Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. (CCCI) as a lens in which to view some of the contributions of religious broadcasting to Canadian society. Chapters two and three focus on the inner workings of federal regulatory bodies and religious broadcasters during the twentieth-century, where both cultural entities negotiated a place for single-faith broadcasting in Canadian society while Chapter four examines the historical development of CCCI and its impact on the Canadian 'electric church.'

Chapter two focuses on the reasons why the federal government placed a sixty-seven year ban on single-faith broadcasting. The absence of single-faith broadcasting is examined in relation to the power held by federal regulatory bodies to ban access to single-faith broadcasters in the Canadian broadcasting system. The authority to license a religious broadcaster solely resided with federal regulatory bodies, effectively placing the

direction and expansion of religious broadcasting in the hands of the federal government for many years. An analysis of the federal regulatory bodies' policies concerning religious broadcasting, reveals that many religious broadcasters were excluded and 'ghettoized' from the Canadian broadcasting system throughout the twentieth-century in order to ensure that the federal regulatory bodies' cultural agendas were being satisfied. Because of the ban on single-faith broadcasting, religious broadcasting in Canada remained in a chrysalis state until political and social forces forced the federal government to deal with the issue of religious broadcasting.

Chapter three focuses on the development of single-faith broadcasting and the advent of the Canadian 'electric church.' An examination on the growth of single-faith broadcasting after the CRTC deregulated their religious broadcasting policies, reveals the birth of a vibrant and growing Canadian 'electric church.' With much of the CRTC's red tape concerning religious broadcasting removed in 1993, many evangelical and religious groups scrambled to fill the radio and television spectrum with their religious broadcasting. However, this new freedom has come at a price. An examination of the CRTC's new religious broadcasting policies reveals a new neo-regulatory system specifically designed to bring the phenomenon of the Canadian 'electric-church' back into mainstream society.

Chapter four examines the phenomenon of single-faith broadcasting and the Canadian 'electric church' through an analysis of Canada's most recognized single-faith broadcaster, Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. (CCCI). An analysis of CCCI reveals that CCCI was a torchbearer for the Canadian 'electric church.' Much of CCCI's historical development reflects an institution bent on evangelism and expansion in order

to proselytize to Canadians about the 'Christo-centric' message. Because mainline denominations failed to adequately adopt televangelism in their agendas, CCCI was able to monopolize religious broadcasting in Canada for a number of years until the CRTC decided to reform their religious broadcasting policies and allow other religious ministries to expand into the Canadian broadcasting system.

Overall, the federal ban on single-faith broadcasting, the failure of mainline denominations to utilize radio and television into their ministries, and the adoption and application of higher-tech mass media by fundamentalist evangelicals, have caused the role and status of evangelicalism to transmute into a new format. Fundamentalist evangelical Canadians, through the prism of higher-tech mass media, have an increased access to the corridors of power, which had previously been blocked by the Canadian government and enjoyed by mainline Protestant denominations. Conservative evangelicals have now gained a small measure of prominence, respectability, wealth and influence in modern Canadian society. This process has been facilitated through evangelicals applying the use of television and other forms of tele-communications into its concept of evangelism. In fact, much of their power and influence has been gained because mainline Canadian Protestantism and other religious faith groups failed to successfully adapt to mass media over the last fifty years. The power of the television and the use of higher-tech mass media has given the Canadian conservative evangelical community a new status in public discourse and attempts to construct a *weltanschauung* of its own to promote a minority expression on television with a technological optimism that uncritically links the electronic media, with the providential mission of God, to espouse the gospel to Canadians. Generally speaking, this paper is about the evangelical

worldview of television, and its effect on Canadian culture. It is also about religion, which has a particular worldview of its own. And it is about the way in which religion and mass communications are intertwining, interacting and reacting over the question of what cultural forces will shape the faith and value system of Canadian culture in the future.

CHAPTER II

THE FIGHT FOR CANADIAN SINGLE-FAITH BROADCASTING

Part 1: The CRTC and its predecessors vs. single-faith broadcasters

"It is really repulsive, the way the CRTC treats Christian applicants. They arbitrarily set content requirements that only Christians must meet, and when Christian applicants meet then, the board springs new requirements and rejects their applications out of hand.... The CRTC is so cynical and so mean-spirited, we're going to have to go over their heads, straight to Parliament.... They have violated the Charter of Rights and the Broadcast Act at will and, so far, no one is holding them accountable."

Roy Beyer, President of Canada Family Action Coalition in Edmonton (CFAC)⁶⁸

When one of Canada's earliest broadcast pioneers, Reginald Fessenden, broadcasted the first ever vocal dialogue on radio of a violin rendition of "O Holy Night," and read the Christmas story from the New Testament on Christmas Eve in 1906, from a station in Brant Rock, Massachusetts, the future of Canadian religious broadcasting seemed promising and hopeful for all Canadians. However, Canadian religious single-faith broadcasting would experience a series of barriers that hampered much of its development into the twentieth-century.⁶⁹ Although Canadian society in the twenty-first

⁶⁸ Joe Woodard, "Christian broadcasters are seething about CRTC bigotry," *Alberta Report*, v.25., 5 January 1998, p.22.

⁶⁹ Very few Canadian scholarly works in broadcasting history examine the cultural impact of religious radio and television, but various aspects of religious broadcasting has been examined. James Penton, in his *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom of Speech* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), devotes a chapter to the IBSA affair and their radio stations in the 1920s, but his analysis is confined to this Protestant group. Russell Johnston's "The Early Trials of Protestant Radio 1922-1938," in *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXV, 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1994), 377-402, offers an interesting look on the government's policies concerning Protestant radio from 1922-38. The paper gives a thorough and in-depth analysis of three Protestant radio-stations. W.E. Mann's *Cult, Sect, and Church in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto 1955), explains how the medium of radio was utilized in Western Canada between the wars, but he does not discuss federal restrictions. In contrast, Judith Haiven's *Faith, Hope, No Charity: An Inside Look at the Born Again Movement in Canada and the United States*, (Vancouver: New Star Books 1984,) offers a scathing analysis of evangelical broadcasting in Canada and the US. Much of her analysis is based on American tele-evangelism and her conclusions on Canadian evangelical broadcasting lacks insight, since she only used Crossroads Communications Inc. as a lens to draw her conclusions on Canadian evangelical broadcasting. Unfortunately, much of her analysis borders on bigotry, as many of her conclusions on Canadian evangelical broadcasting are defamatory. Interestingly, Jay Newman's *Religion*

century can attest to Canadian Christian and multi-faith television, radio stations, satellite networks and vast multimedia resources on the Internet, much of the development and influence of single-faith broadcasting in Canadian society has been a recent phenomenon. The reason for this is easily delineated. The Canadian Radio & Television Commission (CRTC or "Commission, hereinafter), and its predecessors, which control and monitor all aspects of broadcasting over the years, has refused to grant single-faith broadcasters licenses to own a radio or television station or have access to satellite services on the grounds that religious broadcasting is a 'public concern,' which celebrates a 'collective freedom of speech' not individual expression.⁷⁰

Ever since the 1920s, when over-the-air radio disputes between religious broadcasters caused a tremendous amount of controversy, federal regulatory bodies have not granted any licenses to any religious broadcaster since 1928, in order to avoid any over-the-air verbal sniping between Christian broadcasters with differing theological outlooks. Although religious groups never lost carriage rights to the airwaves to broadcast church services and programs on the medium of radio and television and were able to broadcast their programs on community radio and television, commercial radio and television, campus radio and through the CBC, they were banned from owning their own broadcasting licenses. In fact, federal regulators of Canadian broadcasting did not license any religious radio or television stations between 1928 and 1995. The only licensed

vs. *Television*, (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1996). offers an insightful philosophical approach in examining the relation between television, religion and culture. Although much of his philosophical discussions are informative, Canadian religious broadcasting as a whole is not particularly addressed.

⁷⁰ An excellent overview of this issue is offered in John Simpson's article, "Federal Regulation and Religious Broadcasting in Canada and the United States: A Comparative Sociological Analysis, in *Religion/Culture: Comparative Canadian Studies*, ed., William Westfall et al, Volume VII, 1985. Simpson offers a macro-sociological approach in analyzing how religious broadcasting in Canada has been constrained by political regulatory bodies in order to serve as an agent of the social system.

Canadian single-faith stations that operated during this time period were two low wattage AM radio stations; 'VOAR' (Voice of Adventist Radio) and 'VOWR' (Voice of Wesley Radio) situated in the province of Newfoundland. The only reason why these stations even existed was when Newfoundland joined Canada, one of the conditions on entering Confederation was that they would control their own broadcasting and schooling system.⁷¹ Other than these two exceptions, there were no other Christian stations in Canada.

An immediate consequence of these policies was the stunted growth of Canadian single-faith broadcasting in Canada. The 67 year delay in licensing religious broadcasters, raises some important questions on why there was a ban on licensing single-faith broadcasting and why did the CRTC's policies concerning religious broadcasting change close to the turn of the twenty-first century? The development of the CRTC's licensing policies constituted a federal ban on single-faith broadcasting, and remains a subject of debate currently.

Evidently, many scholars have contentiously debated the role of the federal government (through the agency of federal regulatory bodies) has played in developing a religious broadcasting policy in order to control religious broadcasting in Canada. Consequently, much of the historiography on this subject is recent and was created in response to the CRTC's willingness to open the door to religious broadcasting when it

⁷¹ "History: Milestones in Canadian Christian Broadcasting." VOAR: Christian Family Radio Official Website. <<http://www.voar.org/history.asp>> and, "History of VOWR." VOWR Official Website. <<http://www.vowr.org/history.htm>>.

issued a Notice of a Public hearing in 1981.⁷² Most of the analysis on religious broadcasting in Canada has focused on the development of the CRTC's religious broadcasting policies from 1981 to 1993.⁷³

In terms of historiography, there is unanimity among scholars who have argued that federal regulatory bodies throughout the twentieth century have not effectively addressed the needs of religious broadcasters. This, in turn, has caused an under-representation of religion in the Canadian broadcasting system. There are two dominant schools of thought which debate the reasons on why stalwart federal regulatory bodies decided to alter their religious broadcasting policies. One school of thought centres around legal issues which attempt to reveal that changes in legislation through the creation of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982, the 1968 and revised 1991 *Broadcasting Acts*, and other subsequent policy pronouncements issued by the CRTC, were primarily the driving forces in the CRTC's deregulation of its religious broadcasting policies.⁷⁴ Another school

⁷² CRTCLA, *Public Notice* 1981-54, 17 August 1981. The 1981 Public Notice opened the door for religious broadcasters to discuss with the federal government the need for more religion in the Canadian broadcasting system. This initiated a process where the federal government began to slowly deregulate its ban on single-faith broadcasting.

⁷³ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1993-78, Religious Broadcasting Policy (1-19), The CRTC Official Website, <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/1993/PB93-78.HTM>. The 1993 Religious Broadcasting Policy is important because the federal government changed its policies concerning single-faith broadcasting allowing single-faith ministries to own and operate a radio or television station.

⁷⁴ Much of the historiography concerning religious broadcasting has been examined by many scholars who have focused on the development of the CRTC's regulation policies and its relation to the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the 1968 & 1991 *Broadcasting Acts*. These scholars believe that legal pressures directly influenced CRTC policy making. D. Barrett in his, "The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Religious Broadcasting," in *Impact of the New Charter of Rights and Freedoms on Publishing, Broadcasting and Advertising* (Toronto: Canadian Bar Association Ontario, 1982), offers an insightful analysis on *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Broadcasting Act* and the possibility that evangelical groups can litigate against the CRTC by applying certain sections of the Charter to their defense. Andrea Vabalis's, "A 'License in Principle': The Jacobson Case" (paper submitted in completion of course requirements of Communications Law I, University of Toronto, Faculty of Law, 1981) [unpublished] as referenced by Alec Scott, reveals some of the legal issues faced by Canadian Family Radio Ltd. v. CRTC. Also, Paul W. Taylor's, "A Voice Lost, A Vision Realized: The Licensing of Religious Broadcasting in Canada," a study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Communications Studies, University of Calgary, April 1988, asserts that the 'interfaith model' proposed by the CRTC in 1983 would not exist

of thought which seems to be a branch or sub-debate of the “*Charter*-inspired” or legal school of thought, posits that much of the CRTC’s “justification for regulation” on religious broadcasting was rendered unworkable due to a dramatic increase in legal, political, religious and technological pressures.⁷⁵

The CRTC’s policies concerning single-faith broadcasting continue to develop in Canada to this day. In Canada, the monitoring of broadcasting is a federal jurisdiction, subject to the legislation and pronouncements of the federal government. Thus, any examination of single-faith broadcasting requires a historical survey on the federal government’s policies and statutes which have shaped the nature and course of religious broadcasting in Canada. These policies govern the control of private broadcasters, standards for broadcasting licenses and programming content. Invariably, the CRTC’s policies concerning religious broadcasting, has demonstrated that federal regulatory

without the *Charter*. Moreover, Taylor also suggests that the creation of the *Charter* forced the CRTC to deal directly with religious broadcasting. Another study which has used ‘*Charter* and legal-inspired arguments’ is Sheridan Scott’s article, “The New Broadcasting Act: An Analysis,” in *Media & Communications Law Review*, 1991, Scott asserts that the CRTC was under pressure to regionalize much of its activity. This ‘decentralization process’ led the CRTC to certain statutory changes.

⁷⁵ The ‘sub-debate’ mentioned above focuses more on the difficulties of enforcement faced by the CRTC by legal and political pressures, new technologies, and religious organizations protests and pressures. An excellent example on this theme is addressed in Dorothy Zolf and Paul W. Taylor’s article, “Redressing the balance in Canadian broadcasting: A history of religious broadcasting policy in Canada,” in *Studies in Religion*, Vol. 18 No2, 1989. Although Zolf and Taylor discuss the development of the CRTC’s policies and its relation to new legislation, they also reveal how evangelical groups, new technologies, and the interfaith coalition (20 religious groups) pushed for religious broadcasting in Canada. Peter G. Cook & Myles A. Ruggles’s “Balance and Freedom of Speech: Challenge for Canadian Broadcasting,” in *Canadian Journal of Communications*, Vol. 17 No1, 1992, 1-17, also offers an in-depth analysis on the regulatory process of the CRTC and religious broadcasters by examining the issue of ‘balance’ using the 1982 CRTC Public Hearings on Religious Broadcasting to suggest that religious groups had been unfairly constrained in the CRTC’s use utilization of the ‘balance requirement.’ Another excellent study which addresses the reasons on why the CRTC decided to deregulate their religious broadcasting policies is Alec Scott’s, “A New Deal for Religious Broadcasting in Canada? Continuing Political and Legal Pressures to Change,” in *Media and Communications Review*, (189-218), 1994. Scott asserts that the 1991 *Broadcasting Act*, the *Charter of Rights* and the pressure from evangelists was the prime catalyst behind the CRTC’s revisions of their policies. Janet Epp Buckingham’s, “Religious Broadcasting in Canada,” in *Journal of the Church Law Association*, n.p., n.d., gives an excellent analysis on the deregulation of the CRTC’s religious broadcasting policies and the factors which have made the CRTC’s restrictions on religious broadcasting difficult to justify.

bodies throughout the twentieth century were weary of licensing single-faith broadcasters. Moreover, successive publications and pronouncements concerning Christian and multi-faith broadcasting issued by the CRTC and preceding regulatory bodies, not only reinforced the ban on single-faith broadcasting, but also neglected to address the rights of single-faith broadcasters effectively.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, this chapter will briefly elucidate how the CRTC, and its antecedents, effectively placed a ban on single-faith broadcasting through the development of its policies concerning religion and broadcasting. Secondly, this chapter will also illustrate the sudden alteration of the CRTC's religious broadcasting policies between 1981 and 1993 in order to demonstrate the gradual progression in the provision of rights for single-faith broadcasters. Undoubtedly, much of this development was spurred by an amalgamation of religious denominations and an organized evangelical front which exerted a considerable amount of pressure on the CRTC to change its religious broadcasting policies. The final objective of this chapter will examine how the emergence and development of satellite related technologies drastically undermined and altered the CRTC's policies concerning the regulation of broadcasting. In fact, unlicensed evangelical ministers utilized this technology, as a political platform to engage in civil disobedience and political protest in order to pressure the CRTC to revisit and reform its policies concerning religious broadcasting. The leading example of this problem, which this chapter will discuss in some detail, is that of the Western Canadian-based, unlicensed evangelical broadcasters who began to challenge the government in the late 1980s and early 1990s in what is known in evangelical circles as the "Californian TBN re-broadcasting movement."

Justification for Regulation: The development of a federal regulatory body

In creating a regulatory framework for Christian broadcasting, the CRTC and its predecessors, used its policies to reject applications for broadcasting licenses submitted by single-faith broadcasters for many years. Throughout the twentieth-century, the Canadian government has been reluctant to grant broadcasting rights to a religious or political group whose purpose is primarily the promotion of a single perspective.

When the use of radio was first introduced into Canada, the federal government gave the power to control the medium of the radio to the Department of Marine through the *Radiotelegraph Act* of 1913. The Department of Marine was in control of licensing and regulating all radio transmissions in Canada from 1922 until 1932. Initially, during the 1920's, single-faith ownership of radio stations was permitted. In fact, ten Christian stations, which were administered by seven religious groups, were licensed by 1928.⁷⁶ This would all change.

During the 1920s, five radio stations operated by the International Bible Students Association (IBSA, hereinafter) came under the close scrutiny of the federal government because of various complaints that some of their programming was controversial and defamatory to other religious groups. In response to these grievances, the Minister of Marine Pierre-Joseph-Arthur Cardin, decided to revoke all of the Bible Students broadcasting licenses in Canada on March 31, 1928.⁷⁷ Evidently, this action caused a nationwide uproar known as the 'International Bible Students affair.' Many Canadians felt that the government had subjected the Bible Students to censorship and blatant

⁷⁶ Russell Johnston, "The Early Trials of Protestant Radio," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXXV (1994), p.379.

⁷⁷ Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, p.97.

religious discrimination. The federal government was forced to hold public meetings concerning the issue, listen to IBSA sympathizers, deal with the press and debate religious broadcasting in Parliament.

Accordingly, the federal government did not renew the IBSA's radio licenses but promised to investigate the matter through a Royal Commission.⁷⁸ The government appointed a panel of experts to investigate the medium of radio and the impact of radio on Canadians, which resulted in the *Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting*. Through this 30-page document in 1929, the 'Aird' Commission envisioned that a government regulatory apparatus was necessary to "determine how radio broadcasting in Canada could be most effectively carried on in the interests of Canadian listeners and in the national interests of Canada."⁷⁹ Consequently, the Commission drew two important conclusions in 1929 concerning religious broadcasting: a national broadcasting company should monitor all broadcasting, and all controversial perspectives should be monitored. In an attempt to moderate controversial political and religious issues the Commission recommended, "that where religious broadcasting is allowed, there should be regulations prohibiting statements of a controversial nature or one religion making an attack upon the leaders or doctrine of another ... political matters ... should be carefully restricted."⁸⁰

A few years later, the Canadian government under Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, acted on the advice of the *Aird Report* and created one national company, the Canadian Radio

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.102.

⁷⁹ *Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting, Report*. (Ottawa: King's Printer 1929) 1-30 (hereafter cited as *Aird Report*) The object of the Royal Commission was to determine how radio broadcasting in Canada could be most effectively carried on in the interests of Canadian listeners and in the national interests of Canada. The Commission concluded that broadcasting should: be under one national company (CRBC), be a public service, should have Canadian content and should be monitored by government regulatory bodies.

⁸⁰ *Aird Report*, p.13.

Broadcasting Company (CRBC) on May 25, 1932, in order to control the dissemination of radio in Canada. Bennett's government also granted powers to a small regulatory body under control of the CRBC, whose responsibilities included: assigning wave lengths, granting or revoking the licenses, and applying regulations and standards for Canadian broadcasters.⁸¹ Initially, this regulatory process granted only a very limited number of private entrepreneurs the rights to use the airwaves. Although the operations of private broadcasters were in the corporate domain, the CRBC could refuse licenses, could impose CRBC programs and had the power to rent, buy or expropriate private stations all in the name of 'national interest.'⁸²

Although the Bennett government had taken steps to ensure that religious and political groups did not abuse the airwaves, the 'Mr. Sage' broadcast series during the 1935 federal election campaign once again caused a national controversy over what could be expressed over the airwaves.⁸³ One year later, the Liberals under Mackenzie King came into power in 1935 and created the *Broadcasting Act* in 1936. The Act dissolved the CRBC and created the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The act gave the CBC total control over all aspects of monitoring Canadian broadcasting. However, even the CBC was not immune to religious controversy. In 1937, a series of religious broadcasts carried by CRCT, the CBC station in Toronto, became very controversial when religious

⁸¹ Roger Bird, ed., *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*. (Canada: Carleton University Press, 1988), the CBC basically controlled this creation of a regulatory body for broadcasting in 1932 until the late 1950s. Eventually, the CBC lost much of its power due to the proliferation of privately owned stations.

⁸² *ibid.*, p.115.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p.133. The "Mr. Sage" broadcasts was a politically dramatized production which was written by a Toronto advertising firm for the Conservative Party. The series sought to discredit the Liberal Party and Mackenzie King by attacking their political positions.

leaders attacked each other regarding the use of birth control.⁸⁴ Ensuing this, the CBC issued a set of guidelines and principles in 1939 in order to ensure that controversial programs and private broadcasters adhered to their policies.⁸⁵

Coupled with the stock market crash, the Great Depression, the IBSA and Sage incidents, and World War II, the creation of the CBC was the final nail in the coffin for single-faith broadcasters. According to Russell Johnston, most religious denominations at this time, decided to pursue their broadcasting endeavours with the government. The CBC promised these groups free airtime as a “public service” and created, “a state-erected canopy shielding them from costly expenses, innovation, and the frustration of competing head on with sects.”⁸⁶ This development ushered in a 50-year ban on single-faith broadcasting. Because the Minister of Marine had parted with all of the remaining religious broadcasting licenses (taking the last license in 1932), the CBC had a free hand to formulate a new religious broadcasting policy. Since there were no religious broadcasters who possessed a broadcasting license, it was easy for the CBC to create a new policy for religious broadcasting that suited its vision. All effective resistance was gone. Under the CBC’s policies, single-faith broadcasting was outlawed.

⁸⁴ Simpson, “Federal Regulation and Religious Broadcasting in Canada and the United States: A Comparative Sociological Analysis,” p.157. The controversy was started when Rev. Morris Zeidman, a Presbyterian minister aired programs which accused the Catholic faith for their policies regarding birth control.

⁸⁵“CBC Political and controversial broadcasting, policies and rulings,” 21 February 1944 in Roger Bird, ed., *Documents of Canadian Broadcasting*. (Canada: Carleton University Press, 1988), 186. (revised 1944) The policy of the CBC, with regard to controversial broadcasting, is based on the following principles: 1. The air belongs to the people, who are entitled to hear the principal points of view on all questions of importance. 2. The air must not fall under the control of any individuals or groups influential by reason of their wealth or special position....The best safeguard of freedom of discussion is a policy which permits opportunity for the expression of varying points of view.

⁸⁶ Russell Johnston, “The Early Trials of Protestant Radio, 1922-39,” p.402.

There were three reasons why the CBC decided to discourage single-faith broadcasting. First, radio broadcasts that were considered ‘controversial’ caused too many problems. The CBC felt that religious and political groups (whose mission was to discredit other groups) had abused the medium of radio. Since many evangelical groups used the medium of radio as a forum to proselytize or discredit other religious beliefs, the CBC decided that these broadcasters should not be licensed. Secondly, the CBC did not want any organization or privileged groups to monopolize the radio especially if they were able to buy multiple radio stations to disseminate their views. The CBC simply did not want another “IBSA affair” so they created policies that would ensure that religious or political groups could not own their own radio stations. Lastly, the CBC developed the notion that radio stations should provide a “balanced” format on issues that revolved around religion and politics in order to ensure that all viewpoints were expressed to the Canadian public. Evidently, the notion of “balancing” would gradually become part of the CBC’s policies and became enshrined in Canadian law under Section 2 (d) of the 1968 *Broadcasting Act*.⁸⁷

For almost thirty years, all regulation of broadcasting was controlled and monopolized by a small regulatory body administered by the direction of the CBC. Although the Canadian government took some control away from the CBC by creating the Board of

⁸⁷ *Broadcasting Act 1968*, Section 2 (d): The programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied and comprehensive and should provide reasonable, balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on matter of public concern, and the programming provided by each broadcaster should be of high standard, using predominately Canadian [content].

Broadcast Governors (BBG) in 1958,⁸⁸ and the CRTC in 1968, both regulatory bodies continued to exercise the ban on religious broadcasters.

Ultimately, the struggle for single-faith broadcasting simply disappeared in the regulatory web created by the CBC and other preceding federal regulatory bodies. Round one for the fight for single-faith broadcasting had gone to the government.

The incipient development of the Canadian 'electric church'

Years went by before the issue of single-faith broadcasting would again reach the attention of the federal government. With the introduction of satellite technology, community cable and pay TV into Canadian broadcasting during late 1970s, some deep fissures began to appear in the regulatory apparatus put in place many years ago by the CRTC and its antecedents. These fault-lines became increasingly apparent in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the CRTC was forced to deal with a dramatic influx of American programming in the Canadian radio and television broadcasting system. One of the consequences of this development caused a tremendous amount of conflict between Canadian religious broadcasters and the CRTC concerning the representation of religion on the medium of radio and television in Canada.

During the late 1970s, a cultural wave of the American 'electric church' phenomenon began to inundate the Canadian broadcasting system. This process was facilitated through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) *laissez faire* approach to American religious broadcasting. In 1960, the U.S. federal regulatory body on broadcasting decided

⁸⁸ For religious broadcasting decisions during the existence of the BBG, See A. W. Ness & Associates and Parker & Associates, *60 BBG Decisions*, January 30, 1960; and Dixon & Associates and Radio Richmond Hill Ltd., *65 BBG Transcripts*, July 5, 1965, as referenced by Dorothy Zolf and Paul W. Taylor in , "Redressing the balance in Canadian broadcasting: A History of religious broadcasting policy in Canada," p.158.

to liberalize regulations on religious broadcasting by removing the requirement where a station had to provide religious groups with free air-time.⁸⁹ This caused a dramatic increase in paid-time religious broadcasting where evangelical broadcasters filled the American broadcasting system with their programs while mainline denominations witnessed the declension of their own broadcasting pursuits due to the costs of commercial airtime.⁹⁰ In addition, the FCC also decided not to interfere with religious broadcasting because they believed that the issues of religion were not equated with social controversy. Accordingly, the U.S. equivalent of the “balance” provision outlined in the CRTC’s religious broadcasting policies and enshrined under Canadian law in subsequent *Broadcasting Acts* was the “Fairness Doctrine” of the FCC, which was abandoned in the early 1960s.⁹¹ Under these liberalizing policies, evangelical broadcasting in the United States flourished. With little federal interference, evangelical religious broadcasters quickly filled the American broadcasting system with Protestant fundamentalism by buying immense amounts of airtime from commercial stations and through developing their own broadcasting networks.

In addition, many American televangelists such as Pat Robertson (Christian Broadcasting System), Jim Bakker (PTL Inspirational Network) Rex Humbard, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell and groups of other televangelists also utilized satellite technology to build massive Christian corporations. By the end of 1980, there were approximately 30 television religious stations, four major religious networks and over a 1000 religious

⁸⁹ Horsefield, *Religious Television: The American Experience*, p.14.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, p.63.

⁹¹ *ibid*, p.14.

radio stations across the continent of the United States.⁹² Some of these evangelists were able to secure their own religious stations and UHF channels which allowed them to decrease their dependency on the process of syndication because they did not have to pay for the high costs of buying airtime from other commercial stations or mass produce syndicated broadcasts.⁹³ Also, the creation of satellites also offered many of these religious broadcasters greater scheduling flexibility for religious programs which were previously confined to the “religious ghetto” of late nights and weekend mornings. Consequently, with this new technology, American evangelical broadcasters were able to broadcast their Christian television programs on American stations which were broadcasted into Canadian homes. In addition, American broadcasters also bought a tremendous amount of Canadian airtime from Canadian networks through the process of syndication. In fact, as one writer aptly stated about the development, “[even] secular television networks have had to ponder on what has made the phenomenal growth of Christian networks over the last four years.”⁹⁴ This ‘electric church’ phenomenon was described by another writer as a process that, “long ago was only seen Sunday mornings sandwiched in between cartoons... which has [now] moved into daily programming.”⁹⁵

On the other hand, many Canadian religious broadcasters and individuals who were interested in expanding Canadian Christian radio and television were faced with; religious denominations uninterested in communications, limited access to the Canadian

⁹² CCCIA, Bruce Ward, “Evangelists begin holy war of the airwaves,” *Toronto Star*, 11 January 1982, n.p.

⁹³ Jeffrey K. Hadden, “The Globalization of American Televangelism,” (1-16), p. 9.
<<http://www.religiousbroadcasting.lib.virginia/>>.

⁹⁴ CCCIA, Paul McGrath, “And Now... Here’s God,” *Fanfare*, 3 March 1979, n.p.

⁹⁵ CCCIA, Alf Burman, “More and More Christian programs being shown,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 14 November 1977, n.p.

broadcasting system, continued license denials, and increased competition for air-time caused by American televangelism.

With the inundation of American evangelical broadcasting in the Canadian broadcasting system and the advent of Canada's only daily religious program *100 Huntley Street* in 1977, mainline Protestantism, Catholicism and other religious groups had realized that they had been left behind in the new 'electric church' phenomenon. Although the CBC and other commercial networks provided free airtime to religious broadcasters as a public service (which usually ended up in the religious 'ghetto' time of Sunday mornings or other undesirable time-slots), the only religious group that seemed satisfied with this arrangement were Canadian Catholics. In Canada, many Catholics clergymen and laymen were satisfied with their share of Masses on the CBC and the representation of their public opinions on the CBC and CTV News networks.⁹⁶

And yet, many mainline Protestant denominations that had evangelistic elements in their congregations wished to have more representation in the Canadian broadcasting system. For instance, many members of the United Church of Canada wanted more representation in the Canadian broadcasting system. Kenneth Bannel, former editor of the *United Observer*, wrote in the review section of the *Observer* opining that, "major churches.... have left the field of [television] to one enterprising man [David Mainse] who in a short time may be suggesting to people across Canada every morning that the essence of the gospel is getting saved and sitting tight."⁹⁷ Although many United Church members wanted their own religious views expressed on television, the United Church was unwilling to utilize television at this time. For instance, United Church minister

Berkley Reynolds wanted to create and build an evangelistic television ministry to represent the United Church of Canada. However, in a controversial decision in 1980, the United church decided to deny Reynolds any television ministry.⁹⁸ In addition, some Anglicans also wanted more representation using radio and television but individuals like Anglican Bishop Garnsworthy of Toronto deplored using television to proselytize.⁹⁹ These types of decisions and sentiments by the United Church and other mainline denominations revealed that many mainline denominations were generally indifferent to utilizing radio and television to enhance their church ministries. Ultimately, many Canadians criticized mainline Protestantism and Catholicism because of their failure to effectively, “understand and use modern communications systems.”¹⁰⁰

As a result of the increase in American programming in the Canadian broadcasting system, many religious broadcasters were faced with an increased reduction in acquiring airtime for their programs. With the expanding commercial market of television and radio, many Canadian religious broadcasters were forced to produce syndicated broadcasts, purchase airtime from other television networks, and were barred from owning their own radio or television stations due to the CRTC's ban on single-faith broadcasting. In addition, many of the time slots from the CBC, commercial stations and community radio and television were no longer available to religious broadcasters. Many Canadian religious broadcasters felt that there were being ‘black-balled’ and believed

⁹⁶ CCCIA, Father Meehan, “The Church in the ‘80s,” *Catholics Times*, Summer 1980, n.p.

⁹⁷ CCCIA, Kenneth Banell, “Going Ahead in Television,” *United Observer*, December, 1977, n.p.

⁹⁸ CCCIA, Diane Francis, “Gimme that prime-time religion,” *Maclean's*, 28 April 1980, n.p.

⁹⁹ CCCIA, Bryan Whittaker, “100 Huntley Street A Friendly Address,” *London Free Press*, 29 November 1980, n.p.

¹⁰⁰ CCCIA, Rev. Timothy Foley, “The media aren't tools of the devil,” *Toronto Star*, 28 April 1979, n.p.

that the government had reneged on its promise to provide adequate airtime to religious broadcasters as a “public service.”

Another area of contention between religious broadcasters and the CRTC was the denials of two controversial licenses during the early 1980s. The CRTC denied two single-faith licenses; one in 1980, the second in 1981. The first license denial was for an FM station in Vancouver. Initially, the Commission had approved “in principle” a license for Canadian Family Radio Ltd. However, after a public hearing, the CRTC decided not to license the station on the grounds that, “the public property comprised by the radio frequency spectrum should not be used for narrow or sectarian purposes....”¹⁰¹

Although Canadian Family Radio Ltd., and Ralph Jacobson appealed to the Federal Court of Appeal; the court upheld the CRTC decision.¹⁰² Another license denial that caused some controversy was an application submitted by Crossroads Christian Communications Inc, for a television-broadcasting network. Many evangelicals thought that David Mainse’s application would be accepted because much of his programming was considered excellent and family oriented. However, in April 1981 the application of CCCI was also denied.¹⁰³

Finally, many Canadians began to financially support American ministries causing the price of airtime to increase for Canadian religious broadcasters. In addition, American ministries also accumulated millions of dollars of revenue from the outflow of money from Canadians that further perpetuated the growth of American evangelical broadcasting in Canada. In 1979, for example, Canadians had spent 15 million dollars on

¹⁰¹ CRTCLA, *Decision* 80-423, p.4.

¹⁰² *Canadian Family Radio Ltd. V. CRTC*, unreported, Federal Court of Appeal No. A-689-80, October 6, 1981, leave to appeal to the SCC rejected [1982] 1 S.C.R. vi.

televangelist ministries with the majority of the money going to American televangelists. In 1979, CCCI accumulated 5.5 million dollars from Canadians while American televangelists such as Rex Humbard reported revenues of 3.35 million; Oral Roberts, 1.7 million; Pat Robertson, 1.5 million, and Jimmy Bakker with 1.8 million.¹⁰⁴ The immediate consequences of these developments caused a deluge of American evangelical fundamentalism and holy-roller rhetoric to seep into Canada's airwaves through the medium of television and radio. American evangelical programs characterized by the fundamentalist personas and sun-belt televangelism of Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Jerry Falwell, Robert Schuller, Kenneth Copeland, Peter Popoff, Jimmy Bakker, and Pat Robertson and countless other televangelists soon became the 'spam' in the television industry in Canada which glutted the airwaves with American right-winged fundamentalism.

The CRTC initiates a public discourse with religious broadcasters: The 1982 Public Hearings on Religious Broadcasting

Evidently, the CRTC in the early 1980s was caught in a pincer movement. On one side, Canadian religious broadcasters and other commercial broadcasters increasingly began to pressure the CRTC to change its regulation policies. On the other side, the inexorable march of technology and the continued Americanization of broadcasting had undermined the traditional basis for regulating Christian broadcasting. To the CRTC, the development of satellite technologies further complicated matters in regulating religious broadcasting; to many evangelical broadcasters, it was a chance to build independent enterprises on the countless number of radio and television frequencies that had been

¹⁰³ CRTCLA, *Decision* 81-259.

made available through the technological development of broadcasting. Consequently, after a 53-year ban on religious broadcasting, the CRTC, on 17 August 1981, announced that it would hold a public hearing on religious broadcasting. The hearing was held in Ottawa during the week of 26 January 1982, which received more than 1500 submissions reflecting a wide range of perspectives.

During the five-day public hearings in January of 1982, the CRTC heard from approximately forty groups and many individuals. Interestingly, before the public hearings were opened, evangelicals garnished support for their cause for single-faith broadcasting by mailing in interventions to the CRTC, issuing a petition containing 210,000 signatures, and lobbying MPs and Senators to represent their grievances.¹⁰⁵

There was a wide spectrum of perspectives during the hearings as to the scope of religious broadcasting. On one side of the debate, evangelical groups demanded that the CRTC deregulate its religious broadcasting policies. Evangelicals argued that the CRTC's ban on religious broadcasters constituted a form of censorship and discrimination. On the other side of the debate, minority religious groups having little interest in the electronic media argued that licensing single-faith broadcasters contravened Section 3 (d) of the *Broadcasting Act*.¹⁰⁶ In the middle of these two perspectives, traditional Christian mainline denominations represented as a collective body under a group called "Interchurch Communication," opined for a "middle ground."

¹⁰⁴ Elaine Carey, "The Mainse Chance: How a preacher's prayers were answered and his church went straight into "show business," *The Toronto Star*, 30 September 1979, p.C3.

¹⁰⁵ Douglas Barrett, "The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Religious Broadcasting," 4 June 1982 [unpublished], p.8.

¹⁰⁶ *Broadcasting Act 1968*, Section 3 (d). The programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should be varied and comprehensive and should provide reasonable balanced opportunity for the expression of differing views on matters of public concern, and the programming provided by each broadcaster should be of high standard, using predominantly Canadian creative and other resources.

The Interchurch Communication (who represented the religious denominations of the United, Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist and Lutheran churches) wanted the CRTC to continue to monitor broadcasting. However, they also wanted more access for religion in the Canadian broadcasting system to reflect, “the variety of religious interests in Canada.”¹⁰⁷

Despite the disagreements between participants during the hearings, most religious groups unanimously agreed that there was an under-representation of religion in the Canadian broadcasting system. In the background of the public hearings, the CRTC was very aware that an emerging *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* could render many of its policies and decisions unconstitutional. Thereupon, the CRTC was increasingly pressed by the *Charter*, technological change, religious groups and private citizens to change its religious broadcasting policies. A year later, the CRTC decided to change its religious broadcasting policies.

Public Notice CRTC 1983-112

In 1983, the CRTC decided to change its religious broadcasting policies and released Public Notice CRTC 1983-112 as a call for applications for a satellite-to-cable interfaith religious programming service. The CRTC developed three criteria for consideration. Primarily, among these was a desire to provide multi-faith programming where a diversity of opinions would be expressed to the Canadian public. The CRTC envisaged a television or radio service that “[was] a predominantly Canadian, national, satellite-delivered interfaith programming service that would be varied and comprehensive,

¹⁰⁷ CCCIA, Tom Bentley, *The Observer*, November 1981, n.p.

reflecting equitably the religious practices and beliefs of Canadians.”¹⁰⁸ As a concept, ‘multi-faith programming’ was never clearly defined, although initially the Commission held fast to stringent government regulations such as ‘balancing’ with reference to religious television broadcasting.¹⁰⁹ Second, the Commission also concluded that the ownership structure of the religious broadcaster had to be broadly representative of many religious groups in Canada.¹¹⁰ Third, the Commission concluded that any license pursuant had to provide a broadcasting format that was predominately Canadian.¹¹¹

Given Canada’s long history of religious controversy, it was perhaps understandable that the CRTC was reluctant to deal with single-faith religious broadcasting. Evidently, the CRTC did not want to be held accountable for which religious organizations received licenses and which did not. In the CRTC’s opinion, the only option was a multi-faith station that would produce multi-faith religious programming which would be owned by representatives of many religious faiths. The CRTC realized that as long as evangelical or other single-faith broadcast ministries continued to buy their airtime from commercial stations, there existed a convenient buffer between the watching public and the CRTC. Complaints could be referred to the originating stations, and the stations themselves would continue to take responsibility for their clients’ programs.

Alternatively, the CRTC could have dispensed with its discretionary power simply by licensing every feasible religious license pursuant that applied. However, this option had

¹⁰⁸ CTRCLA, *Public Notice* 1983-112. (1-10) Religious Broadcasting: Licensing Policy and Call for Applications for a Satellite-to-Cable, Interfaith Religious Programming Service. 2 June 1983, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ CTRCLA, *Public Notice* 1983-112 p. 2. The CRTC’s policy is based upon Section 3 of the *Broadcasting Act*, which states that the programming content on television should provide the Canadian public with the expression of differing views concerning issues of public concern. Consequently, the Commission maintained its policy in 1983 by not licensing any new AM, FM or TV undertakings for the purpose of providing a religious programming service.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 6.

its own dangers that arose from the state of radio and television in the 1980s. Licensing too many over-the-air radio or television stations in a municipality could have threatened the economic viability of other commercial stations operating in the same market. As such, to license all religious groups would have threatened the current structure of Canadian broadcasting by weakening an already perilous financial foundation. Likewise, many of the religious organizations and individuals who were applying for these licenses were not solidly funded enough to receive their own broadcasting station.

As it turned out, the CRTC initially chose another route; it chose not to license any religious groups at all. The Commission believed that there was an insufficient amount of public frequencies for religious broadcasting for both radio and television and concluded that, “over-the-air public frequencies are limited, particularly in the larger markets.... Since there are not enough frequencies in most communities to accommodate all groups, the Commission concluded that none should be licensed.”¹¹²

The development of Canada's first religious television channel: Vision TV

After a few years, however, the tune of the CRTC in licensing religious broadcasters changed when a consortium of religious faith groups, known as the Canadian Interfaith Network (CIN), began to organize communication specialists, researchers (such as the Roswell Group), religious leaders, lay people and multi-faith organizations in order to form a support system for the sole purpose of producing, developing and distributing multifaith programming on Canadian television. This project was called Animation and Consultation on Religious Networking (ACORN), which attempted to unite all religious denominations under its umbrella in the hope of receiving an over-the-air television

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p.7.

license from the CRTC and to proportionately split the cost of the channel with all participating faith groups.

At first, many religious denominations supported the project. For instance, in 1983, CCCI decided to support the project by purchasing over \$1,000,000 in broadcasting equipment from C-Channel's bankrupt studios for the purpose of providing broadcasting equipment to whatever religious group received a satellite channel from the CRTC.¹¹³ However, four years later, CCCI withdrew from the interfaith project because of a series of American televangelist scandals which rocked the electronic church industry in 1987 and 1988.¹¹⁴ This particularly crippled the interfaith project as CCCI was slated to pay 6.6 million dollars to help launch and underwrite Vision TV.¹¹⁵ In addition, to CCCI's withdrawal from the project, the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches of Canada also withdrew their support for the project.

Nevertheless, Reverend William F. Lowe, chairman of the executive committee for the CIN, filed an application with the CRTC for a license to operate a satellite-delivered religious television station when the CRTC issued Public Notice 1986-199.¹¹⁶ One year later, the CRTC granted the CIN a broadcasting license on December 1, 1987. The CRTC was quite "satisfied" with its decision and praised the CIN for, "the tremendous dedication, initiative and dedication and sustained effort,"¹¹⁷ in the CIN's proposal to the

¹¹² *ibid.*, p.3.

¹¹³ CCCIA, Robert J. Sawyer, "Preaching to the Converters," *Broadcaster*, August 1984, p.6.

¹¹⁴ CCCIA, "Crossroads Withdraws from VISION-TV," *Advertiser Post*, North Batteford, 4 May 1987, n.p.

¹¹⁵ CCCIA, Canadian Press, Evening-Times Globe, Saint John & New Brunswick, 13 April 1993, n.p.

¹¹⁶ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1986-199. Call for Applications for Network Licenses to Offer Canadian Specialty Programming Services. 13 August 1986. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/1986/PB86-199.HTM>>.

¹¹⁷ CRTCEA, *Decision* 87-900. Approved Application for Canadian Interfaith Network. December 1, 1987. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/eng/decisions/1987/DB87-900.htm>>.

Commission. Consequently, this decision paved the way for the development of Canada's first multi-faith television network that went on the air September 1, 1988.¹¹⁸

The television station Vision TV is the first religious broadcaster to receive a broadcasting license since 1928. Vision TV is the only multi-faith and multi-cultural network in the world. Vision TV's mission is dedicated to, "presenting programs that celebrate Canada's diversity and to promote understanding and tolerance between people of different faiths and cultures."¹¹⁹ Accordingly, Vision TV provides exactly what the CRTC and much of what the Canadian public wants; to provide religious broadcasting and other programming fare that gives an outlet for multi-faith viewpoints within a broader multi-faith context.

Hence, here was a successful and cooperative model of Christian broadcasting. At this time, many religious groups were ecstatic about Vision TV and several single-faith broadcasters such as Crossroads Communications Inc. and Trinity Television Inc. were willing to syndicate their programs to Vision TV for production. And yet, despite Vision TV's auspicious beginnings, many single-faith broadcasters remained aloof to the advent of Vision TV. Why did evangelical or other single-faith broadcasters not fully support Vision TV?

There were several reasons for this reluctance. The most obvious reason was that single-faith broadcasters were not given any licenses for any television or AM/FM radio undertaking. Many evangelical broadcasters felt that the multifaith group CIN was predisposed to acquiring the license because they were able to meet all the requirements

¹¹⁸ PAOCA, "First multifaith television founded," January/February 1990.

¹¹⁹ "VISION TV FACTS: What is Vision TV," p. 1. Vision TV Official Website. <<http://www.visiontv.ca/about-visiontv/facts/>>.

even before the CRTC issued Public Notice 1983-112. According to evangelicals and other single-faith organizations, the CRTC's decision to license CIN was a clear signal to single-faith broadcasters that single-faith broadcasting licenses would be rejected while multi-faith religious stations would be licensed. In fact, many evangelicals viewed the Vision TV license as an attempt by the CRTC to stall and block applications by evangelicals groups. Secondly, single-faith broadcasters could not meet two of the CRTC's policies; balancing and multifaith ownership. Since most single-faith broadcasters did not have a multi-faith ownership structure or produced programming that was multi-faith, 'balanced' and non-controversial, they had no chance in receiving a broadcasting license. Finally, many evangelical and single-faith broadcasters wanted their own stations for the simple fact that acquiring a television or radio station and having a 24 hour channel was more economically viable than producing shows for syndication and buying expensive airtime from other commercial television stations. Although many of these evangelical and single-faith broadcasters are registered charities, the opportunity to expand would greatly enhance the scope of their ministries.

Unfortunately for these broadcasters, the CRTC would not license any single-faith broadcasters at this time. Consequently, the CRTC's policies on religious broadcasting caused a tremendous amount of resentment among single-faith and evangelical broadcasters. Many evangelical Canadians wanted to emulate the broadcasting practices of their American broadcasters and still continued to apply for broadcasting licenses in Western Canada and Ontario in the late 1980s, only finding out (much to their chagrin), that their applications were all being denied. Another matter which also cast a dim shadow on the hopes of Canadian evangelical broadcasters was the highly publicized

American televangelist fiascos of 1987 and 1988. These series of infamous sex and money scandals caused by the antics of Jimmy Swaggart, Jimmy Bakker and Oral Roberts further complicated matters for Canadian evangelicals. In fact, it created a devastating wake for Canadian evangelicals who were interested in developing radio or television broadcasting in Canada. For instance, the Jimmy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart scandals caused donations to the program *100 Huntley Street* to drop by 40 percent that pushed CCCI's 13.5 million-dollar year electric church to the brink of bankruptcy.¹²⁰ With the scandals imbedded in the national consciousness of North Americans, it was highly doubtful that Canadian single-faith broadcasting in Canada would sprout in an environment which had recently become extremely distrustful of the electronic church. However, this would all change.

New technologies, new developments

The evolution of satellite-related technologies changed the whole concept and dissemination of broadcasting. With the inception of satellite-to-cable technology and the creation of the CRTC's "Specialty Services" in the late 1980s,¹²¹ many new options were created in the Canadian broadcasting system. In addition to these developments, multi delivery media, digital compression, transactional delivery, pay-per-view, digital radio streams and direct-to-home satellite (DTH) distribution, revealed to many Canadians that conventional over-the-air TV broadcasting was not as an important and scarce resource as it was in the early 1980s. These technologies utterly destroyed the notion of spectrum scarcity as hundreds of new television channels and radio frequencies were created due to

¹²⁰ CCCIA, Michael McAteer, "Evangelists blame Canadian woes on US scandals," *The Toronto Star*, 28 April 1987, n.p.

these technical innovations. The development of these satellite-related technologies re-enforced and heightened the continued inundation of American direct-to-home satellites broadcasting American signals into Canada's airwaves. American cable networks also announced that its 'Death-stars' would also provide 500 more channels into the American broadcasting system.

Consequently, thousands of Canadians in the late 1980s and early 1990s seized the opportunity to capture these signals and bought satellite dishes *en masse* to illegally broadcast these signals into their homes. Evidently, this activity was in direct violation of the *Radiocommunications Act* as defined in section 9 1(c) of the Act.¹²² Suffice it to say, the purchase and distribution of illegal satellite-related technologies was neither condemned nor condoned by the Canadian government. Although these activities contravened Canadian law and were considered a federal offense, the Canadian government rarely enforced this law. This technological development soon reached the hands of unlicensed evangelical ministers who would use this technology as a political platform to pressure the CRTC's into changing its policies concerning single-faith ownership of television and radio stations.

The TBN rebroadcasters: A civil disobedience movement in Western Canada

During the late 1980s, the response to the CRTC's denial of single-faith licenses for television stations caused a handful of Alberta and Saskatchewan 'pirate' broadcasters to

¹²¹ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1986-199. 13 August, 1986. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/ENG/Notices/1986/PB86-199.htm>>.

¹²² *Radiocommunications Act* 1991, Section 9 1(C): No person shall decode an encrypted subscription programming signal or encrypted network feed otherwise than under and in accordance with an authorization from a lawful distributor of the signal or feed. Section 9.1 Every person who contravenes subsection 9 (1.1) or (2) is guilty of an offense punishable on summary conviction and liable a) in the case of an individual, to a fine not exceeding twenty-thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to both.

begin re-broadcasting American religious services from Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) of Santa Ana, California. Much of this movement was spear-headed by Ken Groening, a Manitoba agribusiness man, who worked with several Western Canadian charismatic ministers on a 'civil disobedience project' to rebroadcast TBN signals onto unused Canadian channels.¹²³ TBN's television programming is a mélange of religious programs which include Benny Hinn's healing ministries, Pat Robertson's program *700 Club*, John Hagee's evangelical ministries, James Robinson's program *Life Today*, and countless other in-house and syndicated religious programs.¹²⁴ The American religious station TBN encouraged the broadcasters to perform this illegal activity by offering technical and moral support. TBN supplied the 'pirate' rebroadcasters with rebroadcasting transmitters that Ken Groening then leased to charismatic leaders for a dollar a year.¹²⁵ Groening admitted to the CRTC that TBN was involved in these activities by stating, "The transmitters, the hardware was given to us and it was up to us to find a way of getting it assembled....then turned over to the people."¹²⁶ This became known in evangelical circles as the 'Californian TBN movement.'

Other evangelicals, who were not affiliated with Ken Groening, also began to rebroadcast American religious programs with low powered equipment on UHF channels into local areas of rural Alberta and Saskatchewan.¹²⁷ Many of these individuals erected satellite dishes on top of grain silos, elevators and terminals in order to receive signals

¹²³ Lloyd Mackey, "Canada Opens Airwaves To Christian Broadcasting: Single-Faith Channels May Seek Licensing. After 60-Year Ban," *New Network International New Service*, 12 July 1993, p. 7.

¹²⁴ TBN Official Website <<http://www.tbn.org>>.

¹²⁵ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Edmonton Public Licensing Hearing*. Edmonton. 14 Jan 1992, Brief by Russell Pearson and Ken Groening.

¹²⁶ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*. Winnipeg, 29 October 1992. Brief by Ken Groening and Gavin Wood of Life Broadcasting.

from the 'ether' that originated from California. At least a total of 16 known unlicensed vigilante broadcasters were participating in this unlawful act.¹²⁸ Many of these broadcasters were evangelical pastors in local evangelical congregations. Among them were Reverend David Bounds of Lloydminster, Reverend Dick DeWeert of Lethbridge, Roy Bayer of Medicine Hat, Ken Sweigard of Grand Prairie, and Russell Pearson of Edmonton.¹²⁹ Consequently, this activity was illegal and the CRTC issued licensing pamphlets, letters, and cease and desist orders to stop the dissemination of illegal broadcasts into the eyes and ears of the Canadian public.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, most of the rebroadcasting still continued unabated. As a result, the RCMP seized hundreds of thousands of dollars of rebroadcasting equipment and arrested, charged, and fined a few individuals who were partaking in this activity.

Ensuing these seizures, the CRTC issued Public Hearing notices to seven of the unlicensed broadcasters to appear in Edmonton on 14 January 1992, to give cause for their illegal activities. The Commission wanted to, "enquire into, hear and determine whether a mandatory order should be issued requiring certain operators to cease and

¹²⁷ "Spicer yields to religious pressure: CRTC liberates Christian broadcasters into an obstacle course of red tape and restrictions," *Western Report*, v.8 (21) 21 June 1993, p.21.

¹²⁸ "Christian broadcasters plan CRTC suit," *Calgary Herald*, 27 April 1992, p.B5.

¹²⁹ Peter Taylor, "Matthew, Mark Luke and Ottawa: Alberta Christian broadcasters will face jail in January," *Alberta Report*, 30 December 1991, p.19.

¹³⁰ *Broadcasting Act 1991*, Section 32: Every person who, not being exempt from the requirement to hold a license, carries on a broadcasting undertaking without a license is therefore guilty of an offense punishable on summary conviction and is liable (a) in a case of an individual, to a fine not exceeding twenty thousand dollars for each day that the offense continues (b) in the case of a corporation, to a fine not exceeding two hundred thousand dollars for each day that the offence continues. *UN Declaration on Human Rights*, Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this rights includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, prayer, worship and observance.

desist operating broadcasting undertakings.”¹³¹ As a result of the notices, three of the illegal broadcasters decided to comply with the CRTC and stopped their illegal activities.¹³² Accordingly, only four TBN rebroadcasters were represented in the Edmonton licensing hearings. During the hearings, the CRTC listened to the arguments presented by four unlicensed operators: Russell Pearson, Dick Dewert, Ken Sweigard and David Bounds. However, much of the meeting turned into a ‘make-shift’ revival meeting where 800 evangelical supporters decided to use this opportunity to pray, sing and yell during the duration of the proceedings.¹³³ In fact, the proceedings were interrupted many times by loud inaudible jeers from the crowd. What was supposed to be a routine licensing hearing turned out to be a public discussion on the CRTC’s religious broadcasting policies. At length, throughout the meeting, evangelical broadcasters and concerned citizens claimed that the CRTC’s regulatory policies in stopping unlicensed broadcasters in receiving American satellite signals from TBN, violated their rights under section 2 (a) and (b) and 15 (1) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and Article 18 of the *U.N. Declaration of Human Rights*.¹³⁴ Furthermore, they argued that the satellite signals that they were re-broadcasting were not “foreign” or “American” but

¹³¹ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1992-34. (1-4) Mandatory Orders Issued Pursuant to Subsection 12 (2) of the Broadcasting Act Concerning the Operations of Unlicensed Undertakings at Edmonton, Lethbridge, Grand Prairie, Alberta; and Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, 8 May 1992, p.1. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/1992/PB92-34.htm>>.

¹³² *ibid.*, These individuals were rebroadcasting American entertainment programs and were not affiliated with the TBN rebroadcasting effort.

¹³³ Bob Harvey, “Mining a miracle,” *Faith Today*, March/April (18-20), p.19.

¹³⁴ *Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms* 1982, sec. 2 (a): Everyone has the following freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press, and other media of communication. sec. 15 (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. *UN Declaration of Human Rights* 1948, Article (18): Everyone has the right of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief,

“Christian.” Many of these evangelical Christians sincerely felt the government was attempting to apply censorship to their religious beliefs and thought that the government would fine and imprison their ministers. Ken Sweigard exemplified this belief by stating, “It was a terrible shock. I’m threatened with \$20, 000 dollars. I thought, my God, what are you trying to do to a preacher anyhow? This is the suit that was given to me?”¹³⁵

Nevertheless, after a few of months of deliberation, the CRTC issued Public Notice 1992-34 on May 8, 1992, and concluded, “no matter what the programming of the undertaking is, the operator must obtain a license or fall within an exemption.”¹³⁶ The CRTC issued “mandatory orders” to the unlicensed broadcasters and ordered them to, “cease and desist carrying on a broadcasting undertaking....or anywhere else in Canada, except in compliance with the Broadcasting Act.”¹³⁷ No doubt influenced by the TBN rebroadcasters, the CRTC also issued a Notice of a Public hearing which was released simultaneously with the ‘mandatory orders,’ in order to re-open public discussions on their religious broadcasting policy.¹³⁸ In fact, in a carefully prepared new release the CRTC claimed that the, “Commission certainly took the comments made at the public [Edmonton] hearing into account in deciding it was time to review the policy.”¹³⁹

In response to the CRTC’s “mandatory orders,” a couple of TBN religious rebroadcasters decided to take legal action against the CRTC alleging its policies

and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

¹³⁵ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Edmonton Public Licensing Hearings*. Edmonton. 14 January 1992, Brief by Ken Sweigard.

¹³⁶ CRTCEA, *Public Notice 1992-34 (1-4)*, p.2.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ CRTCEA, *Notice of Public Hearing CRTC 1992-8. Review of the Policy on Religious Broadcasting May 8, 1992. The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Hearings/1992/N-92-8.htm>>.

discriminated against evangelical Christians. Russell Pearson and Ken Sweigard decided to file suits against the CRTC claiming that the CRTC's licensing policies violated Section 2 and Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which guarantees freedom of religion and equality.¹⁴⁰ A month later on June 25, Ken Groening, president of Life Broadcasting and Inspiration Television, also decided to file a claim against the CRTC claiming that the RCMP and federal Communications officials illegally seized five transmitters from five of his re-broadcasting outlets.¹⁴¹

In addition to litigation, these Western Canadian broadcasters attempted to foster support for their cause by mailing hundreds of petitions, organizing support through churches, para-church organizations, and exploiting the media all in the attempt to pressure the CRTC to change its licensing policies. In fact, a documentary aired on a Christian television station in the United States (TBN) that devoted an episode on their show *Liberty, Life and Family* on the plight of these Alberta broadcasters. The broadcast showed how the Federal Department of Communications was issuing cease and desist orders and "viciously" seizing hundreds of dollars worth of equipment from Alberta evangelical churches.¹⁴²

In 1992, the plight of the Western Canadian broadcasters also reached the attention of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) which is a grassroots legal pressure group founded by televangelist Pat Robertson, CEO of the Christian Broadcasting

¹³⁹ CRTCLA, CRTC News Release, "Religious Broadcasting Review and Decision on Mandatory Orders" Ottawa.

¹⁴⁰ Kim Hazelwood, "The Vision' network hasn't any: Lawbreaking Christian broadcasters sue the CRTC," *Alberta Report*, 11 May, 1992, p. 41. Evidently, both Russell Pearson and Ken Sweigard's litigation suits against the CRTC were dropped. There was no constitutional footing for their arguments, their counsel recommended closure.

¹⁴¹ Doug Koop, "Christian re-broadcasters take the CRTC to Court," in *Christian Week* 14 July 1992, p. 8.

¹⁴² "The fight for a TV pulpit," *Western Report*, v8.(19) 7 June 1993, p. 37.

Network (CBN). A Canadian evangelical lawyer Gerard Guay, decided to represent some of these rebroadcasters and began to work directly with Jay Sekulow, head of the ACLJ. Sekulow mobilized the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) and created the Canadian Centre For Law & Justice (CCLJ).¹⁴³ The purpose of the CCLJ was to represent conservative Christians in lobbying the government to deal with issues related to family, religion, and life.¹⁴⁴ Guay and some of the TBN rebroadcasters began to put together a court challenge against the CRTC policies that stipulated that single-faith operators could not own or operate a radio or television station. Much of the argument was centered on the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Under the leadership of Jay Sekulow and with the direction of Gerard Guay, four lawyers set up an office complex in Hull, Quebec, to challenge the CRTC's broadcasting policies.

In summation, the Western Canadian rebroadcasters had taken a stand against the government. Although many considered these 'pirate' rebroadcasters itinerant 'bible thumpers,' and their activities were considered as a flagrant act of civil disobedience, their impact was great. An immediate consequence of their actions led the Commission to hold two public hearings in October in 1992 in Ottawa and Winnipeg, in order to revisit its policy on religious broadcasting. For the most part, the rebroadcasters had effectively succeeded in challenging and annoying the CRTC with civil disobedience, petitions, letters, bad press, pressure groups and litigation. When the CRTC decided to 'crack down' on the TBN rebroadcasters especially after issuing 'mandatory orders,'

¹⁴³ The American Center for Law and Justice Official Website. <<http://www.aclj.org/>>. The ACLJ was founded in 1990, by Pat Robertson in order to provide American evangelical Christians with a legal pressure group designed to defend religious liberties, the sanctity of human life and the two-parent, marriage bound family.

some of these individuals complied with the Commission and shut down their transmitters while others continued to rebroadcast religious programming. Ultimately, most of the TBN rebroadcasters ended up as one of the TBN rebroadcasters put it, “presently embroiled in court proceedings at the expense of the tax payers in Canada.”¹⁴⁵ Many of them remained poised and ready to represent themselves for the October 1992 Public Hearings on religious broadcasting in the hope that the Commission would consent and legitimize their operations.

The CRTC initiates a second public discourse with religious broadcasters: The 1992 Public Hearings on Religious Broadcasting

When the CRTC issued Public Notice 1992-8 for another public consultation on religious broadcasting, thousands of evangelicals across Canada once again mailed petitions, letters and interventions to the CRTC which supported the position for single-faith broadcasting. In the months that led up to the hearings, many concerned citizens requested that the CRTC change its religious broadcasting policies to accommodate evangelicals in the Canadian broadcasting system. The EFC aptly summarized this perspective in one of their interventions calling for the CRTC to change, “a discriminatory policy.... towards religious broadcasting [which] is an undue restriction on the rights of freedom of expression.”¹⁴⁶ For all that, evangelicals would have to wait until the public hearings in order to voice their opinions before the Commission.

¹⁴⁴ Richelle Wiseman, “Are Canada’s mainstream media aggressively secular?,” *Christian Week* 14 March 1995, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing: A Review of the Policy on Religious Broadcasting*. Ottawa, 22 October, 1992. Brief by Roy Bayer.

¹⁴⁶ EFCEA, “Religion and Broadcasting, A Review of the Policy on Religious Broadcasting,” *Brief to the CRTC*, August 1992, p.1.

The 1992 October Public Hearings on Religious broadcasting in Ottawa and Winnipeg revealed a wide spectrum of opinions among the participants. On the whole, most of the discussions during the proceedings, centered on the issue of single-faith broadcasting. Although there were many other religious groups that expressed specific needs, the topic of single-faith broadcasting was the hot topic.

With the creation of Vision TV, many religious groups, concerned citizens and associations were not as concerned with acquiring more access to the Canadian broadcasting system as they were in the 1982 Public Hearings on Religious Broadcasting. Many of these groups felt that CRTC, through its endorsement of Vision TV, had adequately represented the religious needs of most Canadians. In fact, Vision TV claimed during the hearings that they were, “the culmination and model of all religious broadcasting.”¹⁴⁷ The United Church of Canada, The Canadian Council of Churches, Vision TV, The Anglican Church of Canada, Canadian Association of Broadcasters, The Toronto Women in Film, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Canadian Cable Television Association, Humanist Association, Zoroastrian Society, and other concerned organizations and citizens expressed this view. Most of these groups believed that Vision TV and the CRTC’s existing policies for granting licenses, were sufficient for religious broadcasting, and that any change in the Commission’s policies could invite divisiveness and discord into Canada’s cultural mosaic. In fact, many of these briefs expressed extreme dissatisfaction with licensing a single-faith group. For instance, the United Church of Canada stated in the proceedings, “we have argued that by definition a single

¹⁴⁷ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*. Ottawa, 20 October 1992. Brief by Vision TV.

point view channel individually licensed cannot, by its very purpose and definition provide balance....the present system answers the question adequately.”¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, many evangelical groups and individuals wanted to see much more religious broadcasting in the Canadian broadcasting system. These views were represented by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), Crossroads Christian Communications, The Quebec Interfaith Media Council, The Christian Institute, some TBN rebroadcasters, concerned citizens and a consortium of evangelicals groups and organizations who expressed an interest in expanding religious broadcasting.

There were three major points that evangelicals addressed. First, many evangelicals argued that religious broadcasting was not adequately represented by one religious television service. For instance, the EFC summarized this perspective in this statement, “Vision TV should not be the sole gate keeper for religious broadcasting.”¹⁴⁹ Since Vision TV could not possibly express all forms of religious expression and monopolize all religious broadcasting, evangelicals believed it was necessary to ensure that other religious groups have access to the airwaves and express their beliefs. Therefore, they believed, single-faith broadcasting should be granted.

Another issue that evangelicals addressed in the hearings was the state of Christian music in Canada. Concerned evangelicals believed that Christian music had been “ghettoized” and blackballed by secular radio stations who preferred secular formats and failed to provide religious artists with airtime. Many appeals were made for an outlet for Christian music. Evangelicals interested in operating a radio station, felt that if they were

¹⁴⁸ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*. Ottawa, 19 October 1992. Brief by The United Church of Canada.

able to receive licenses, Christian music would be able to displace listener-ship to foreign signals, attract new radio listeners and provide new employment opportunities. Two of the presenters, in particular, Al Hunsperger of Touch Canada Broadcasting and the Dixon Family impressed the CRTC with their arguments. In fact, the Commission was particularly pleased with the Dixon family's plea for Christian radio as evident in this comment, "The Dixon family was a very thoughtful plea for something on the air other than the regular fare that is put on the air....they were a very eloquent plea which affected the Commission's thinking."¹⁵⁰ Thirdly, a group of evangelicals also expressed regional needs for religious broadcasting. Many evangelicals believed that more religious narrow casting programming was needed in certain regions where a niche market for evangelical programming was already present. For instance, TBN rebroadcasters believed that many Western Canadian towns had a significant untapped market for religious broadcasting. Many Western Canadians argued that they were not interested in national religious programming and only wanted to address the needs of their respected communities. One of the TBN rebroadcasters aptly summarized this position, "I would like to reach my city. I don't have an interest to produce Christian television for my country at this time, my focus is my city."¹⁵¹

The Public Hearings on Religious Broadcasting in Ottawa and Winnipeg, during the month of October in 1992, revealed that the CRTC and many other religious denominations had an incessant fear of licensing evangelical single-faith broadcasters in

¹⁴⁹ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*. Ottawa, 19 October 1992. Brief by The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

¹⁵⁰ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*, Winnipeg, 23 October 1992. Brief by CRTC.

Canada. Even the CRTC voiced this concern during the hearings stating, “how do we avoid a U.S. style of religious programming universe where it looks as though the screen is dominated by a certain type of fundamentalism?”¹⁵² This fear was not unwarranted. With the 1987 and 1988 American televangelist scandals still fresh in the memories of Canadians and a nascent and developing multifaith project through Vision TV just underway, many Canadians did not want more American fundamentalism to be voiced through the mouths of televangelist preachers. American televangelism in the Canadian broadcasting system was viewed by many Canadians as the ‘spam’ of the Canadian broadcasting system and the quality of the programming was also considered by many to be on the same level as infomercials or 1-800-chat-lines. In addition, the TBN rebroadcasting movement (which was supported by American fundamentalist groups), gave credence to the argument that licensing evangelical single-faith groups would only heighten more conflict, more intolerance and fragment the country.

Conclusion

Initially, the fight for single-faith broadcasting in Canada had its origins in the International Bible Students Association’s struggle to retain its broadcasting licenses for their four radio stations. When the federal government in 1929 revoked the Bible Students licenses, the struggle for single-faith broadcasting was swept under the carpet for more than 60 years until the forces of American programming, new technologies, new legislation, the *Charter*, and an organized evangelical protest movement once again

¹⁵¹ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*, Ottawa, 22 October 1992. Brief by Roy Bayer.

¹⁵² CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC Public Hearing on Religious Broadcasting*, Ottawa, 19 October 1992. Brief by CRTC.

forced the issue out into the open. The IBSA affair was the cauldron in which future conflicts between single-faith broadcasters and the federal government were brewed and preserved. It was only a matter of time before other religious groups and individuals would mix and stir up the cauldron once again only to realize that the contents of the cauldron still emitted a foul stench. The forces that stirred up the cauldron were a combination of many religious denominations, groups, individuals and organizations who all wanted more representation in the Canadian broadcasting system. The stench that was emitted was the conflict between the CRTC and the unlicensed TBN re-broadcasters.

And yet, some important conclusions can be gleaned from both the “IBSA affair” and the “TBN rebroadcasting movement.” Oddly enough, there are some strikingly similar parallels between the Bible Students affair in the 1920s, and the unlicensed TBN re-broadcasting movement in Western Canada during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

First, both the IBSA affair and the unlicensed TBN re-broadcasting incidents, centered on the issue to express religious beliefs using the medium of radio or television. Both religious groups felt that federal regulations concerning religious broadcasting, contravened the right to express their religious views using the press. IBSA believed that The Minister of Marine had subjected the Bible students to censorship when the government revoked their broadcasting licenses in 1929. Similarly, the unlicensed TBN re-broadcasters believed that the CRTC’s “Mandatory Orders” and police seizures in 1992 were in direct violation of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Another similarity between the IBSA and the unlicensed TBN broadcasters was that both incidents originated in Western Canada. In the case of the IBSA conflict, the affair

was precipitated when the radio station CHUC,¹⁵³ sold airtime to Ku Klux Klansman who broadcast slandering programs across Saskatchewan. Similarly, in the TBN re-broadcasting movement, all of the unlicensed broadcasters were from the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. A possible explanation for this is geography. Western Canada has largely remained an isolated frontier and its population is scattered in many small far-flung communities, far removed from the dense economic, political and populated corridors of Quebec and Ontario. Many Western Canadians are deprived of frequent social intercourse, due to their geographical remoteness. Therefore, religious broadcasting offered a unifying outlet to marginalize regionalism. Another possible explanation is history. Western Canadians have been imbued with evangelicalism in the Aberhart tradition and its 'oil patch' heritage gives it unique cultural links to the United States. Nevertheless, the medium of radio, television, and satellite offer these religious groups an opportunity to evangelize, entertain and unify Western Canadian communities through religious programming, especially during the long winter months. Evidently, these religious broadcasters were relatively unconcerned about the cultural agendas laid down by federal policy makers in Ottawa. Finally, both IBSA and the unlicensed TBN re-broadcasters marshaled national support for their cause by signing hundreds of petitions and using the media and the press to pressure the government to change their regulatory policies.

However, despite the fact that there are some pronounced similarities in the two incidents, there are some fundamental differences. First, IBSA was fighting to retain its

¹⁵³ Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, p.96. The radio station CHUC was based in Saskatoon. Owned by Jehovah Witnesses, it was one of the four radio stations that IBSA had acquired between 1924-1928. Their license was pulled by the government in 1929.

broadcasting licenses while the TBN re-broadcasters were struggling to acquire licenses. Secondly, the IBSA was primarily represented by Jehovah Witnesses, which was at the time, still considered to be a distasteful sect by many Canadians, whereas the unlicensed broadcasters had garnished support for their cause through solidly organized evangelical pressure groups. Thirdly, the outcome of the two movements was quite different. The IBSA lost all of its broadcasting licenses and their programming was considered by Parliament controversial, “unpatriotic, and abusive of all churches.”¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the IBSA affair was a tremendous annoyance to the federal government. In fact, federal policy makers created policies in order to ensure that this event would never happen again. Conversely, the unlicensed TBN re-broadcasting movement in Western Canada was really only a small blip on the CRTC’s regulatory radar. The CRTC had many other problems to deal with at this time. The effects of these rebroadcasters were somewhat muted and ‘ghettoized’ to the religious pages of Canadian newspapers.¹⁵⁵

Invariably, the second struggle for single-faith broadcasting would take on a more diplomatic route. The fight for Christian broadcasting in Canada during the 1980s was a progressive movement in which evangelical broadcasters, organizations and single-faith ministries worked within the CRTC’s regulatory system in an attempt to slowly pressure the government to reform their policies concerning religious broadcasting. In opening up public hearings in 1982, and endorsing Vision TV as the sole gatekeeper in providing subsidized religious broadcasting in Canada, the Commission felt that it had provided an adequate outlet for religious groups to express their views. However, the 1992 Public

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁵⁵ Richelle Wiseman, “Are Canada’s mainstream media aggressively secular?” *Christian Week*, 14 March 1995, p.8.

Hearings on Religious Broadcasting revealed that many evangelicals and other religious groups were still dissatisfied with the CRTC's provisions for religious broadcasters. The hearings revealed that the CRTC had failed to cope with the advent of technological change revealing that the capacity of the government to give direction to the Canadian broadcasting system, for cultural reasons, had been seriously eroded. Nevertheless, the 1982 and 1992 hearings, and the licensing of Vision TV, indicated to many Canadians, that the CRTC was ready to soften its stance on religious broadcasting. In fact, many evangelicals felt it was only a matter of time before a favourable decision for single-faith broadcasting was announced.

And yet, it was clearly evident that some evangelical broadcasters were unwilling to work within the regulatory system or wait for the CRTC to make concessions. When the CRTC announced that it would reform its broadcasting policies, unlicensed evangelical TBN re-broadcasters used the opportunity to defy the government and engaged in civil disobedience by transmitting illegal satellite signals into the Canadian public. Many evangelical denominations and organizations who were interested in radio and television attempted to separate themselves from the TBN rebroadcasters' cause. Nevertheless, many other evangelicals sympathized with the TBN rebroadcasters and considered their efforts a stab at the CRTC 'by proxy'. Although these 'pirate' broadcasters were not the main reason why the CRTC decided to reform its broadcasting policies, these broadcasters were the catalyst that sped up the movement towards the deregulation of the CRTC's religious broadcasting policies. The TBN rebroadcasters pushed the envelope so to speak. As one of the TBN rebroadcasters aptly stated about the movement, "While the other groups sat around and waited, we believed we had no choice to follow the route we

did...preaching the gospel must be challenged in society.”¹⁵⁶ Indeed, it was the unlicensed evangelicals who challenged the CRTC’s right to regulate balance and Canadian content in religious broadcasting and the right to own a broadcasting station. Also, it was the unlicensed broadcasters who faced cease and desist orders, RCMP seizure raids, fines, licensing hearings, court appearances, public ridicule and possible imprisonment. Most importantly, it was the TBN rebroadcasters who decided to challenge the CRTC by appealing to the media and filing litigation suits against the Commission all in an attempt to legitimize their civil disobedience and to reveal that the government’s policies were unconstitutional and unfair.

¹⁵⁶ Wendy Elaine Nelles, “No business, no balance, no broadcasting license,” *Faith Today*. Jan/Feb 1996, p.14.

CHAPTER III

THE ADVENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF CANADIAN SINGLE-FAITH
BROADCASTING

Part 2: The development of the Canadian 'electric church'

"These small wattage stations—I'm not in agreement with them....If you can't do it right, don't do it at all. The smaller stations won't last. The guys that come in with the full wattage are the ones who will dominate [the market]."

Al Hunsperger, owner of Shine FM in Calgary & AM 930 in Edmonton
Christian Week, www.christianweek.org vol. 14. No.2, p.2.

In anticipation of the CRTC's decision to revise its religious broadcasting policies, single-faith Christian ministries, evangelical broadcasters, and unlicensed evangelical television and radio broadcasting 'hopefuls' all over Canada, prepared to build and strengthen their organizations in the future hope of receiving either a television UHF channel or an over-the-air radio broadcast license. In an attempt to curry favour with the CRTC, many unlicensed broadcasters who were illegally re-broadcasting satellite signals voluntarily turned off their transmissions. At the same time, bands of evangelical Christians across Canada who were interested in the medium of Christian radio and television began to organize their own broadcasting enterprises. Equally important, two of Canada's largest single-faith television ministries; Crossroads Communications Inc. and Trinity Television Inc. were both expanding their ministries by constructing new broadcasting facilities.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, this chapter will reveal that the change in the CRTC's religious broadcasting policies in 1993, facilitated an unprecedented amount of growth for single-faith broadcasting ministries throughout Canada. Second, this chapter will also attempt to delineate some of the consequences and impact that

single-faith broadcasters have had on Canadian society. Finally, this chapter will also demonstrate how the CRTC has created a new regulatory web for religious broadcasters in order to minimize and sanitize the impact of the single-faith 'electric-church' phenomenon in Canada.

A new religious broadcasting policy: CRTC 1993-78

On June 3, 1993, in a controversial decision and a narrow vote of 8-6, the CRTC led by chairman Keith Spicer, decided to relax ownership restrictions for single-faith broadcasting in Canada.¹⁵⁷ Chairman Keith Spicer had to break a 'tie-vote' by his fellow Commissioners in order to legalize single-faith broadcasting in Canada. However, Spicer warned single-faith broadcasters that there would be limits to this new development.

"Canadians do not want our system to imitate the hardcore fund-raising, intolerances and excesses often found in American televangelism," quipped a skeptical Spicer.¹⁵⁸

Although six of the 14 commissioners issued a dissenting opinion, and contended that the compromise on single faith broadcasting could, "promote religious, cultural and racial intolerance in Canada,"¹⁵⁹ the CRTC promised to "to amend its current policy on religious broadcasting in order to provide for the licensing of single faith services, or services which are owned or controlled by a single faith group, provided they commit to the balance criteria."¹⁶⁰ In addition to accepting single-faith applications for assessment, the Commission also officially legalized single-faith broadcasters to own their own television

¹⁵⁷ Paul Taylor, "CRTC opens door to single-faith stations," *Christian Week*, 22 June 1993, p.3.

¹⁵⁸ Bob Harvey, "Mining a miracle," *Faith Today* March/April 1996, p.20.

¹⁵⁹ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1993-78. Religious Broadcasting Policy (1-19) pg 18. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/1993/PB93-78.HTM>>.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*.

In order to establish a credible frame of reference from which to view and assess the impact of the CRTC's decision to license single-faith television telecasters, and single-faith radio broadcasters, a discussion on the development of these pioneering ministries is mandatory.

Christian television broadcasting in Canada took a great leap forward through the efforts of Dr. Dick Dewert founder and president of The Miracle Channel Association. Dewert and his 1,000 member evangelical congregation, Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF) located in Lethbridge, Alberta, fought for many years before they received a license from the CRTC. In February 1986, as an unlicensed broadcaster, he started to rebroadcast signals of TBN from Santa Ana, California, and filed an application to rebroadcast with the CRTC. Six months later, his application was rejected by the CRTC. However, after the CRTC revised its broadcasting policies in June 1993, VCF sent out another application and received a broadcasting license on April 4, 1995.¹⁶⁴ Oddly enough, it is interesting that the CRTC issued VCF an over-the-air television license. Dick Dewert and some of the members of VCF were originally one of the "pirate" stations that had contravened CRTC regulations by rebroadcasting Christian television on unused UHF channels in Western Canada during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Nonetheless, CJIL-TV became the first over-the-air television Christian station dedicated to producing and broadcasting religious programming under a single-faith ownership. On January 14, 1996, CJIL television began broadcasting 24 hours-per-day Christian

¹⁶⁴ CRTCEA, *Decision* 1995-129. New Over-the-Air Television Station Devoted to Religious Programming-Approved pg 1. The CRTC Official Website.
<<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/eng/Decisions/1995/DB95-129.htm>>.

television with an effective radiating power of 31,600 watts. 'The Miracle Channel' was launched on channel 17 UHF in Southern Alberta and on (Cable 5) in Lethbridge.¹⁶⁵

The station CJIL-TV known as the 'Miracle Channel' produces its own in-house religious fare programs such as *MC Magazine*, a community lifestyles program, *In sight and In sight chat room*, current news and public affairs programs, and its' flagship program *LifeLine* which presents devotional testimonies, guest interviews and spiritual discussions. CJIL also carries Christian and secular programs that are positive and family oriented which deal with issues in ethics and morality. CJIL's mission is, "to change the spiritual temperature of the nation through 24-hour Spirit-filled Christian television."¹⁶⁶

Within a few years after receiving their license, CJIL quickly began to expand their base of operations and filed for two licenses with the CRTC in 1999 and 2001, to establish two transmitters at Bow Island and Burmis, Alberta. The CRTC accepted the licenses and CJIL began to transmit CJIL television to the residents of the Medicine Hat and Pincher Creek areas of Southern Alberta.¹⁶⁷ Equally important, CJIL's potential viewer-ship was also increased in 2000, when the CRTC added CJIL-TV to the List of Part 3 eligible satellite services.¹⁶⁸ This allowed CJIL to be launched nationally on Star Choice and Bell ExpressVu Direct-to-Home Satellite reaching 1.1 million homes.

Although Dewert and his followers have established an "invisible church" in Southern Alberta, through the medium of television, they still face tremendous obstacles. First, the economic viability of the station is directly correlated to how much revenue can be raised

¹⁶⁵ "The Miracle Channel: Canada's First Christian television station," The Miracle Channel Official Website (1-3). <<http://www.miraclechannel.ca/who.html>>.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁶⁷ CRTCEA, *Decisions* 99-71 & 2001-491. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

by financial donors and through the sale of airtime. The start-up cost of CJIL was approximately \$1.8 million dollars, half of which was financed through a bank.¹⁶⁹ In addition, the station is faced with operating costs of \$600,000 annually, which will only increase in the future.¹⁷⁰ As a condition of the license, CJIL is not allowed to use commercial advertising to finance its activities.¹⁷¹ Because 'The Miracle Channel' station is commercial free, CJIL-TV depends solely on the support of donors and viewers to continue its existence. Secondly, CJIL has not been able to meet some of the most important conditions of its license. For instance, at a Public Hearing in Vancouver on 18 October 2001, the CRTC was extremely concerned that CJIL-TV during the broadcast years 1998-2000, failed to comply with sections 4 (6) and 4 (7) of the *Television Broadcasting Regulations* as contained in the 1987 *Broadcasting Act*.¹⁷² These concerns stem from the fact that CJIL-TV has not complied with the Canadian content requirements in their religious programming. The Commission concluded that it would: use this period of two-and-a-half years [license renewal for CJIL-TV] to thoroughly monitor and assess the licensee's performance in response to the very serious concerns discussed below....The Commission is particularly apprehensive about what it considers to be either the licensee's lack of understanding of the balance requirements contained in the religious broadcasting policy, or worse, its inadequate appreciation of the importance of these requirements and their objectives. This concerns stems from the licensee's vague and unfocused responses to questions at the hearing....the Commission gave serious consideration to granting a shorter license term than the two-and-a-half years noted....¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 2000-7. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/2000/PB2000-7.htm>>.

¹⁶⁹ Brent Nightingale, "The Miracle Channel Leading the Way in Canadian Christian Broadcasting" (1-3) in *Technologies For Worship Magazine*. <<http://www.tfwm.com>>, p.2.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid*.

¹⁷¹ CRTCEA, *Decision* 1995-129. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁷² "Canadian Legal Information Institute," *Television Broadcasting Regulations*. The Canadian Legal Information Institute Official Website. <<http://www.canlii.org>>., Section 4 (6): ... a license shall devote not less than 60 per cent of the broadcast year and of any six month period specified in a condition of license to the broadcasting of Canadian programs.

¹⁷³ CRTCEA, *Decision* 2002-60. (1-8) Short-term license renewal for CJIL-TV. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>. 28 February 2002, p.1.

The future of CJIL-TV weighs in the balance of the CRTC. Although the “Miracle Channel” has a veritable presence in Southern Alberta and is available on satellite, future expansion on conventional television in other areas of Alberta and future license renewals depends on the discretion and ‘good graces’ of the CRTC. In a market that is arguably too small to support CJIL’s lofty enterprises, it is doubtful that, “The Miracle Channel,” will continue to expand at a rapid pace. In addition, if CJIL-TV does not comply with the conditions of their license, its broadcasting licenses will either be revoked or their religious broadcasting will be confined to the rural areas of Southern Alberta indefinitely.

A more successful venture for single-faith Canadian Christian broadcasting began under Reverend David Mainse of Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., (CCCI). Mainse, no stranger to Canadian religious television, had experimented in television in 1962 and found the response so encouraging that he brought into being CCCI in 1977, as a registered charity. In the same year he also launched a live daily television program called *100 Huntley Street*, which was released from 9:30 am- 11:00 am from Monday through Saturday on Global TV. Like many other religious broadcasting ministries of the day, Crossroads quickly discovered that its operating costs were great. To recover from its deficits, CCCI had to initiate many stewardship drives during the 1980s just to stay ‘afloat.’

And yet, things seemed hopeful for CCCI when the CRTC decided to change its policies concerning religious broadcasting. This provided CCCI with a renewed opportunity to expand the scope of their religious ministries and acquire an-over-the-air religious channel. With much of the CRTC’s red tape concerning single-faith

broadcasting removed, Crossroads filed an application on September 15, 1993,¹⁷⁴ for a 24-hour religious channel that would service much of Ontario's heartland; the geographical corridor between St. Catharines and Toronto. With an estimated population base of 6, 243, 350, Crossroads wanted to be the first single-faith broadcaster in the largest television market in Canada. A competing application was also filed by another single-faith broadcaster Trinity Television Inc. (Trinity), for a license to carry on a new religious over-the-air television channel in Toronto. Both broadcast ministries were solidly funded, growing and poised to expand their markets.

However, three years later, both applications filed by Crossroads and Trinity were both rejected by the CRTC.¹⁷⁵ The main reason why these Christian ministries were rejected was that the CRTC was not entirely convinced that the applicants could ensure that their proposed religious programming would provide "balanced" formats. In response to the two rejections, the CRTC issued Public Notice 1996-152, which reiterated its expectations concerning religious programming. The Commission deemed that, "in the case of the two current applications....[the Commission] has concluded that they did not provide sufficient, detailed information as to how they would carry out their proposals for the provision of balanced programming."¹⁷⁶

Nevertheless, two years later, CCCI became the second single-faith broadcaster to receive a religious broadcasting license to carry an over-the-air religious television

¹⁷⁴ CTS Archives (hereafter CTSA), Dick Gray, "An Application for a New Specialty Service," Letter to CRTC, 17 September 1993.

¹⁷⁵ CRTCEA, *Decisions* 96-773 & 96-774. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁷⁶ CRTCEA *Public Notice* 1996-152. Introductory Statements to Decisions 96-773 and 96-774- Denial of Applications for Broadcasting Licenses to Carry On New, Religious Television Programming Undertaking at Toronto and Hamilton/Burlington, Ontario. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>. 4 December 1996, p.1.

channel.¹⁷⁷ The channel was created to service Southwestern Ontario and CCCI was licensed to operate an UHF channel with an effective radiating power of 473,000 watts. Simultaneously, Trinity's competing application to broadcast in the vicinity of Toronto was rejected. Licensed in April, CTS began broadcasting 24-hour television on September 30, 1998, to a potential viewing audience of 10 million. Within a year after receiving their license, Crossroads quickly began to expand their operations and filed an application with the CRTC in order to be added to the list of eligible satellite services.¹⁷⁸ CTS received acceptance to be carried on satellite a year later.¹⁷⁹ In addition, in an attempt to extend their religious channel to other urban centers in Canada, Crossroads applied for a license in 2001 to add rebroadcasting transmitters in London and Ottawa. Unfortunately, for CCCI, their application was denied by the CRTC.¹⁸⁰

Trinity Television Inc. (Trinity) became the fourth single-faith broadcaster in Canada to receive a religious television-broadcasting license. Willard and Betty Thiessen, like David and Norma-Jean Mainse of CCCI, were no strangers to Christian television. In fact, Willard and Betty Thiessen had been producing Christian television since 1976, to the residents of Southern Manitoba. Beginning on October 6, 1976, the Thiessens launched their flagship program *It's a New Day* which was aired once a week in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Two years later, the TTI began to expand the scope of its ministries by developing children's programming through a series of shows entitled *Follow Me*.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ CRTCEA, *Decision* 98-123. New over-the-air station devoted to religious programming- Approved. Competing application- Denied. 9 April 1998. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/>>.

¹⁷⁸ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1999-2. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/>>.

¹⁷⁹ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 2000-7. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/>>.

¹⁸⁰ CRTCEA, *Decision* 2001-698. (1-3) Denial of proposal to add transmitters of CITS-TV at London and Ottawa. 16 November 2001. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/>>.

¹⁸¹ "The History of Trinity Television," Trinity Television Official Website. <<http://www.newday.org/>>.

By the late 1980s, TTI, had launched a second children's program *Sonshiny Day* and had produced 260 "*It's a New Day*" shows which were syndicated and aired five days a week on five Canadian television stations.¹⁸² A few years later, in anticipation for the CRTC to change its religious broadcasting policies, TTI purchased a new production facility in 1991, in the hope of receiving either an over-the-air radio or television license. However, throughout the 1990s, TTI was rejected by the CRTC so many times that Willard Thiessen felt that his ministry was, "at a total roadblock and had no idea what to do next."¹⁸³ Trinity Television Inc. had been denied a license on a number of occasions to carry an over-the-air religious channel in the markets of Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto.¹⁸⁴

And yet, things would change for TTI. In 2000, the CRTC officially gave TTI an over-the-air radio license to serve the Winnipeg area and also granted it an over-the-air religious channel for distribution in the Fraser Valley areas of British Columbia.¹⁸⁵ In 2002, the CRTC also granted Trinity an over-the-air television license to service the area of Southern Manitoba.¹⁸⁶ Trinity Television Inc. launched its' first television NOW TV station in Vancouver/Abbotsford in 2001 and plans to launch another NOW TV station in Manitoba in the late summer of 2003.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² "NOWTV FAQs," *NOWTV Official Website*. <http://www.nowtv.ca/nowtv_faq.asp>.

¹⁸³ Wendy Elaine Nelles, "No business, no balance, no broadcasting license," *Faith Today*. Jan/Feb, 1996, p. 15.

¹⁸⁴ CRTCEA, *Decisions* 95-854, 95-855, 96-774, 98-123. *The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁸⁵ CRTCEA, *Decisions* 2002-20, 2002-218. *The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁸⁶ CRTCEA, *Decision* 2002-29. *The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁸⁷ Patrick Erskine, "Christian TV sanctioned: Winnipeg station receives CRTC nod," *Christian Week* Vol #16 Issue12, 3 September, 2002. <<http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol16/no12/story/html>>.

The future of Canadian single-faith television: digital distribution

Currently, only five single-faith over-the-air television licenses have been granted by the CRTC. With Trinity Television (NOWTV) capturing the markets of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the Fraser Valley of B.C, Crossroads (CITS-TV) reaching the geographical corridor of Southwestern Ontario and the Miracle Channel (CJIL-TV) transmitting in the southern areas of Alberta, it is doubtful that the CRTC will license any more large wattage religious television channels in the near future until its impact can be fully accessed by the CRTC. What is more likely to occur, is other single-faith groups interested in the medium of television may be granted a religious UHF channel, however, the power transmissions outlined in their 'conditions of license' will be very low and will only serve as a local channel for a small city or town. For instance, the CRTC granted The B.C. Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches a broadcasting license for an English-language television channel in Abbotsford, British Columbia.¹⁸⁸ Accordingly, the main reason why the CRTC decided to license this undertaking was because a large number of people in Abbotsford were Mennonite and many people in the community , "are 80 years or older. Many are not able to attend church services."¹⁸⁹

Suffice it to say, with the advent of direct-to-home satellite (DTH) distribution and with the CRTC's growing list of eligible satellite services, the future of Canadian religious broadcasting rests in satellite television. Currently, the CRTC has licensed four Canadian specialty religious channels and has also licensed two foreign religious channels. Among the Canadian specialty channels that have been licensed are: CJIL-TV, CITS-TV, Vision TV and the Inner Peace Television Network (IPTN). The newest

¹⁸⁸ CRTCEA, *Decision 99-107*. The CRTC Official Website. < <http://www.crtc.gc.ca> >.

member of the CRTC's Canadian specialty channels (IPTN), was licensed to provide a "national ethnic...specialty television service devoted to providing religious programming from the single-point-of-view Roman Catholic faith....the service will target Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Filipino, English and French-speaking audiences."¹⁹⁰

Equally important, the CRTC has also decided to allow foreign religious programming into the Canadian broadcasting system when it added two foreign specialty channels, Eternal Word Television and Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA), into its list of eligible satellite services.¹⁹¹ The former network is dedicated to producing homilies, novenas, mass readings and other religious fare for a Catholic audience,¹⁹² while MTA provides Muslim adherents with international news, question and answer sessions, readings from the Qur'an and other in-house programs.¹⁹³ Both of these networks disseminate a limited point-of-view and have a global audience in many countries who watch these programs on conventional television. Although the CRTC has not forced the issue of 'balance' on IPTN or any of the foreign religious channels, these channels have to be packaged with other single-faith stations or offered as a stand-alone pay channel.¹⁹⁴

With the development of the digital revolution in the communications industry, it will be increasingly difficult for the CRTC to enforce 'balance' regulations on religious television as more channels and options are available to Canadian (DTH) subscribers.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ CRTCEA, *Decision 2001-687*, *The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁹¹ CRTCEA, *Public Notice 2001-82*. Revised lists of eligible satellite services, 13 July 2001. *The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁹² *The Eternal Word Official Website*. <<http://www.ewtn.com>>.

¹⁹³ *The Muslim TV Ahmadiyya Official Website*. <<http://www.cybermta.alislam.org>>.

¹⁹⁴ CRTCEA, *Decision 2001-82*.

The introduction of foreign satellite services represents a new phase in religious television broadcasting in Canada. Because many of these foreign channels appeal to a global audience and embody the development of a multi-signal universe, the CRTC will find it difficult to apply “censorship practices” to these religious networks since most of them are based in areas outside of Canada.

The development of Canadian single-faith radio

In the aftermath of the CRTC’s revision of its religious broadcasting policies, single-faith broadcasting through the medium of television has grown. However, single-faith radio has grown at a more rapid pace. Indeed, before CRTC 1993-78, there were only two single-faith radio stations in Canada; Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR) and Voice of Wesley Radio VOWR. Both of these stations were ‘grand fathered’ into Confederation when Newfoundland joined Canada. Although there were many attempts by individuals in the evangelical community to unite evangelicals and secure more access for evangelical radio in the Canadian broadcasting system through fledging and ephemeral organizations, no evangelical or religious radio stations would be licensed until 1994.¹⁹⁵ Today, there are approximately 52 single-faith radio stations across Canada (refer to Map 1.0). Out of these 52 single-faith stations, 24 radio stations in Canada are licensed with a format based on spoken word religious programming.¹⁹⁶ Also, the CRTC has licensed many of these stations with additional transmitters that serve as “repeater stations”

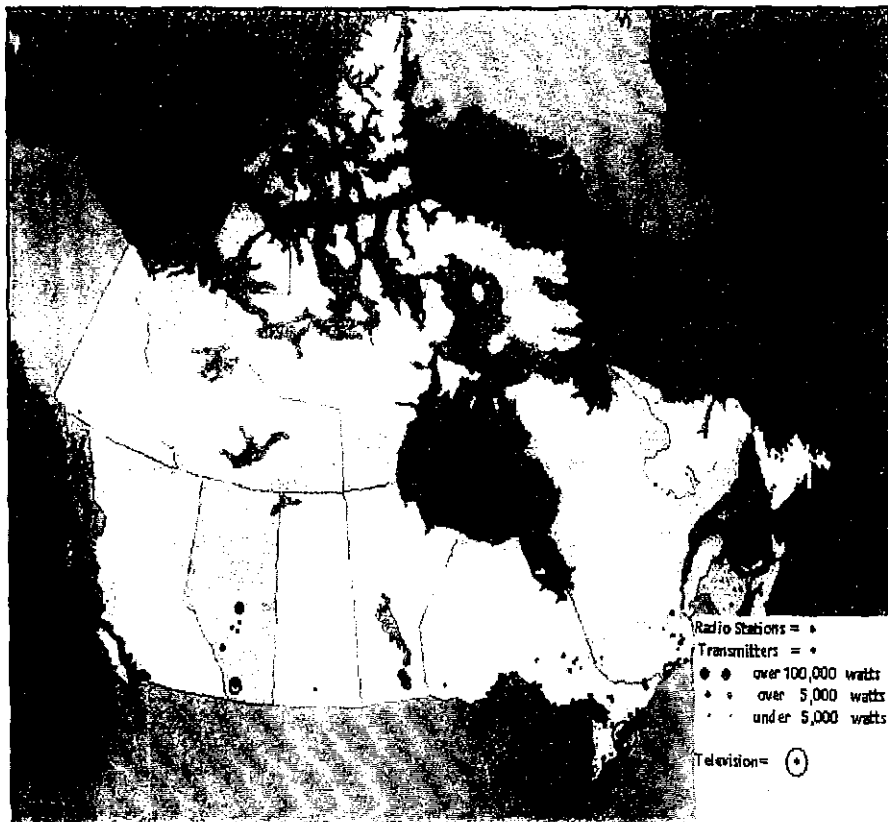
¹⁹⁵ For an interesting read on some of the historical developments and struggles which some evangelical single-faith radio stations have faced with the CRTC see <www.christianradio.ca/history/> or <http://www.rcc.ryerson.ca/ccf/CCF_Listings_and_histories/radio_>.

¹⁹⁶ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1993-78. Religious Broadcasting Policy (1-19), p.18. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/eng/notices/1993/pb93-78.htm>>. Although there are 24 single-faith stations based on spoken word religious programming, there are many more single-faith stations that operate in Canada. Many of these stations have opted to have a ‘music format’ in order to bypass the CRTC’s ‘balancing’ requirements required for voice modulated religious programming.

Map 1.0
Number of Single-Faith Radio and Television stations before CRTC 1993-78



Number of Single-Faith Radio and Television stations after CRTC 1993-78



which enhance a station's transmitting area and targeted audience. With the expansion of religious radio stations and transmitters across Canada, many urban centres are now exposed to single-faith broadcasting on a daily basis. Currently, the growth of single-faith broadcasting is a nascent phenomenon as new stations are being licensed by the CRTC every year.

Since the CRTC deregulated its broadcasting policies, there has been a race by single-faith groups to acquire a frequency on the radio spectrum for a space on Canada's airwaves.¹⁹⁷ Because there were many frequencies available on the FM and AM bands for expansion, single-faith broadcasters have quickly filled this vacuum with radio channels. Evidently, the two religious denominations that have acquired the majority of over-the-air radio licenses are evangelical broadcasters and French-Canadian Roman Catholic parishes.

On the one hand, the CRTC has licensed 24 single-faith radio enterprises in the province of Quebec alone (refer to Table A-1). In fact, after an absence of religious radio for almost 70 years, the CRTC authorized the creation of Canada's first two religious radio stations on the FM dial: Radio Ville-Marie and Foundation Humanite 2000, in 1994.¹⁹⁸ These stations are Quebec's two biggest single-faith stations which cover the urban centres of Montreal and Quebec City.¹⁹⁹ Although the majority of their religious programming is predominantly Roman Catholic, these stations have to provide "balance" and airtime for other religious denominations because they are situated in large urban

¹⁹⁷ Carol Lowes, "Christian radio takes the dial: Broadcasters tap need for local faith-based programming," *Christian Week*, 17 September 2002. Vol. 16 Issue 13.

¹⁹⁸ CRTCEA, *Decision* 94-813. 14 October 1994. *The CRTC Official Website*. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

¹⁹⁹ Art Babych, "CRTC bless return of religious radio," *B.C. Christian News*. Vol., 19 #3. n.p.

centres. Nonetheless, the majority of the over-the-air licenses that have been granted in the province of Quebec, are for Roman Catholic parishes in small rural communities. Many parishes in Quebec have been granted an over-the-air radio license in order to provide live broadcasts of masses, marriages, funerals, baptisms and other religious ceremonies to their local congregations. Because the province of Quebec is predominantly Roman Catholic (especially in the rural areas), these stations can espouse a Catholic doctrine and do not have to provide "balance" or provide airtime for other denominations. These Catholic stations emit a radiating power of 0.6 to 0.8 watts which cover an area of a small town. Currently, there are 21 Roman Catholic parishes that have been licensed for these small community enterprises (refer to Table A-1).

The remaining licenses that have been granted by the CRTC for single-faith broadcasting in Canada, have been given to bands of evangelical groups interested in establishing radio stations in urban centres. With the exception of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Prince Edward Island, evangelical radio has sprouted in cities and towns in every province across Canada. What's more, an evangelical radio station has even been licensed in the territory of the Yukon, and has been approved to broadcast Christian radio to the 23,000 residents of Whitehorse.²⁰⁰ Although most evangelical radio stations' transmitting capabilities and power transmissions vary from region to region, most of the licenses that have been approved by the CRTC have been for low wattage stations which transmit evangelical radio into small urban centres. Notwithstanding, many of these evangelical stations attempt to operate as commercial entities in order to provide an outlet for gospel music and evangelical programming. Because these

operations are small and expensive to operate, many single-faith broadcasters are heavily dependent on the local evangelical community in their licensed service area. In essence, many stations are partially subsidized through financial donations and volunteer activities provided by evangelical churches or individuals. For instance, Canada's first evangelical Christian FM station located on the campus of Briercrest Bible College in Caronport, Saskatchewan,²⁰¹ serves as a form of community radio where the Bible College and other religious denominations can broadcast religious services or community events to their student body and to the residents of Caronport. Much of the station's activities and daily operations are supported through the voluntary efforts of the college's student body.²⁰² Obviously, without a commercial identity, many of these low wattage evangelical stations will have to indefinitely depend on the financial donations and volunteerism of individuals in order to survive in the near future.

Although most evangelical radio broadcasters are confined to the city limits of their licensed service area, there are a few commercial evangelical radio stations that have been licensed to broadcast in large commercial markets. Among some of these large radio stations are: Shine FM (CJSI-FM) in Calgary, The Light (CJCA-AM) in Edmonton, Christian Hit Radio., (CHRI-FM) in Ottawa, Christian Radio Manitoba Ltd., (CHVN 95.1 FM) in Winnipeg, and Joy 1250 (CHWO-AM) in Oakville. In addition, in 2003, the CRTC also licensed Touch Canada Broadcasting in Calgary and the United Christian Broadcasters of Canada in Belleville, with large broadcasting enterprises.²⁰³ Because

²⁰⁰ Kelly Henschel, "Christian music hits northern airwaves," *Christian Week* 1 April 2003 Vol. 17 Issue 1, p. 1. <<http://www.christianweek.org>>.

²⁰¹ CRTCEA, *Decision* 95-61. *The CRTC Official Website* <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

²⁰² Don Millar, interview by author, 27 March 2003, personal, Oakville, Ontario.

²⁰³ CRTCEA, *Decisions* 2003-1 & 2003-80. *The CRTC Official Website* <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca>>.

these stations serve large urban areas, they are required to provide “balanced” programming and provide airtime to other religious groups who wish to use their station.

As a result of the CRTC’s decision to deregulate its religious broadcasting policies, single-faith radio has blossomed in Canada. Although some of these new single-faith enterprises are Roman Catholic, the majority of single-faith stations that have been licensed to operate in Canada are bands of evangelical groups. These single-faith stations serve as a form of community radio for some regions, and other stations operate as commercial entities where they provide the Canadian public with an outlet for Christian music and alternative religious and family programming.

CRTC Public Notice 1993-78: A neo-regulatory system for single-faith broadcasters

With the rapid proliferation of single-faith television and radio stations that have sprouted all over Canada since the CRTC changed their religious broadcasting policies, it would seem that single-faith broadcasters had finally achieved their objective; an adequate amount of inclusion in the Canadian broadcasting system. However, many evangelicals who have applied for a radio or television have still been rejected *en masse* by the CRTC. Suffice it to say, the CRTC’s regulatory web had not simply vanished under CRTC 1993-78. As Keith Spicer explained, “Our decision rests on a Canadian-style compromise, it strikes the vital, if delicate, balance between supporting freedom of expression and safeguarding against our broadcasting system being used to promote tolerance.”²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ CRTCLA, CRTC News Release, “Freedom of expression balanced by tolerance: Cornerstones of new CRTC religious broadcasting policy,” 3 June 1993, p.2.

Aware that licensing single-faith broadcasters could cause another deluge of non-stop evangelism and American fundamentalism to flood the broadcasting system, the CRTC has carefully created a regulatory system specifically designed for religious broadcasters. This regulatory system contains a series of checks and balances which ensure that Canadian single-faith broadcasting can be sanitized and brought into mainstream society. In licensing single-faith broadcasters, the CRTC has created a regulatory apparatus designed to control religious broadcasting in three specific areas through: the licensing process, the daily monitoring of all programming disseminated from licensed single-faith broadcasters, and the power to enhance or limit the expansion of any single-faith broadcasting undertaking.

The first system of checks and balances is through the CRTC's licensing process. Since the CRTC controls all aspects of licensing and has the right to select and reject any applicant, all broadcasting 'hopefuls' must adhere to the CRTC's standards before receiving a broadcasting license. All potential licensees must observe a series of ethical guidelines for religious broadcasting. The CRTC's *Guidelines on Ethics for Religious Programming* was created to ensure, "that programming of a religious nature, like any programming must demonstrate tolerance, integrity, and social responsibility."²⁰⁵ These stringent guidelines also cover all aspects of over-the-air fundraising activities.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Because the CRTC equates religious programming as a matter of 'public concern,' all applicants must adhere to these guidelines. The guidelines state: 1. No problems shall have the effect of abusing or misrepresenting any individual or group. 2. No group shall be targeted for the purpose of conversion or proselytism. 3. While groups and ministries are free to express their views about activities that they deem to be "sinful," they shall not call into question the human rights or dignity of any individual or group. 4. When programs are planned that deal with or comment on the beliefs, practices, liturgy or behaviour of another religious group, the licensee shall ensure the accuracy and appropriate context of such content. Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., *The Guidelines* further provide that any solicitations for funds shall not: be alarmist in suggesting that the program may be discontinued in the absence of such a response; predict divine consequences of not responding, or exaggerate positive results of responding; intimidate the view or listener in any way.

Second, the CRTC requires that all religious broadcasters ‘balance’ aspects of their programming, “to ensure that a reasonably consistent viewer or listener will be exposed to a spectrum of differing views on issues of public concern.”²⁰⁷ Interestingly, the ‘balance’ requirement is designed only for religious broadcasters and not subject to any other broadcasting undertaking. This requirement was purposely created to sanitize any religious group who disseminate religious messages that are too sectarian and one-sided.

Third, all licensees are required to issue a detailed business plan which must demonstrate that their proposed undertaking is economically viable.²⁰⁸ Religious broadcasters must demonstrate to the Commission that their programming, “will adequately meet the needs of the community it serves, in some cases this may mean providing multifaith programming.”²⁰⁹ These regulations are the first system of defense for the CRTC to control single-faith broadcasting.

Although the CRTC’S licensing process attempts to ‘filter out’ unfavourable religious elements in the Canadian broadcasting system, a second series of checks and balances ensures that licensed religious broadcasters adhere to their broadcasting standards. With the CRTC monitoring religious broadcasters’ programming, license renewals address any inconsistencies, abuses or deficiencies that diverge from a licensee’s ‘condition of license.’ For instance, in Vision TV’s most recent licensing renewal,²¹⁰ the licensee was reprimanded for failing to comply with the CRTC’s Canadian content requirements and

²⁰⁷ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1993-78.

²⁰⁸ CRTCLA, CRTC News Release, “CRTC Narrows List of Applications To Be Heard For New Specialized Canadian TV Services,” 20 October 1993.

²⁰⁹ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1993-78.

²¹⁰ CRTCEA, *Decision* 2001-669. *The CRTC Official Website*.

<<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Decisions/2001/db2001-669.htm>>

was penalized for its indiscretion.²¹¹ These renewal hearings are also used to coerce single-faith broadcasters into becoming more "mainstream" if they wish to continue their broadcasting enterprises. According to Alec Scott, the CRTC's operations concerning single-faith broadcasters, "continues the trend towards domestication, by proposing to allow single-faith broadcasters to the air, subject to many conditions...the next stage will have been reached in bringing religious broadcasting into mainstream."²¹² An example of the CRTC's "domestication policy" is evident in a licensing hearing with the CRTC and CJIL-TV that took place on October 18, 2001. During this hearing, the CRTC severely reprimanded CJIL-TV for failing to adhere to its 'conditions of license' by failing to produce a significant amount of Canadian content and balanced programming. When pressed with these severe infractions, Dick Dewert representing CJIL-TV, explained to the CRTC that they would sacrifice their single-faith ministry by becoming more mainstream in order to achieve some concessions from the CRTC:

- 5133 Dick Dewert "we began to immediately make moves to separate completely from any local church so that we could be non-denominational and interdenominational.
- 5451 Commissioner Wilson "Okay. So you're actually distancing yourself from Victory?
- 5452 Dick Dewert "That's correct."²¹³

As well as using licensing hearings to monitor religious broadcasting, the CRTC also uses the findings from the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) and

²¹¹ *ibid.* All Canadian broadcasters must provide a minimum of 60 percent of Canadian programming in their schedules. The CRTC only granted VISION TV a 33-month license, rather than a five or seven year extension.

²¹² Alec Scott, "A New Deal for Religious Broadcasting in Canada? Continuing Political and Legal Pressures for Change," *Media & Communications Law Review* (1994), p.217.

Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) to monitor the quality of programming disseminated by single-faith broadcasters.²¹⁴ With three watchdog organizations monitoring the Canadian broadcasting system, it is very difficult for religious broadcasters to 'bend the rules' on programming content in their religious programming. In short, these effective measures ensure that religious broadcasters are abiding by their 'conditions of license.'

The final line of defense in the CRTC's regulatory web for religious broadcasters, is the ability to control the expansion of all single-faith broadcasting undertakings. First, the CRTC can restrict the carriage of cable of distant Canadian signals.²¹⁵ In other words, if a single-faith broadcaster wishes to expand a station beyond its licensed service area by adding additional transmitters in other vicinities, permission to expand must be granted by the CRTC. Also, the CRTC reserves the right to allow single-faith broadcasters to be added onto the CRTC's list of eligible satellite services. These services allow broadcasters to be distributed nationally on direct-to-home satellite (DTH). Only a few single-faith broadcasters have been added onto the list as a 'pay per view' option. Although the religious channels of CJIL-TV and CITS-TV were added to 'List 3' of the CRTC's eligible satellite services, these broadcasters are subject to the CRTC's distant signal policy. Therefore, they cannot broadcast out of their licensed area because the CRTC believes that, "these Canadian signals might have [an impact] on the revenue of

²¹³ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC renewal hearing of Miracle Channel*, Vancouver, B.C., 18 October, 2001. Brief by CRTC and Dick Dewert.

²¹⁴ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1991-90, 30 August 1991. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/1991/PB91-90.htm>>. The CRTC released this statement to the Canadian public to affirm that the CRTC fully supports the objective of the CBSC to monitor and direct the process of complaints directed at Canadian broadcasters.

²¹⁵ CRTCEA, *Public Notice* 1984-13, 16 January 1984. The CRTC Official Website. <<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/eng/notes/1984/PB84-13.htm>>.

local broadcasters.”²¹⁶ Most importantly, the CRTC determines the amount of power that each radio and television station is allowed to transmit in any given area. Evidently, the CRTC’s policy in licensing single-faith broadcasters has been to give single-faith broadcasters low wattage licenses whose emitting power is between 5-50 watts (refer to Table A-1), which reaches the city limits of many Canadian towns or villages, but no further.²¹⁷ As Don Millar program director of CJYE 1250 AM states, “The CRTC gives you just enough wattage so that your station can only survive, it has you around a noose.”²¹⁸

Inherent anomalies in the CRTC’s regulatory system

Although the CRTC has established a formidable regulatory web which filters and controls the expansion of single-faith broadcasting, some tears in the CRTC’s web are clearly evident. First, some single-faith broadcasters are unable to meet the “balancing” and Canadian content requirements stipulated in their ‘conditions of license.’ A significant number of ministries have a tremendous amount of difficulty in staying ‘afloat’ due to specific aspects of their ‘conditions of license’ such as low wattage output or a prohibition on fund-raising. Because some ministries can barely survive, they adopt practices which deviate from their normal broadcasting routine. This can result in a large number of activities. For instance, when CJIL-TV was in financial difficulties, it decided to, “rely heavily upon American ministries who have the money and are willing to buy

²¹⁶ *ibid.*

²¹⁷ Kevin Heinrichs, “Christian radio expands its frequency,” *Christian Week*.
<http://www.christianweek.org/stories/vol14/no02.htm>, p. 1.

²¹⁸ Don Millar, interview by author, 27 March 2003, personal, Oakville, Ontario.

airtime.”²¹⁹ The consequence of using syndicated American televangelism is a double-edged sword. Although this process allows the ‘bills to be paid,’ it diminishes Canadian content airtime and also allows more American fundamentalism to be aired in the Canadian broadcasting system. In addition, many of these programs ask for donations in the same marketplace where the station is asking for donations. Another practice that is used by single-faith broadcasters in order to meet Canadian content requirements, is to simply re-run Canadian programs *ad nauseum* in order to meet their broadcasting standards. These activities result in poor programming and lowers the benchmark in quality Canadian programming. Finally, if a single-faith station cannot survive, it simply reverts back to a secular format or it goes bankrupt. As a matter of fact, Canada’s first contemporary Christian music station on the AM dial (CKBD 600 am), situated in Vancouver B.C. , switched to a secular format because financial losses were too great to continue a single-faith ministry.²²⁰

Another area in which the CRTC has relatively little control over is the airing of syndicated American religious programming by Canadian single-faith broadcasters. For many single faith radio and television broadcasters, many religious American programs form a significant portion of their daily broadcasting schedules. Although many single-faith radio and television stations develop their own ‘in-house’ programming, many American religious programs offer these stations with much needed revenue which aid in covering a station’s operating costs and expenses. Programs such as *Insight for Living* with Chuck Swindoll, *Focus on the Family* with Dr. James Dobson, *In Touch* with

²¹⁹ CRTCLA, *Transcripts of the CRTC renewal hearing of Miracle Channel*, Vancouver, B.C., 18 October, 2001. Brief by Dick Dewert.

²²⁰ “Losing the Bridge,” *B.C. Christian News* Vol. 18 #8, Langley, British Columbia, 1998.

Charles Stanley, and *Decision Today* with Billy Graham, are among some of the more popular programs which are carried daily by Canadian single-faith stations. Likewise, single-faith television channels also carry many syndicated religious programs such as *Life Today* with James Robinson, *Life in the Word* with Joyce Meyer, *Kenneth Copeland Daily* with Kenneth Copeland, *This is your day* with Benny Hinn and the *700 Club* with Pat Robertson. Although many of these programs stress the importance of pure daily Christian living over proselytization, and are not characterized by the fundamentalist preaching of television programs such as the *Old Time Gospel Hour* with Jerry Falwell, and *Jimmy Swaggart Ministries* with Jimmy Swaggart, or the right-wing hard-line radio programs such as *The Dr. Laura Schlessinger Show* or *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, they do offer a limited point-of-view, which, at times, offends certain segments of the Canadian population. Even though most religious stations attempt to provide religious programming that they would deem as “socially responsible” and “constructive,” many stations across Canada still continue to air religious programs that are considered by many Canadians as controversial and defamatory.

Because many “secular” and single-faith stations continue to air right-wing American religious programming, some abusive and group-hatred statements mouthed by American right-wing broadcasters are heard on some occasions in the Canadian broadcasting system. Oddly enough, many of the complaints have been lodged against secular stations not single-faith stations. The reason for this is that secular stations have a larger viewership and probably a more diverse audience. Religious broadcasters such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Jimmy Swaggart, are among a group of religious broadcasters that have been slated by many Canadians as ‘bigots’ for making countless defamatory

remarks against religious groups. For instance, The Canadian Office of the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) has forwarded complaints to the CRTC for abusive comments aired on television and radio concerning the religion of Islam pronounced by American fundamentalist preachers.²²¹ An example of some of these defamatory statements is evident in a Jimmy Swaggart telecast that aired November 10, 2002, on CFMT. During the telecast, televangelist Swaggart called the prophet Muhammad a “sexual deviant” and “pervert” and suggested that some individuals should ‘take care’ of Muslims and “clean their noses with their teeth.”²²² In addition, complaints have been made against the program *Focus on the Family* for allegedly airing ‘group hatred’ statements against the homosexual community.²²³ Even the ‘so-called’ guardian of multicultural religious television, Vision TV, has been in breach of the Human Rights Clause of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters’ (CAB) ethical code when it aired an episode of *Power Today* hosted by US televangelist R.W. Schambach. On November 19, 2002, the show disseminated many defamatory and group-hatred comments directed towards the homosexual community.²²⁴ Consequently, the airing of American syndicated religious programming is a ‘catch-22’ circumstance. Because American evangelical programs are competitive and attempt to draw the viewer into supporting their ministries through pitched and polished advertising, they are able to flourish through the donations

²²¹ “CAIR-CAN files CRTC complaint against Toronto-based CFMT,”
<http://www.ottawamuslim.net/newsarticles/feature_cair-swaggart.htm>

²²² *ibid.*

²²³ CBSCEA, *Decision* 96-97-0155 16 December 1997. Canadian Broadcast Standards Council Official Website. <<http://www.cbsc.ca/english/decision/971216i.htm>>.

²²⁴ CAB Ethical Code. Clause 2. Recognizing that every person has the right to full and equal recognition and to enjoy certain fundamental rights and freedoms, broadcasters shall ensure that their programming contains no abusive or unduly discriminatory material or comment which is based on matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or mental disability. Canadian Broadcasters Association Official Website. <<http://www.cab-acr.ca>>.

of their targeted audiences. In addition, American evangelical programming can also survive the undesirable time slots of early morning television when viewer ship is almost non-existent. Therefore, single-faith and secular networks are happy to provide these time slots to American religious broadcasters in exchange for much needed revenue.

Consequently, the airing of American evangelical programming by Canadian networks causes a certain type of American fundamentalism to dominate the airwaves. Another unfortunate by-product of this practice is blatant religious intolerance where some American evangelical ministers use the forum of television to proselytize and discredit religious groups in an attempt to promote a minority and bigoted expression on the airwaves.

Conclusion

The CRTC's decision to allow single-faith broadcasting in Canada has allowed religious broadcasting to flourish in Canada. Countless single-faith radio stations have been licensed and a few single-faith ministries have been granted a UHF channel and have also received access to broadcast their programming via DTH satellite. With the creation of so many single-faith enterprises, Canadian society is currently witnessing the advent of the Canadian 'electric church.' With the exception of two foreign religious channels, all single-faith ministries that have been licensed by the CRTC are Canadian broadcasters who have been licensed to provide Canadians with 'home-grown' religious programming.

Interestingly, Canadian society has been exposed to two 'electric church' cultural movements. The first 'electric church' phenomenon took place during the late 1970s and during most of the 1980s where American religious fundamentalism seeped into the

Canadian broadcasting system through the expansion of American evangelical programming. Although some 'home grown' Canadian religious programming was created in the wake of this phenomenon through the development of CCCI, TTI and Vision TV, much of the growth of Canadian religious broadcasting was choppy, uneven and unstable. This is clearly evident when the 1987 and 1988 American televangelist scandals forced many Canadian ministries to the brink of bankruptcy and almost pushed Vision TV back to the drawing board.

That being said, the second 'electric church' phenomenon really began when the CRTC decided to allow single-faith programming in the Canadian broadcasting system in 1993. With the liberalization of the CRTC's religious broadcasting policies, single-faith broadcasting has flourished in Canada. However, this 'electric church' phenomenon is directly controlled by the CRTC. With the CRTC acting as the guardian of the Canadian broadcasting system, Canada's religious stations are very cautious in what they promote on the air. To many evangelical single-faith broadcasters, the government's regulations for religious broadcasting contained in CRTC 1993-78, further complicates matters for many single-faith broadcasters, to the CRTC it is the only effective way to ensure that single-faith religious broadcasters are responsible for certain elements of their programming. Because the CRTC controls the expansion, programming and advertising of all single-faith ministries, many single faith ministries have adopted practices which contravene the CRTC's broadcasting policies. Consequently, the CRTC's "domestication policy" has forced many single-faith ministries into becoming commercial entities where their original vision for evangelical programming has been marginalized in favour of multi-faith and alternative family programming. Inevitably, with the CRTC closely

monitoring single-faith stations, the Bible-thumpers and religious hucksters found in the U.S. Midwest and Southern Baptist states are almost non-existent in Canada. The CRTC has successfully marginalized the American fundamentalist tendencies of most Canadian evangelical broadcasters and tempered some salient aspects of their evangelical message.

CHAPTER IV

A FORERUNNER TO THE CANADIAN ELECTRIC CHURCH: CCCI

Part 3: A case study of Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. (CCCI)
An example on the development of Canadian Christian broadcasting

“Back in 1962, television was just making its way up into Northern Ontario, and the entire province was responding like a kid with a new toy. Television antennas were sprouting up on rooftops everywhere and since there was only one late movie a week in those days everyone stayed up to watch it.....the Lord opened a new dimension in our ministry-one that would have far-reaching ramifications in the future.”

David Mainse
 Televangelist
100 Huntley Street, 1983, p.106-7

In 1962, Reverend David Mainse was building Pentecostal churches far into the Canadian Shield among the sparse and isolated communities of Northern Ontario. Forty years later in 2002, Mainse had become the founder and CEO of Canada's largest single-faith broadcaster, with a powerful institutional apparatus that boasts an array of ministries under the umbrella of Crossroads Christian Communications (CCCI).

Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., is a non-denominational registered Canadian charitable organization, which uses television to launch an evangelistic and religious outreach ministry to individuals all across Canada and the world.²²⁵ It is an evangelical institution whose key objective is, “to add to and bring unity to the body of

²²⁵ Although there are no scholarly works which examine the cultural impact of CCCI, there have been some attempts in examining their history. David Mainse and David Manuel's books *100 Huntley Street* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983) and *Past, Present & Promise* (Toronto: Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., 1986) give an anecdotal and personal view on the development of Crossroads. For information concerning some of CCCI's broadcasting tours see David Mainse and David Manuel's *God Keep Our Land* (Toronto: Mainroads Productions Inc, 1981.) Also, see David Mainse and Wendy E. Nelles's *Impact Canada 100* (Burlington: Crossroads Christian Communications., 1992). For a work concerning missions see Cal R. Bombay's *Let My People Go!* (United States: Multnomah Publishers Inc., 1998) which gives a sobering account of the African nation of Sudan and its treatment of slavery.

Christ through direct and indirect evangelism, to enhance and augment the ministry of the local church and build understanding, credibility and attractiveness of life in Jesus Christ.”²²⁶ Founded and spearheaded by Reverend David Mainse, CCCI has enjoyed 40 years on television and 25 years for CCCI’s flagship program *100 Huntley Street*; both accomplishments were celebrated in Crossroads’ “25/40 Celebration Rally” in 2002. Mainse is best known for his successful program “100 Huntley Street,” which is a daily live television program that, “consists of various subjects of general interest. These subjects are presented in the forms of interviews or debates and are intermingled with special music.”²²⁷

Beginning with its inception in Deep River, Ontario, CCCI sprang from its roots from a weekly syndicated program launched in 1962, and has evolved into a powerful evangelical institutional apparatus which currently provides an over-the-air 24-hour television channel (CTS) which services the Golden Horseshoe region between St. Catharines and Toronto. In addition, this channel is also available nationwide through direct-to-home-satellite and continues to provide syndicated broadcasts of its programming to commercial stations across Canada and the world.²²⁸ CCCI’s visionary and multifaceted evangelical outreach agenda provides the Canadian public with a community outreach program, quality Christian and family-based programming, a 24 hour telephone-prayer ministry, a Broadcasting School, and 9 Circle Square Ranches for children. CCCI is also a member of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) and has an evangelical missions outreach program which has aided countless countries from

²²⁶ CCCIA, “*Celebration Rally 25/40: A History of Caring for the Future*”, pamphlet, July 2002, p.12.

²²⁷ CCCIA, Armando Alberto Machado de Silva and Andrew Lourenco, “An Evangelical Show on Video,” *Relididade Crista*, Brazil, November, 1980, n.p.

around the world through its Emergency Response and Development Fund (ERDF) and its partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Through the efforts of thousands of evangelicals, CCCI has become a Canadian national symbol and a *sine qua non* for thousands of Canadian citizens across Canada. In fact, through CCCI's 24-hour telephone ministry, 7,641,871 calls have been received for various personal needs and 90,382 viewers have made first-time decisions to follow the life set by Jesus Christ (refer to Table A-2).²²⁹ CCCI has also received national acclaim through its national unity outreach programs. In fact, Crossroads, on many occasions, has attempted to unify Canadian Christians during difficult times when social and political tensions in Canada have been high. Through CCCI's Salute to Canada Tour in 1981, Stars and Stripes Tour in 1983, Impact Canada 100 Cities Tour in 1991 and its contribution to 4 World Expos, CCCI has attempted to unify Canadians through prayer and unity tours.

Quite simply, CCCI is the biggest visible medium for Canadian evangelicals which is able to provide a 24-hour religious channel that services much of Ontario's heartland; the geographical corridor between St.Catharines and Toronto. With an estimated population base of 6, 243, 350, Crossroads is the most dominant single-faith broadcaster in the largest television market in Canada.

Although there are many individuals who support and encourage CCCI, there are many Canadians who loathe CCCI and its evangelical cause. In fact, hundreds of concerned Canadian citizens have described CCCI's outreach program as a tremendous misappropriation of funds and have compared David Mainse's ministries with the

²²⁸ Crossroads Official Website < <http://www.crossroads.ca/corporat.htm> >.

fundraising abuses and antics of a few American televangelists.²³⁰ CCCI has also been sued for libel statements,²³¹ and has been asked by hundreds of people, the CRTC and Global Television to “tone down” on some of its rhetoric on topics concerning homosexuality and abortion.²³² In addition, many religious groups and individuals have attempted to curb the expansion of CCCI by mailing in interventions, filing grievances and giving their opinions to the CRTC during the 1982 and 1992 Public Hearings on Religious Broadcasting. Nevertheless, CCCI continues to grow and continues to serve as a forum for public discourse for evangelicals to influence and address important issues in Canadian society.

The objective of this chapter is to view the development of religious broadcasting in Canada using Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., as a case study in order to examine the evolution and cultural impact of evangelical broadcasting in Canada. CCCI was selected for the simple fact that the evangelical outreach program of *100 Huntley Street* has been the most influential and widely viewed evangelical-based television program in Canada.²³³ Although a few large PAOC churches such as Elim Tabernacle in Saskatoon, Calvary Temple in Winnipeg, Queensway Cathedral and People’s Church in Toronto and many other Christian churches have implemented television ministries on

²²⁹ CCCIA, *All Centres Monthly Report- Telephone Calls*, Printed 4 July 2002.

²³⁰ Judith Haiven, *Faith, Hope No Charity*. (Vancouver: New Star Books Ltd., 1984). This book basically paints people like David Mainse and religious broadcasters as ‘intolerant bigots.’ In a forward written by Charles Templeton, he states David Mainse is ‘misguided’ (pg.9). Much of her research is based on personal reflections on religious broadcasting with very little research, analysis and understanding of the issues involved in Canadian religious broadcasting.

²³¹ CCCIA, Canadian Press, “Lion Serpent Sun wins \$10,000 damages in Satanist libel trial,” *Victoria B.C. Daily*, 20 July 1988, n.p. In 1988, Lion Serpent Sun, formerly known as Mark Fedoruk, slapped a libel suit on CCCI and Len Olsen because of an interview on 100 Huntley Street where Olsen claimed that Lion Serpent Sun attempted to sacrifice him in a satanic ritual. Lion Serpent Sun claimed that the activities were Wicca and not Satanist. He was awarded 10,000 dollars from CCCIA and Olsen.

²³² CCCIA, Canadian Press, Television program tones down statements,” *Star Phoenix*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 12 May, 1990, n.p.

public television channels for many years,²³⁴ most of their programming has run and continues to run in what is known as the religious 'ghetto' time of Sunday mornings. In the meantime, new 'home grown' television networks are just beginning to form such as CJIL-TV located in Lethbridge, Alberta and Trinity Television in Winnipeg, Manitoba. However, it will be some time before these ministries can expand and receive national accreditation like the institution of CCCI. The only notable exception that has rivaled Crossroads' influence in Canada that deserves recognition is Terry Winter and his program *The Terry Winter Show*, which was on the air for 30 years until his untimely death in 1999.²³⁵ Nevertheless, CCCI has grown to become an immense cultural idiom and a vanguard for Canadian Christian broadcasting in which evangelical Canadians have supported in order to have their faith represented in Canadian society.

An analysis on the evolution of CCCI, will reveal that evangelical Canadians have used the medium of television to assert their economic, social, religious and cultural strength on society as many evangelicals believe that the traditional, social and religious and cultural structures of mainstream Canadian society are inadequate to meet the demands of this age. Because of the financial support provided by thousands of evangelical Christians, CCCI is able to operate a diverse and comprehensive evangelical agenda which disseminates a particular evangelical worldview, whose basic position on a whole range of issues from evolution to abortion, differ greatly from other religious denominations or mainstream Canadian society. It has given the Canadian evangelical

²³³ Haiven, *Faith, Hope, No Charity*, p.50.

²³⁴ Thomas W. Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. (Mississauga: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994), p.305.

community a new status in public discourse and attempts to construct a *weltanschauung* of its own to promote a minority expression on television with a technological optimism that uncritically links the electronic media with the providential mission of God to preach the gospel to Canadians and to the rest of the world.

The first part of this chapter will analyze the historic and chronological development of CCCI and outline its impact and contributions to Canadian society through the growth of its ministries. This chapter will highlight three distinct phases in CCCI's development: syndication, live television and a 24-hour television station. The second part of the chapter will analyze the creation and impact of CTS which serves as a cultural beacon and as a public expression for thousands of evangelicals across Canada

The historical development of Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. (CCCI)

David Mainse, a Pentecostal ordained minister and native of Campbell River, Quebec, along with his wife, Norma-Jean, were evangelists and church builders in Pentecostal Assembly of God churches (PAOC) in the late 1950s and early 1960s after they both graduated from Bible college.

An innovator in Christian television, Mainse conceived the production of Christian telecasts when he purchased a 15-minute time slot on CHOV Pembroke to air a gospel-singing group called the "King's Men" in the early summer of 1962. The live production was an immediate success and two PAOC churches in Deep River and Chalk River, Ontario, funded David Mainse and a coterie of individuals to produce weekly productions. In 1964, Mainse moved to Sudbury and set up his television operation at the

²³⁵ Nancy Devine, "Respected evangelist dies," in *Anglican Journal*, <<http://www.anglicanjournal.com/125/02/canada12.html>>. As an evangelical Anglican, Terry Winter started his television ministries in 1975 until his death in 1999. His show was aired on 28 stations before his passing.

congregation of a Sudbury PAOC church to broadcast his programs. In addition, Mainse also founded the name of his broadcasts which he called "Crossroads." At the same time, Mainse still continued his broadcasts in Pembroke by sending them tapes of his Sudbury telecasts. Hence, beginning the process of Crossroads' syndication.²³⁶ With a zeal to expand his television ministries and inspired by Dr. Alan Walker's telephone outreach program "Life-Line," in Sydney, Australia,²³⁷ Mainse established a telephone ministry in Sudbury called "Telecare," which spread quickly across North America. As the Mainse family moved to other centres to pastor at PAOC congregations, the television ministry moved with them.

After a few years, through the process of syndication, the telecast *Crossroads* branched-out to the cities of Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, North Bay, Toronto, Quebec City, Montreal and Vancouver.²³⁸ Because of the growing influence of CCCI, the PAOC decided to take control over telecasts, and began to take a more instrumental role in financing and directing the course of this ministry. For instance, on January 6, 1967, the PAOC set up a steering committee, and created a Directorate and Executive Committee drawn from Pentecostals for the sole purpose of directing the *Crossroads* telecast.²³⁹ Although CCCI separated from the direction of the PAOC in 1977, and has operated as an independent non-denominational ministry ever since, the PAOC has greatly influenced the direction of Crossroads who have provided the ministry with financial and moral

²³⁶ Mainse and Manuel, *100 Huntley Street*, p.115.

²³⁷ For an interesting read on the beginning of telephone ministries see Alan Walker's, *Life Line: Help is as close as the telephone*. (Great Britain: Fontana Books), 1967.

²³⁸ Mainse and Manuel, *100 Huntley Street*, p.115.

²³⁹ PAOCA, "The Steering Committee," (Jan. 6 1967).

support. In fact, in the framework of the “Crossroads Constitution”, it clearly stipulates that CCCI shall, “conform to the general stated objects and purposes of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and shall subscribe to its Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths.”²⁴⁰

Consequently, in August of 1970, Mainse left his church for the pursuit of full-time television ministry. With the experience of radio, television and telephone ministries behind him and sponsored by thousands of donations, Mainse attempted to break out of his “narrow casting” syndicated programming in order to popularize CCCI by using the 1972 Grey Cup finals as a springboard to popularize his ministries. The sports-cast, which featured the Hamilton Tiger-Cats and Saskatchewan Rough-Riders vying for the Grey Cup, was an event where CCCI used television to spread the message of the gospel to a potentially untapped market through a more direct form of advertising. The vision of David Mainse, executive director of the Crossroads telecast, was to put the gospel message through a Grey Cup Christian celebration on television during prime-time to receive national attention.²⁴¹ Held at McMaster’s University gymnasium complex, the broadcast which followed the game, reached an estimated 10 million viewers across Canada and some areas in the United States.²⁴² During the broadcast, “Footballers pounded on to the stage of the University’s 4,000 seat physical complex...to speak enthusiastically about Jesus Christ.”²⁴³ Both CCCI and the PAOC thought that the 1972 Grey Cup Christian festival was a tremendous success because it reached the homes of

²⁴⁰ PAOCA, *Constitution Act of 1977*: Crossroads Christian Communications, art II sec. I

²⁴¹ PAOCA, *Festival*, pamphlet, 1972.

²⁴² *ibid.*

²⁴³ Charles Wilkinson, “God is alive on earth and moon says astronaut,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 4 December 1982, p.3.

millions of people who heard the Christian message live. The broadcast was seen coast to coast on 133 stations and the telecast was also seen on Dec. 16 and Christmas day.

Although Mainse's telecast paralleled the Americanized approach of using popular cultural events to spread a message to the public, it helped place Crossroads and Canadian evangelical broadcasting 'on the map.'

A year later in 1973, Mainse decided to diversify his religious ministry by creating family-based children programming. Mainse created a family-oriented program called "Circle Square," which was a series of shows that was dedicated to meeting the needs of youth and children all across Canada. These programs were a *mélange* of skits performed by children, cartoons, puppet shows and sing-alongs which expressed altruistic Judeo-Christian values. Although the program was a success in evangelical circles, these telecasts became mainstream when the CRTC demanded more airtime for family-based programming from commercial stations.

The reason for this was that the CRTC, during the 1970s, had become increasingly concerned over the seepage of American culture into Canadian society as the explosion of cable introduced the "Big Three Networks" (NBC, ABC, CBS) to millions of more Canadians. In effect, many Canadians became increasingly enthralled with American sitcoms, dramas and action shows. By 1975, there was an increasing concern in Canada concerning the violent nature of American television programs. This concern was especially directed towards the effects of violent television on Canadian children. This fear led to a grass-roots campaign against violent programming that advanced public knowledge and aided evangelical television broadcasting. Thousands of concerned citizens mailed letters asking for the CRTC to create more family-based programming in

the Canadian broadcasting system. The tremendous growth of telecommunications and American television stations in Canada prompted the federal government to appoint a panel of experts to investigate the effects of violence and the impact of American television on English Canadians, which resulted in the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry.²⁴⁴

Many Canadians in communities across Ontario objected to the level of violence in the media especially its effects on young children.²⁴⁵ The PAOC, for example, issued a memo in the summer of 1976 to all Pentecostal churches in Canada about the demoralizing effects of television on Canadian society. The memo stated that, “Children’s minds are filled with acts of violence which have been proven to have a harmful effect on their behaviour...If we are tired of the pollution of the air waves by violence, vulgarity and blasphemy we can do something about it.”²⁴⁶ The PAOC called for evangelical Christians to send complaints to the CRTC about the incidents of violence in the media because there was a deep concern for the moral well being of Canadian children.

²⁴⁴ Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), *The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry 1977*. On May 7, 1975, J. V. La Marsh, Lucien A. Beaulieu and Scott A. Young were appointed to investigate violence in the communications industry. The Commission was instructed to study the effects of violence in the communications industry, and to determine the connection, if any, between violence in the industry and violence in society. The panel undertook an ambitious research program analyzing the content of television, movies, radio, music literature and newspapers. The Commission concluded that there were problems with incidents of violence from American television and Canadian children were at risk from the result of these programs. This prompted the Commission to support children programs that were pro-social instead of violent and destructive.

²⁴⁵ PAC, *The Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry 1977*, Series RG 18-173, textual, p.346.

²⁴⁶ PAOCA, Memo from Robert M. Argue regarding Objectionable TV programs, (July, 1976).

CCCI through the affiliation with the PAOC, issued a report funded by an LIP grant titled "*Television and our Children*" to the Commission. The report conducted a 400 home survey in co-operation with the computer department of McMaster University which analyzed parental and child questionnaires.²⁴⁷ Through this 225-page report, CCCI concluded that many Canadians wanted more Christian and family programming represented in the Canadian broadcasting system. CCCI wanted to promote their program called *Circle Square*, which was a half-hour block that was dedicated to teach Christian values to young children.²⁴⁸ This program taught community values through a myriad of singing, cartoons, puppet-shows, and skits that appealed to many Canadian children and adults. CCCI wanted to make the program available to local community organizations; prepare support material for *Circle Square* programs; and offer a Canadian viewing audience pro-social material for young children.²⁴⁹ The Commission concluded that too many Canadian children were being exposed to violent American programs and that this exposure could induce children to cause crime in the community. Therefore, the Commission wanted more commercial networks to carry family programming.²⁵⁰ CCCI's *Circle Square* and the PAOC greatly benefited from their 225 page report to the Royal Commission. For instance, in an article in the *Pentecostal Testimony* that explained the success of the reports it states:

The Circle Square benefited greatly from the research and report of a year ago....
[Circle Square] has had a wide viewing audience on 28 stations and with satellites, 150

²⁴⁷ CCCIA, "Crossroads brief sees TV violence as dangerous to children," *Christian Inquirer*, 11 Jan, 1977, n.p.

²⁴⁸ PAC, *Royal Commission*, p.346.

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*

²⁵⁰ PAC, *Royal Commission*, p.62.

outlets in Canada and may be seen in the US soon as well. Circle Square has won awards of excellence in its field...recent surveys show that children six to eight years were viewing Circle Square.²⁵¹

The program *Circle Square* was an immediate success in Canada and internationally.

Many countries around the world such as Bermuda, United States, Britain, Hong Kong and the Philippines decided to carry the program.²⁵² In Canada, many commercial stations decided to air the program as a public service and also to meet their Canadian content requirements which helped popularize the program. In fact, CCCI did not have to pay any money for airtime because the broadcast created space in between the program for commercials which allowed stations to receive revenue from advertising.²⁵³ In the first 2-1/2 years following its release, some 50, 000 letters of appreciation and donations were received from children, parents, TV station managers, clergymen and educators. As a result of this program, many Canadians from all over Canada embraced CCCI's approach to children's television as the children's telecast, *Circle Square* provided children with Christian morals and values. From its inception in 1975, the program *Circle Square* ran for thirteen years and has been received in over 50 different countries around the world.

The advent of daily Canadian Christian television

The radical approach to attracting Canadians to evangelical Canadian Christianity by using live television can be credited to the support and efforts of the CCCI. In 1977, Mainse and his followers began to expand CCCI's horizons by leasing a property from Confederation Life for the purpose of creating a production studio to create daily

²⁵¹ PAOCA, "100 Huntley Street," *The Pentecostal Testimony*, August, 1977.

²⁵² CCCIA, Charles Wilkinson, "Hamilton boy makes his mark as TV evangelist," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 1980, n.p.

Christian television. Mainse envisioned a live daily telecast which would resemble a morning-show format where there would be personal interviews, testimonials, biblical discussions, guest speakers, question and answers sessions, tele-thons, and video-clip presentations. An enthusiastic live studio audience, groups of singers and a live telephone-counseling ministry would accompany this format.

On June 15, 1977, single-faith broadcasting and evangelical broadcasting expanded their frontier into the Canadian broadcasting system when *100 Huntley Street* aired its first daily broadcast. CCCI was the first single faith television ministry in Canada's history to purchase an immense broadcasting facility for the sole purpose of producing live Christian television which was a development that was *sui generis* in Canada. The daily broadcast of *100 Huntley Street* was a fusion of Pat Robertson's American talk show format from the *700 Club*, Alan Walker's Australian Life-Line telephone ministries and was characterized with David Mainse's Canadian patriotism and tempered but zealous evangelical message. The telecast dealt with a range of topics including: national and international news, the breakdown of the traditional family, depression, homosexuality, prostitution, drugs and pornography.²⁵⁴ Through the veil of CCCI, evangelicals were able to spread an evangelical message on a daily basis to Canadians across Canada and use *100 Huntley Street* as a forum to debate certain issues in Canadian society. The telecast was aired from 9:30a.m.-11:00 a.m. from Monday through Saturday. The Global Television Network in Toronto aired the program, which covered all of southern Ontario, from London to Ottawa, and allowed the program to be received in a

²⁵³ CCCIA, "Mainse wields television arsenal in body-count," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 14 April 1978, p.37.

²⁵⁴ CCCIA, "David Mainse the modern day marketing of Christ," *Business World Amazon Publication*, Sept/Oct, 1979, n.p.

potential viewing audience of nearly five million. At the time, the only other live programming in Canada was the CBC's *90 Minutes Live* which was a late-night talk show hosted by Peter Gzowski.²⁵⁵

After a few years, Global's six transmitting stations were able to provide Ontario, Quebec and the northern areas of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio with the daily telecast.²⁵⁶ This network of tele-communications broadcast the gospel message to a potential Ontario viewing audience between seven and eight million viewers. In addition, there were two other stations, one in Quebec City and another in Vancouver, British Columbia. The Vancouver transmission reached much of Washington State in and around the Puget Sound area. Many well-known personalities were guests on the program, among them: Pat Boone, Joey Smallwood, George Foreman, Pat Robertson, Billy Graham, Rex Humbard and Jimmy Swaggart.

With the introduction of live Canadian evangelical broadcasts through the program *100 Huntley Street* in 1977, many Canadians wondered why this program was the only real visible telecast on television for Christians. Press comments from both the secular and religious press took notice of the new phenomenon and wrote a series of articles in newspapers which ranged from very positive reactions to reserved criticism. As an illustration, one article exhorted the good work produced at CCCI as evidenced in this statement, "Remarkable things have happened...hundreds of separated families have

²⁵⁵ CCCIA, Tom Hill, "Salvation on Channel 6: Valley boy TV's key of evangelism," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 14 April 1978, n.p.

²⁵⁶ PAOCA, Earl Kulbeck, "Electronic Evangelism is Alive in Canada," typescript, (1977), p.15. This 18 page composition is a defense for the television broadcasting of *100 Huntley Street*. The paper defends the work of David Mainse and *100 Huntley Street* and gives a breakdown on the various ministries that CCCI has been involved with. [unpublished].

been brought together and hundreds of people seeking jobs have found employment.”²⁵⁷ Likewise, another editor in an article in the *Toronto Star*’s Sunday magazine felt that the ministry produced excellent programming and that, “....mentioning the other mighty works happening in this building is like a pie without the ice-cream....there are film animation of parables, Circle Square songbooks and record albums, ranch T-shirts. There is talk of kids; games....why not?”²⁵⁸ However, some individuals criticized the program *100 Huntley Street* and the new ‘electric church’ phenomenon. For instance, Tom Harpur, a religious editor of the *Toronto Star*, compared the telecast to fundamentalist American televangelists as he wrote, “He’s host of *100 Huntley Street*, a new daily TV show live from Toronto with all the razzle-dazzle of big-time US religious programming.”²⁵⁹ In another *Toronto Star* article, a freelance Catholic reporter Gregory Bation called *100 Huntley Street* and televised religion a “confessional box” as he stated, “they are dangerous as they emphasize spiritual feeling at the cost of ordinary physical way of meeting together in the body of Christ.”²⁶⁰ Moreover, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Ontario issued a public statement warning Catholics that *100 Huntley Street*’s evangelical message was too “narrow” and its total evangelical message on salvation and Christianity was “incomplete.”²⁶¹

Although many Canadians objected to televangelism and some aspects of *100 Huntley Street*’s Christian fundamentalism, CCCI remained on television and was supported

²⁵⁷ CCCIA, “100 Huntley Street present 100% living,” *Ancaster News*, 28 December 1977, n.p.

²⁵⁸ PAOCA, Anne Bayin, “100 Huntley Street: Starring David Mainse, Executive producer, God” *The City: The Toronto Star Sunday Magazine*, 11 December 1977, n.p.

²⁵⁹ PAOCA, Tom Harpur, “It two minutes to air time. Praise the Lord!” *The Toronto Star*, 8 October 1977, n.p.

²⁶⁰ PAOCA D. Gregory Bation, “You can’t get real fellowship through televised religion,” *The Toronto Star*, 17 December 1977, n.p.

primarily through the donations of Canadian evangelical Christians. The continued success of CCCI allowed them to expand and diversify their operations and develop a whole array of programming. Some programs catered specifically to physically challenged Canadians and other programs catered to ethnic minorities. CCCI worked with the deaf community to produce a series of language programs entitled, *Sign of Times*, which allowed the deaf to express themselves on television in subjects ranging from marriage to education.²⁶² Crossroads also produced Christian Multilingual programming (CMP) which have been done in: French, Italian, German, Ukrainian, Yugoslavian, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Finnish, Greek, Hindustani and Korean and eight other languages.²⁶³ CCCI also launched a Christian black heritage program called *Soul Set Free* which was a program that attempted to address some of the social and political issues concerning the status of Christian Afro-Americans in Canada.²⁶⁴ In 1980, CCCI was honoured by the Canadian Ethnic Press with an "Appreciation Award" because of their work in developing Christian multilingual programming to the ethnic communities in Canada and keeping with Canada's promotion of a mosaic pattern of cultural development.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ CCCIA, Tom Harpur, "Catholic Bishops of Ontario issue warning on televangelism," *The Toronto Star*, 19 February 1982, n.p.

²⁶² PAOCA, "Sign of the Times" *The Pentecostal Testimony*, October 1979, n.p.

²⁶³ CCCIA, Pamphlet, "What is Crossroads Christian Communications Inc.?" 1988, n.p.

²⁶⁴ CCCIA, Maureen Roach, "Soul Set Free makes Canadian TV debut," *Contrast*, June 1980, n.p.

²⁶⁵ PAOCA, "Christian Multilingual Programming Honoured by Canadian Ethnic Press," *The Pentecostal Testimony*, November 1980, n.p.

CCCI's national Christian unity and international evangelical outreach and missions campaigns (1980-1991)

In the early 1980s, the electronic church in Canada was riding a powerful wave of evangelical cultural osmosis from the United States caused by the dramatic increase in American fundamentalism *vis-à-vis* televangelism. Through the medium of television, an American evangelical phenomenon known as the "Moral Majority movement" had proliferated its way into the Canadian broadcasting system and began to influence Canadians to support American fundamentalist ministries and champion their collective cause.²⁶⁶ Consequently, the political aspect of this movement transplanted itself into Canada and was spearheaded through fundamentalist preacher Ken Campbell and his entourage of 60,000 followers.²⁶⁷ These individuals formed an activist fundamentalist organization called Renaissance International in an attempt to influence and intimidate Canadian politicians who supported homosexuality and abortion.²⁶⁸ No doubt influenced by the Moral Majority movement and the dramatic increase in American televangelism, CCCI embarked on a series of ambitious national and international evangelical outreach and mission programs during the 1980's in an attempt to popularize and expand Canadian evangelical broadcasting in Canada and into the world. Most of CCCI's outreach programmes attempted to link Canada's history and patriotism with Canada's

²⁶⁶ Reverend Jerry Falwell of Lynchburg Virginia founded the Moral Majority Movement in USA in 1979 to form conservative Christians into a powerful voting bloc and push for laws reflecting conservative values. In its hey-day, it boasted of a 4-million membership. It has opposed abortion, homosexuality, secular humanism, pornography, and the Equal Rights Amendment for women. It supports military spending, prayers in schools and the teaching of the bible in school.

<<http://www.hammer.prohosting.com/~penz/encycl/m6encyc.htm>>.

²⁶⁷ CCCIA, Jack Batton, "TV Preachers: Moral Force or Menace?" *Chatelaine*, November 1981, n.p.

²⁶⁸ For an interesting read on whether a "New Religious Right in Canadian society can flourish see John Simpson and Henry Macleod's "The Politics of Morality," in *Religious Movements: Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers*, ed. Rodney Stark (New York: Paragon House, 1985).

evangelical movement. In fact, many of the tours' themes were aimed at celebrating aspects of Canada's rich cultural history.

Beginning in April 29, 1980, a small contingent of *100 Huntley Street* supporters made a pilgrimage to Washington D.C. to gather and pray at the Mall for a "Washington For Jesus rally." This event was organized by members of the Moral Majority movement for a day of repentance and renewal for American fundamentalist churches. As 500,000 evangelicals attended the rally, many charismatic leaders of the movement announced to the audience gathered in front of the Capitol that Christian leaders throughout the world would organize similar movements in their own countries.²⁶⁹ Although Mainse did not attend the 500,000 people rally, the next year CCCI decided to use the medium of live television to, "unite the nation in prayer and to call on Canadian Christians to repent."²⁷⁰ When pressed with the influence of the Moral Majority on CCCI, Mainse attempted to separate himself from the movement by stating, "We're not a moral-majority type of movement that lobbies politicians on issues. What we want to do is to soak the country in prayer and lobby God through prayer, rather than politicians."²⁷¹

From June 1 to July 1, 1981, CCCI undertook an immense Canadian unity project and embarked on an historic mission to produce 25 live 90-minute daily telecasts from coast to coast in 25 Canadian cities in only 31 days. In what was called the "Salute to Canada Tour," CCCI toured across Canada on a cross-country pilgrimage with a convoy of vehicles and 33 tons of broadcasting equipment. Beginning in Burnaby, British Columbia and ending on Dominion Day July 1, in front of the Province House in Charlottetown,

²⁶⁹ CCCIA, "Washington For Jesus," pamphlet, April 1980, n.p.

²⁷⁰ Mainse and Manuel, *God Keep Our Land*, p.2.

²⁷¹ CCCIA, Robin Barstow, "100 Huntley Street takes to the road," *Edmonton Journal*, 6 June 1981, n.p.

PEI, CCCI visited 10 Canadian provinces and all of their capital cities as they celebrated aspects of Canada's historical roots and spiritual heritage. During the 31-day period, CCCI broadcasted their flagship program *100 Huntley Street* from a different location each day on the Global TV network. Many of the telecasts were produced in front of provincial legislatures and Canadian landmarks in an attempt to link Canadian patriotism and nationalism with CCCI's evangelical unity tour. Mainse aptly paints these word pictures and vignettes in his book *Impact Canada 100*.

"Our outdoor surroundings were featured on 100 Huntley Street daily, as our broadcasts were beamed from the lawns of Victoria's Legislative Building, from the streets of Regina and Winnipeg, from Parliament Hill in Ottawa, from a terrace overlooking old Quebec City, from the docks of Halifax, from the harbour at St. Johns and, on July First, from Province House in Charlottetown, where Confederation became a reality. There, we sang "O Canada," and as we came to the line "God keep our land," we released 115 red helium balloons—one for each year in which He had done so in His faithfulness."²⁷²

These broadcasts consisted of singing, preaching, prayers and interviews with some of Canada's most prominent politicians and clergymen. In fact, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (who attended the Parliament Hill broadcast), congratulated, "Reverend David Mainse and the organizers of this "Salute to Canada" for inviting all [Canadians] to think about the debt we owe to the faith of our fathers and to the spiritual heritage which finds expression in countless ways in our daily lives."²⁷³ Most of the cities that David Mainse visited produced positive newspaper publications concerning the coast-to-coast spectacle. As one observer aptly summarized the event, "Salute to Canada is over. But the impact on thousands of individual lives during that month will not pass away. God spoke to a country in June 1981....and hundreds of thousands of people were listening."²⁷⁴

²⁷² Mainse and Nelles, *Impact Canada 100*, p.45.

²⁷³ *ibid.*, p.242.

²⁷⁴ CCCIA, Paul Knowles, "Salute to Canada winds up tour," *TV News*, July 19-July 15 1981, p.7.

A year later, with the experience of the "Salute to Canada Tour," behind them, CCCI went to Washington D.C. and provided live coverage of America's Independence Day celebrations, from July 4th to July 8th in a series of broadcasts entitled "The Maple Leaf Salutes the Stars and Stripes." These telecasts, which featured interviews with high profile American Christians, were broadcasted from the National Mall each morning and were dedicated to promoting the history, glory and spiritual roots of American culture. These broadcasts were played on Canada's Global TV and American broadcasts were carried live by PTL and NCN satellites to 750 US cities. Mainse believed it was necessary to, "say thanks to Americans for being such great neighbours."²⁷⁵

Another project of CCCI during the 1980s and early 1990s, was to spread their gospel message throughout Western Europe and at pavilions at World Expositions. Because CCCI was unable to receive an over-the-air television license from the CRTC, Mainse decided to redirect some of his energies to an European outreach program.²⁷⁶ First, from 1980 to 1985, CCCI expanded its influence in Europe through an evangelical outreach program. In a series of conventions and conferences in various Western European countries, CCCI helped established "Eurovision," which was a fellowship of concerned Christians from Western Europe.²⁷⁷ CCCI expanded its evangelical outreach program by donating a million dollar mobile television unit to European Christians in order to enable Christian television organizations throughout northern Europe to up-link to satellites to distribute Christian programming to Western Europe. In addition, CCCI also provided many Western European commercial stations with syndicated telecasts of its

²⁷⁵ CCCIA, untitled, *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 2 July 1983, n.p.

²⁷⁶ CCCIA, "Deregulation boosts Christian TV," *Calgary Herald*, 17 November 1984, n.p.

²⁷⁷ Mainse and Manuel, *Past, Present & Promise*, p.25.

programming such as *Circle Square* and some of its Christian multilingual productions to countries such as Italy, Germany and Britain.

In addition to the European outreach agenda, CCCI participated in World Expositions at Expo' 86 in Vancouver, Canada; Expo' 88 in Brisbane, Australia; Expo' 92 in Seville, Spain and at Expo'00 in Hanover, Germany. Beginning in 1986, CCCI, World Vision Canada and countless of other individuals decided to undertake an immense project by creating a \$5.1 million dollar pavilion at Expo'86. Evangelical Christians across Canada financially supported the multi-million construction of a 300-seat amphitheater "Pavilion of Promise" in Vancouver's Expo '86.²⁷⁸ The PAOC were staunch supporters, as they donated \$100,000 dollars to this ephemeral project of CCCI.²⁷⁹ The purpose of the pavilion was to communicate an abridged but sensational presentation of Christianity during Expo'86 which would run from May 2, to October 13. Although there was supposed to be a multi-faith pavilion at Expo '86, the interfaith pavilion was cancelled due to escalating costs and conflicts over the construction and design of the facility.²⁸⁰ When CCCI was given the opportunity to develop their own pavilion, leaders of the Pacific Interfaith Citizenship Association (PICA) who represented many different religious faith groups, filed grievances to the federal government's Multicultural minister and to Expo officials claiming that the decision to allow CCCI to build the only religious pavilion contravened Canada's multicultural policies.²⁸¹ A few months later, PICA decided to file a petition to the B.C. Supreme Court claiming that the CCCI's proposed

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p.166.

²⁷⁹ PAOCA, Donation certificate of \$100,000 dollars from Crossroads Christian Communications, (June 30, 1986).

²⁸⁰ CCCIA, "Pavilion at Expo," *TV Times*, 28 December 1984, n.p.

“Pavilion of Promise” violated the rights of Canadian citizens that were protected in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The B.C. Supreme Court dismissed PICA’s bid to block CCCI’s Expo project and a few months later, the B.C. Court of Appeal also dismissed an appeal by PICA to change their previous decision.²⁸² Nevertheless, on opening day the “Pavilion of Promise” presented laser shows, cinematic displays, live singing and public demonstrations which presented the Christian version of creation and the dramatic presentation on the life of Jesus Christ.²⁸³ The spectacle was also accompanied by the music of the National Philharmonic Orchestra of England and British writer Malcolm Muggeridge narrated the presentation.²⁸⁴ CCCI and World Vision of Canada believed that the project was a tremendous success as millions of people were engaged in CCCI’s presentation of “The Scroll.” After Expo’86, CCCI has showcased various “Pavilions of Promise,” at expositions in Brisbane, Australia; Seville, Spain; and Hannover, Germany. CCCI believes that the story of salvation presented at these pavilions has had a lasting spiritual impact on the lives of millions of people across the world.²⁸⁵ In addition, CCCI claims that during Expo’86 in Vancouver 17,000 individuals became ‘born again’ and two years later in Brisbane, Australia, 10,000 first-time decisions to follow Christ were recorded.²⁸⁶

The final nationwide evangelistic initiative that CCCI embarked on during the late 1980s and early 1990s was the Impact Canada 100 Tour. The nationwide tour was

²⁸¹ CCCIA, James Oakes, “Expo’s approval of evangelists’ pavilion draws groups’ ire,” *The Globe and Mail*, 19 April 1985, n.p.

²⁸² CCCIA, Canadian Press, *The Kamloops News*, 14 March 1986, n.p.

²⁸³ Mainse and Manuel, *Past, Present, Promise*, p.205.

²⁸⁴ CCCIA, Moira Farrow, untitled, *The Vancouver Sun*, 13 March 1985.

²⁸⁵ CCCIA, *Celebration Rally 25/40: A History of Caring for the Future*, July 2002, p.7.

²⁸⁶ CCCIA, “Expo Production Travels The World,” *Christian Info News*, Vancouver, B.C., 12 August 1990.

designed to unify and immerse Canadians in prayer through an evangelical tour that would visit 100 cities from the Pacific to the Atlantic coasts across Canada. Mainse believed it was necessary to promote the campaign because of the Oka crisis and the failed Meech Lake efforts which heightened many cultural divisions within Canadian society.²⁸⁷ CCCI visited 100 Canadian cities and met with approximately 3 000 church ministers and full-time church workers, and many of the representatives of Canada's provincial and federal political parties.²⁸⁸ Mainse believed that the initiative was a success as thousands of were Canadians unified in the effort and immersed themselves in prayer for the spiritual unity of Canada.

The development of CCCI's foreign and national missions program

One of CCCI's greatest accomplishments is the development of its foreign-missions program. In 1977, Mainse began to embark on an ambitious foreign-missions outreach program when CCCI donated time and facilities to World Vision of Canada for the World Vision/CCCI "Vietnam Boat People Telethon," which raised \$650,000 for the plight of Vietnamese refugees.²⁸⁹ A few years later, Mainse established CCCI's Emergency Response and Development Fund (ERDF) in 1982, which was created to respond, "to death, destruction, and psychological trauma caused by disasters, war and poverty in developing nations of the world."²⁹⁰ Mainse was inspired to establish the fund due to an immense famine which swept over many African nations during the early 1980s. Mainse felt that it was one of the most devastating disasters of the twentieth

²⁸⁷ Mainse and Nelles, *Impact Canada 100*, p.21.

²⁸⁸ *ibid*, p.50.

²⁸⁹ CCCIA, "Our Past Present & Future," *Centurion* (Burlington, Crossroads Christian Communications Publications, 1992), p.12.

²⁹⁰ CCCIA, pamphlet, "Our Mission: Out where the need is," n.d., n.p.

century where, “literally millions of fellow human beings were facing one of the cruelest forms of death-extinction through indifference.”²⁹¹

Beginning in 1982, during the onset of the Ethiopian famine, Mainse utilized the medium of television through the program *100 Huntley Street* as a vehicle to bring public awareness to Canadians concerning the immense humanitarian and developmental needs of citizens in third world countries. In a series of tele-thons entitled the “100% Africa Famine Fund,” images of emaciated children and impoverished living conditions in Ethiopia were aired on *100 Huntley Street*. Thousands of concerned Canadians responded to the telecasts and CCCI raised 3.5 million dollars to distribute foodstuffs, medical supplies, clothing and seed grain to the nation of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian crisis began a series of ongoing missionary campaigns for CCCI. CCCI has responded to the humanitarian crisis of the world through short-term ‘emergency response’ initiatives and longer-term ‘development projects.’ CCCI has intervened in many short-term projects where it has aided many disaster-prone countries where earthquakes, hurricanes and famine are commonplace. CCCI has responded to the devastating effects of hurricanes and typhoons in countries such as Bangladesh, Jamaica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. The countries of El Salvador, Mexico and Armenia, Italy and India have also received aid and support from CCCI due to the devastating effects of earthquakes. In addition, CCCI has also helped the countries of Russia, Ukraine, South Lebanon, Cambodia, Israel and countless other nations in providing them with food relief and equipment. However, much of CCCI’s focus has been focused on the continent of Africa. Currently, CCCI is involved with

²⁹¹ Mainse and Manuel, *Past, Present & Promise*, p.61.

providing the countries of Kenya, Zambia, Sudan, and Sierra Leone with financial support through a myriad of development projects.

As a result of the Emergency Response and Development Fund (ERDF), CCCI has gained national and international acclaim for a variety of worldwide disaster relief projects, as well as helping those right here in Canada, such as the victims of the 1997 Manitoba flood and the 1998 Eastern Ontario-Quebec ice storms. CCCI is recognized by the Government of Canada as a reputable and approved non-government organization (NGO) for the purposes of its funding of overseas relief efforts through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).²⁹²

CITS-TV: 24 hour Christian and family programming

The creation of Crossroads Television System (CTS) is perhaps the greatest achievement of David Mainse. With the deregulation of the CRTC's religious broadcasting policies in 1993, CCCI received an over-the-air license in 1998 and began to develop and distribute a whole array of evangelical programming to the Canadian public. On September 30, 1998, CTS (channel 36, cable 9 Toronto-1998), was available both over the air and on cable to 5.9 million people (50 percent of Ontario's population), and an estimated 10 million Canadians are now able to receive the CTS channel. CTS broadcasts are comprised of television programs that offer a variety of inspirational and wholesome family programming. David Mainse, executive director of Crossroads claims that between 300,000 and 500,000 Canadians, "tune in religiously to CCCI television."²⁹³ This 24 hour station, which is operated as an independent commercial station is available

²⁹² For an in-depth view on some of CCCI's current mission programs see < <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/directory.nsf/vE/4TNT7u?openDocument#3Rm> >.

²⁹³ PAOCA, Paul Mitchinson, "Spreading the good word via space satellite" *The Post*, 7 June 1992.

nationwide through direct-to-home satellite and other cable system operators are adding CTS to their cable systems.²⁹⁴

CTS's national headquarters and production facilities is situated on an five-acre site in Burlington, Ontario, which is near the scenic crossroads of the QEW, and the 400-Series highways of the 403 and 407, that faces an endless torrent of traffic on one of Canada's busiest interchanges, located between Toronto, Hamilton and Niagara Falls. Currently, through its television service, Crossroads is able to provide "Family Friendly Television" into an estimated 10 million Canadian homes.²⁹⁵ Evidently, Crossroad's television headquarters has become a regional construct in the Greater Toronto Area and is even demarcated by the "Ontario, Yours to Discover" provincial highway signs. Inside this state-of-the-art television production centre are a five-screen presentation theatre, a bookstore and gift-shop, courtyard restaurant, a 24-hour counseling centre, a chapel and a museum of Biblical artifacts.

CTS claims to carry programs that promote positive values and moral decency, as well as broadcasting a wide variety of Christian and non-Christian ministry programs. Originally, the architects behind CTS were mainly evangelical Christians who are affiliated with CCCI and wanted to utilize the over-the-air television channel to expand their markets in order to provide the Canadian public with evangelical programming which disseminates Judeo-Christian ethics in an evangelical format. However, with the CRTC's insistence that single-faith broadcasters adhere to the "balance" provision and other specific requirements contained in each of their specific 'Conditions of Licenses,'

²⁹⁴ CTSA, Dick Gray, "CTS Television Facts," 15 February 2002.

²⁹⁵ CTSA, Dick Gray, "C TS Television Stats," 15 February 2002.

much of CCCI's emphasis on evangelical proselytization has been marginalized.

Although many of CCCI's programs such as *100 Huntley Street* attempt to promote a specific Christian way of life to Canadians, much of the nature and emphasis of their programming is ecumenical and is geared towards wholesome family living.

The wide range of religious programming offered on CTS, licensed on April 9, 1998 and, which began September 1998, is an impressive example of how Canadian television and religion can be creatively brought together on many levels. CTS, conceived by its operators as a "single-faith Christian programming" that offers "Family Friendly Television,"²⁹⁶ was licensed by the CRTC under fairly specific Conditions of License²⁹⁷ meant to prevent the kind of religious abuses such as interfaith quarreling. One aspect of its programming mandate is to "provide paid access time to multi-faith communities and broadcast ministries."²⁹⁸ Thus, the network offers a wide array of televangelical programs, but also offers many non-televangelical programs sponsored by mainstream Christian ministries and non-Christian religious communities. CTS programs have featured such televangelists as Charles Stanley, James Robison, Benny Hinn, and Jack Van Impe. Among other offerings have been such programs as *Islam Today*, *Voice of Hinduism* and *Insights into Sikhism*.²⁹⁹ The network also produces its own 'in-house' programs, many of which involve the promotion of interfaith dialogue and Christian ecumenicalism. An example of this type of programming is a talk show known as *Michael Coren Live* where religious groups debate points of theology and attempt to find

²⁹⁶ CCCIA, "CRTC Licenses New Religious Television Station," April 9, 1998 *News Release*.

²⁹⁷ CRTCEA, "Decision CRTC 98-123," pg 3. www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Decisions/1998/DB98-123.HTM

²⁹⁸ *ibid*, p. 3.

²⁹⁹ CTSA, "CTS Program Schedule Winter 2002."

some commonalities or middle ground in their discussions. In addition, the network has been required by “Condition of License” to offer an extensive amount of network-produced and other programming about religion and so-called ‘values-based’ fare designed to appeal to persons of all religious beliefs intended to create a balanced forum for the discussion of religious life in Canada. The programs it offers in this category are in fact often classified as religious, though they are very different indeed from televangelical programs and other programs that concentrate on proselytizing. It also offers regularly scheduled programs featuring interviews with spiritual leaders and social reformers, panel discussions of social problems, religious music and short documentary features.

Some of the programming on CTS is self-righteous, dogmatic, but much of it is also well conceived, stimulating and uplifting. In any event, the network certainly offers as Mainse claims, the “radically different alternative” to the general fare provided by other networks.³⁰⁰ The range of religious programs that it offers is particularly impressive, although interestingly enough, virtually every type of religious or quasi-religious program that it presents has been witnessed before on ordinary commercial and public television stations.

Incidentally, CTS is not able to stay ‘afloat’ solely on the merits of its self-produced Christian programming or imported American fundamentalist ministries. In the 1990’s CTS acquired the syndication rights to many family friendly programs such as *Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman*, and Aaron Spelling’s *7th Heaven*, as well as long running re-run sitcom staples such as *Family Ties*, *Happy Days*, *Growing Pains*, *Mr. Belvedere*, and *Leave*

it to Beaver. These shows not only bring in the bulk of advertising dollars to the network, which in turn are used to help fund their staple religious programming, but these also draw new viewers to the channel. In many cases, the popular syndicated shows act as 'lead-ins' to the Christian shows, which automatically guarantees higher viewer-ship. During the peak hours of CTS' non-traditional programming, they also air countless 'promos' of their religious agenda shows, a practice used by all the popular broadcast networks. For example, NBC's *ER* has helped launch other popular shows such as *Third Watch* and *The West Wing* by airing commercials for the dramas during its highly rated telecast that is aimed at the same audience (adults 18-49) as the freshman dramas. David Mainse justifies his use of technology by stating, "Technology has always been with us...When St. Paul the apostle traveled, he used the latest technology of his day. Maybe it was a sailboat, but that was the latest at the time."³⁰¹

Conclusion

During the late 1970s and well into the 1980s, CCCI was at the forefront of single-faith broadcasting in Canada. Because there were barely any 'home grown' single-faith ministries on the medium of television and radio at this time, CCCI was able to develop an array of ministries and a comprehensive agenda which allowed it to embark on hundreds of stewardship drives, missions projects and outreach programs in an attempt to further their evangelical cause across Canada and the world. From a simple syndicated broadcast in 1962, CCCI has become a national symbol and a beacon of hope for thousands of Christians across Canada.

³⁰⁰ David Mainse, interview by author, 22 May 2003, personal, Burlington, Ontario.

³⁰¹ PAOCA, Peter Cheney, "Praise the Lord and pass the video cam: Christians go forth with bells, whistles," *The Toronto Star*, 20 March 1993, n.p.

Interestingly, much of CCCI's development and evangelical objectives have been directly influenced by the cultural forces of American right-wing fundamentalism and televangelism which have been transplanted and filtered into the national consciousnesses of thousands of Canadians. This is clearly evident in many of CCCI's visionary evangelical outreach programs that characterized much of its development during the 1980s. Quite arguably, CCCI's Salute to Canada Tour, The Stars and Stripes Tour, Eurovision, the Pavilion of Promises and the Impact Canada 100 Cities Tour, mirror the American evangelical urban revivalism phenomenon which is a characteristic of the American 'electric church.'³⁰² In fact, CCCI's ministries expressed through CITS-TV and its flagship program *100 Huntley Street* in Canadian society is comparable to Pat Robertson's CBS and its popular program *700 Club* in American society. While CBS and the program *700 Club* form a nexus around much of the bible belt of the Southern United States, CCCI seems to be the symbol and fulcrum of evangelical broadcasting in Canada which is geographically located in the political and economic heart of Canada.

However, despite the fact that there are some profound similarities in CCCI's approach to televangelism and American televangelism, there are some fundamental differences. First, CCCI's approach to evangelism has been ecumenical and trans-denominational. This aspect differs widely from the sectarian and fundamentalist religious practices of American televangelists. Although CCCI is supposed to subscribe to the beliefs and tenets of Canadian Pentecostalism, its evangelical approach to televangelism is trans-denominational and attempts to bridge the gap between all evangelistic elements in the Canadian Christian church. Much of CCCI's vision and

³⁰² Frankl, *Televangelism*, p.4.

tempered evangelical message has sought to unify Canadian Christians through prayer in an attempt to reorient Canadian Christians to focus on the importance of social Christianity. This focus differs greatly from the 'holy roller' rhetoric and "health and wealth" messages of American televangelists whose focus lies primarily with the individual. In addition, CCCI has weaved Canada's mosaic pattern of development into its message by producing multilingual programming with a passionate vision to develop third world communities. Also, CCCI operates as a non-denominational registered Canadian charitable organization with no capital stock which is also quite different from the electronic empires and excesses of many American televangelists.

To close, in using CCCI as a lens to observe the Canadian 'electric church' phenomenon, it is clearly evident that Canadian single-faith broadcasting differs widely from the practices of American single-faith broadcasting. These differences lie within the very fabric of Canadian society itself. With the CRTC acting as the social and cultural guardian of the Canadian broadcasting system, much of the development of CCCI, and more generally speaking the Canadian 'electric church,' has been circumscribed and directed by this federal regulatory body. The CRTC's religious broadcasting policies have ensured that Canadian single-faith broadcasters are held accountable for what they disseminate and promote over-the-air. In turn, this has caused single-faith broadcasters such as CCCI to tone down some of its evangelical message and incorporate other religious perspectives into its ministries in order to receive concessions from the CRTC. This process of 'domestication' attempts to saturate some important aspects of the evangelical message in order to bring religious broadcasting into mainstream Canadian

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society.³⁰³ Ultimately, with the CRTC controlling aspects of single-faith broadcasting, CCCI and the Canadian 'electric church' are held accountable for their evangelical messages in order to preserve the CRTC's vision for tolerance, order and collective freedom in Canadian society.

³⁰³ For an interesting read on the CRTC's domestication policy, see Alec Scott's, "A New Deal for Religious Broadcasting in Canada? Continuing Political and Legal Pressures for Change," in *Media & Communications Law Review* (1994).

CONCLUSION

From an examination of evangelical culture in Canada, the American electronic church, the institution of CCCI, and the development of single-faith broadcasting in Canada, the extent in which the federal government and the evangelical community have wrestled for control over the social and moral heartbeat of the Canadian nation remains startling. The issue of single-faith broadcasting exemplifies the ongoing conflict between these two cultural entities.

Max Weber, famous for his work on religion and culture, identified two contrasting typologies concerning religion's view of the world as defined as his "inner-worldly" and "other-worldly" concepts³⁰⁴ which are similar to what Durkheim described as the sacred and the profane. Durkheim described the existence of religion in human culture as a unified system of beliefs and practices associated with sacred entities. These beliefs and practices provided a key in assisting social cohesion to unify the moral community or the social group into what is known as a church.³⁰⁵ Part of the difficulty in assessing the electric church phenomenon and evangelical culture in general can be traced to an erosion of boundaries between the sacred and profane. Interestingly, the evangelical community in the early half of the twentieth-century was once held in high esteem by mainstream society as they were regarded as "trailblazers" in their pursuits of Christianizing and reforming Canadian society. Evangelicals were able to expand their power base in society through: mass revivalism, their efforts in developing Canadian

³⁰⁴ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, trans., Talcott Parsons (United States: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

³⁰⁵ W.S.F. Pickering, *Durkheim on religion: A Selection of readings with bibliographies*, (Great Britain: Routledge&Kegan Ltd., 1975).

universities and colleges and were also quite instrumental in shaping social legislation.³⁰⁶ However, Protestant Christianity between the years 1900 and early 1940s, which focused primarily on social evangelism, does not exist on the same scale in contemporary Canadian society. With the rise of modernization and secularization, the evangelical community has lost much of its power base through secular institutions which have usurped their previous commitments and have transmuted the function of organized religion to become as Bibby states, “a neatly packaged consumer item taking its place among other commodities that can be bought or bypassed according to one’s consumption whims.”³⁰⁷

Current scholarly evidence suggests that the evangelical community no longer has a determining role in providing the main direction in shaping the moral and social landscape of Canadian society as they once held in the early twentieth-century. In fact, evidence suggests that the evangelical community in Canada has moved towards a defensive posture and has mobilized its energies into preserving “its own” from the grasp of secular society instead of working within society’s institutions to effect change.³⁰⁸ Evangelicals are torn between two worlds: that of secular society and the Christian way of life. The development of the Canadian electronic church and the advent of single-faith broadcasting can be seen as outgrowth of this mentality and as an attempt to hold secular society ‘at bay,’ in order to provide alternative values for the Christian community than what is being disseminated from the government and mainstream society.

³⁰⁶ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity*. (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), xiii.

³⁰⁷ Bibby, *Fragmented Gods*, p. 2.
 Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 1993.

According to Canadian evangelical broadcasters, single-faith broadcasting is a God-given gift and a fundamental right that is protected under Canadian law and enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Throughout the twentieth-century, evangelical broadcasters have struggled for the right to broadcast their religious messages on the medium of television and radio by: applying for hundreds of broadcasting licenses, petitioning members of Parliament with interventions and grievances (in order to force the CRTC into changing their religious broadcasting policies), initiating small and fledgling broadcasting enterprises, and a small number of broadcasters have even engaged in civil disobedience all in an attempt to have access to the electronic media and have their share of representation in the Canadian broadcasting system. And yet, the combined mediums of radio and television and other tools of mass communications are the epitomes of secular life and popular culture, marketing mediums for consumer goods and a stage which presents sport events, Hollywood celebrities and escapist values. Although televangelists disparage the electronic media as a source of secular humanism, moral relativism, violence, pornography and licentiousness, the reality is that they themselves (like the cowboy kid in Charlie in the Chocolate factory) are part of the television universe.

This dichotomy clearly presents a moral dilemma for the electronic church in Canada. Since the cost of broadcasting is significant to stay on the airwaves, much of the donations and funding is received by the Canadian electric church barely covers the operating costs and expenses of their broadcasting enterprises. In addition, most religious programming is not subsidized which, in turn, forces religious programmers to adapt to the competitive nature of commercial broadcasting where profit making pitches and

production techniques used by televangelists seriously marginalizes the quality of their programming and compromises the doctrine of their religious messages. Studies of the American 'electric church' by American scholars have revealed that the 'electric church' and its message are primarily targeted towards the evangelical community and that its methods of televangelism are not particularly effective for the evangelization of society.

What further complicates matters for the Canadian electronic church and those who endorse its social and moral agenda, is that the Canadian government operates in its own right as a cultural guardian and moral gate-keeper to Canadian society in which its own cultural agendas and vision (more often than not), run into conflict with the theological outlooks of religious broadcasters and organized religion in general. An analysis of federal regulatory bodies' agendas, actions and attitudes concerning the issue of single-faith broadcasting throughout the twentieth-century, reveals an cultural institution bent on ensuring collective harmony and collective freedom over individual rights and individual religious expression. Although the CRTC has deregulated its religious broadcasting policies by allowing single-faith broadcasters to own their own broadcasting licenses and stations as outlined in CRTC *Public Notice* 1993-78, a neo-regulatory apparatus has also been created in the wake of this legislative provision in order to ensure that the Canadian 'electric church' or the single-faith broadcasting phenomenon can be thoroughly controlled and brought into mainstream Canadian society.

Currently, the Canadian electronic church has been led primarily by small bands of evangelical groups who have quickly expanded their broadcasting enterprises into the Canadian broadcasting system for the last ten years and have proved to the CRTC that there is, indeed, a market for their religious messages in Canadian society. Their

considerable growth and expansion can unquestionably attest to this fact. However, its own effectiveness to champion the causes of evangelicalism, missionary work, ecumenicalism, Christian unity, and provide an alternative lifestyle to Canadians, remains highly suspect. Although the Canadian electronic church is highly regulated by the federal government, and at times, is forced to accommodate its religious agendas in order to satisfy federal policies, many of these stations, (to use Bibby's terminology) are 'fragmented' from each other and each station is primarily focused on its own economic survival. If the Canadian electronic church (which is characterized by small groups of evangelicals), continues to display an "us vs. them" mentality concerning the nature of secular society and "Christian society," their cause to promote a Christian lifestyle within Canadian society will be lost for there will be no unity in which to challenge the cultural aegis of the federal government. Invariably, the current topic of "same-sex marriage" will reveal if the Canadian electronic church has any real influence on the cultural and social policies of the federal government.

Ultimately, the issue of single-faith broadcasting in Canada clearly demonstrates a divisive cultural fault-line and battleground between the federal government and the evangelical community over who will define the values and ethics that will come to dominate Canadian society.

APPENDIX A

**LIST OF ALL SINGLE-FAITH BROADCASTERS IN CANADA AFTER
CRTC 1993-78**

Table A-1. Single-faith broadcasting enterprises collated list includes: (television stations, radio stations and transmitters). Arranged Alphabetically by Province.

Licensee Name	CRTC Decision	Date	Wattage	Province/City
ALBERTA				
Touch Canada Broadcasting Inc.	96-729	Oct.29/1996	47,000 watts	Edmonton, AB
The Miracle Channel Association CJIL-TV (Television)	95-129	Apr.4/1995	31,600 watts	Lethbridge, AB
The Miracle Channel Association (transmitter) (Television)	99-71	Mar.30/1999	3820 watts	Bow Island, AB
The Miracle Channel Association (transmitter)(Television)	2001-491	Aug.13/2001	790 watts	Burnis, AB
Spirit Broadcasting Ltd.	2000-743	Nov.29/2000	50 watts	Lethbridge, AB
The Church of Nazarene of Rimbey	2001-579	Sept.12/2001	1.6 watts	Rimbey, AB
Touch Canada Broadcasting Inc.	2003-1	Jan.7/2003	100,000 watts	Edmonton, AB
Tag Broadcasting	2000-436	Nov.8/2000	50 watts	Wetaskiwin, AB
BRITISH COLUMBIA				
The B.C. Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches (TV)	99-107	May.20/1999	50 watts	Abbotsford, BC
Christian Family Inspirational Radio Ministries	99-468	Oct.18/1999	26.5 watts	Prince Rupert, BC
CHNU-TV (Trinity Television) (Television)	2000-218	July 6/2000	18,000 watts	Fraser Valley, BC
MANITOBA				
Christian Radio Manitoba Ltd.	2000-20	Jan.19/2000	100,000 watts	Winnipeg, MB
His Broadcasting	2002-226	Aug.8/2002	920 watts	Winnipeg, MB
Trinity Television (Television)	2002-229	Aug.8/2002	20,000 watts	Winnipeg, MB
NEW BRUNSWICK				
The JOY FM Network Inc.	2000-379	Sept.1/2000	23 watts	Fredericton, NB
Houssen Broadcasting Ltd.	2000-358	Aug.24/2000	50 watts	Moncton, NB
International Harbesters for Christ Evangelistic Ass. Inc.	2000-359	Aug.24/2000	50 watts	Moncton, NB
Donald E. Mabee (OBCI)	2000-152	May.10/2000	50 watts	Saint John, NB

NEWFOUNDLAND				
VOWR (Voice of Wesley Radio)	n.a.	n.a.	c.10,000 watts	St. John's, NF
VOAR (Voice of Adventist Radio)	n.a.	n.a.	c.10,000 watts	St. John's, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	230 watts	Bay Roberts, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	50 watts	Botwood, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	250 watts	Cornbrook, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	30 watts	Deer Lake, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	50 watts	Gander, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	250 watts	Goosebay, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	250 watts	Grand Falls, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	50 watts	Lewisporte, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	15 watts	Marystown, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	50 watts	Port aux Basques, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	50 watts	Springdale, NF
VOAR (transmitter)	2002-49	Feb.20/2002	50 watts	Wabush, NF
NOVA SCOTIA				
Aylesford Community Baptist Church	2003-2	Jan.7/2003	5 watts	Aylesford, NS
ONTARIO				
Trust Communications CJLF-FM Barrie	99-90	Apr.19/1999	75 watts	Barrie, ON
Trust Communications (transmitter)	2003-27	Feb.3/2003	500 watts	Peterborough, ON
Trust Communications (transmitter)	2002-415	Dec.8/2002	75 watts	Owen Sound, ON
Anthony Schleifer	2001-642	Oct.11/2001	50 watts	Brantford, ON
Crossroads Television System (CITS-TV) (Television)	98-123	April.9/1998	473,000 watts	Burlington, ON
Christian Hit Radio Inc. (CHRI-FM)	96-276	July 8/1996	24,900 watts	Ottawa, ON
Fabrique de la Paroisse du Sacre Couer du Diocese d'Ottawa	97-45	Feb.6/1997	0.8 watts	Ottawa, ON
Faith Baptist Church of St. Thomas	97-641	Nov.18/1997	0.8 watts	St. Thomas, ON
David Jackson	2001-569	Sept. 5/2001	50 watts	Sudbury, ON
Etemacom Inc.	97-255	June.6/1997	35 watts	Sudbury, ON
Etemacom Inc.(transmitter)	2001-569	Sept.5/2001	50 watts	North Bay, ON
Thunder Bay Christian Radio (CJOA FM)	98-459	Sept.28/1998	50 watts	Thunder Bay, ON
Thunder Bay Christian Radio (transmitter)	2000-403	Sept.29/1998	50 watts	Candy Mountain, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd.	95-782	Oct.27/1995	84 watts	Timmins, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd.(transmitter)	2001-182	Mar.20/2001	1.3 watts	Chapleau, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd.(transmitter)	2001-182	Mar.20/2001	1.3 watts	Eliot Lake, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd.(transmitter)	2001-9	Jan.11/2001	1.6 watts	Iroquois Falls, ON

1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2001-641	Oct.11/2001	1.5 watts	Kapuskasing, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2001-9	Jan.11/2001	1.6 watts	Kirkland Lake, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2000-147	Oct.27/2000	1.3 watts	New Liskeard, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2000-189	June 7/2000	50 watts	North Bay, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2000-190	June7/2000	50 watts	Red Deer, AB
1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2000-146	Oct.27/2000	50 watts	Sault Ste. Marie, ON
1158556 Ontario Ltd. (transmitter)	2001-82	Mar.20/2001	1.3 watts	Wawa, ON
Way of Life Broadcasting	2003-31	Feb.7/2003	50 watts	Dryden, ON
United Christian Broadcasters of Canada	2003-80	Feb.28/2003	45,000 watts	Belleville, ON
Sound of Faith Broadcasting	2002-416	Dec.9/2002	10 watts	London, ON
CHWO (Joy 1250)	2000-205	June.16/2000	50,000 watts	Oakville, Ont
QUEBEC				
Fabrique de la Paroisse de Saint-Andre d'Acton Vale	95-809	Nov.6/1995	0.8 watts	Action Vale, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse de Ste-Praxede de Bromptonville	95-810	Nov.6/1995	0.6 watts	Bromptonville, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse St-Camille de Cookshire	95-811	Nov.6/1995	0.6 watts	Cookshire, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Saint Joseph de Hull	97-44	Feb.6/1997	0.8 watts	Hull, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse L'Assomption-de-la-Ste-Vierge	2000-758	Dec.15/2000	0.8 watts	L'Assomption, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Notre-Dame de la Guadeloupe	96-718	Oct.28/1996	0.8 watts	La Guadeloupe, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse de la Patrie	95-812	Nov.6/1995	0.8 watts	La Patrie, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Marie-Mediatrice	97-26	Jan.20/1997	0.8 watts	La Tuque, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Saint-Antoine de Padoue	96-719	Oct.28/1996	0.8 watts	Louiseville, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse de Saint-Mathieu	97-94	Mar.5/1997	0.6 watts	Montmagny, QC
Radio Ville Marie Inc.	94-813	Oct.14/1994	36,200 watts	Montreal, QC
Radio Ville Marie Inc. (transmitter)	2003-100	Mar.24/2003	6,000 watts	Trois-Rivieres
Fabrique de la Paroisse de Piopolis *	95-813	Nov.6/1995	0.6 watts	Piopolis, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Saint-Roch de Rock Forest *	96-397	Aug.13/1996	0.8 watts	Rock Forest, QC
Communications CHIC (C.H.I.C.)	2001-163	Mar.5/2001	50 watts	Rouyn, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Saint-Georges d'Aubert-Gaillion *	97-27	Jan.20/1997	0.8 watts	St-George West, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse de Saint-Paul de Scotstown	2000-252	July 7/2000	0.8 watts	Scotstown, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Saint-Sauver de Shawinigan-Sud	96-720	Oct.28/1996	0.8 watts	Shawinigan-Sud, QC
La Fabrique de la Paroisse Ste-Jeanne-d'Arc	97-563	Sept.26/1997	0.8 watts	Shawinigan-Sud, QC
Fabrique Notre-Dame-du-Perpetuel-Secours	95-814	Nov.6/1995	0.6 watts	Sherbrooke, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse St-Janvier de Weedon	95-815	Nov.6/1995	0.6 watts	Weedon, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse St-Philippe de Windsor	95-816	Nov.6/1995	0.6 watts	Windsor, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse St-Augustin de Woburn	96-228	June 17/1996	0.6 watts	Woburn, QC
Fabrique de la Paroisse Sacre-Coeur de Jesus de Crabtree	2003-13	Jan.7/2003	1 watt	Crabtree, QC
Fondation Radio Galilee	94-814	Oct.14/1994	5685 watts	Sainte-Foy, QC
Fondation Radio Galilee (transmitter)	94-814	Oct.14/1994	400 watts	Beauceville, QC

<i>Fondation Radio Galilee (transmitter)</i>	2002-412	Dec.6/2002	11,040 watts	Saugenay, QC
SASKATCHEWAN				
Briercrest Community Radio Inc. (community radio) Bible College	95-61	Feb.22/1995	5 watts	Caronport, Sask
YUKON				
Bethany Pentecostal Tabernacle	2001-664	Oct. 29/2001	50 watts	Whitehorse, Yn

*all source material drawn from www.crtc.gc.ca and updated as of May 9, 2003.

APPENDIX B

Table A-2. Counseling Calls Received at CCCI, 1977-2002

SUBJECT	TOTAL # OF CALLS
Total Individuals Prayed for	7,457,289
Decisions For Christ	90,382
Spiritual Growth	228,205
Baptism of the Holy Spirit	34,564
Emotional Healing	1,118,459
Suicide Intervention	12,370
Physical Healing	1,190,848
Family Concerns	1,347,240
Deliverance From Sustained Abuse	200,276
Financial Provision	142,800
Healing of Abuse (physical,sexual,emotional)	11,888

Source: Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. Archives, January 2002.

APPENDIX C

CONSTITUTION OF CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATIONS INC. (CCCI)

June 1977

ARTICLE I - NAME

The official name of the organization shall be "Crossroads Christian Communications Incorporated."

In this constitution, the term "Crossroads" shall be deemed to mean all operations under the Crossroads Christian Communications Incorporated.

ARTICLE II - AFFILIATION, OBJECTS, AND PURPOSES

- (1) Crossroads shall work in harmony with the National Committee authorized to oversee the operations of all incorporated organizations which work in conjunction with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.
- (2) Its objects and purposes shall conform to the general stated objects and purposes of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and shall subscribe to its Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths.
- (3) In order to avail itself of the opportunity of greater outreach and support, Crossroads and its personnel may become involved with non-Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada opportunities, provided such activity has the approval of the Board of Directors and does not contravene the initial and ultimate purpose of the organization.
- (4) Crossroads may use whatever communications media, "The becometh the Gospel", that would further its objectives and outreach, provided such has been approved by the Board of Directors.
- (5) The specific objects of purposes of Crossroads shall be:
 - (a) To declare the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - (b) To offer any means of counsel, correspondence courses and other assistance to establish in the faith all persons responding to Crossroads outreach. It shall endeavour to channel all contacts into area churches.
 - (c) To receive, in accordance with the financial policy set forth hereafter by the Directors, monies, gifts, bequests, as a means of sustaining the organization.
 - (d) To conduct all its own affairs with the appointed Board of Directors and in accordance with the Constitution.
 - (e) To conduct its affairs without purpose of financial gain for its

employees or members and any profits or other accretions shall be used in promoting its objectives and purposes.

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