

Chapter Six

Rethinking Revival in Québec

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Introduction

“Those were the days, my friend...”

Francophone evangelical churches grew very rapidly in Québec between 1970 and 1985 (see Figures 16-19). It is not without some pain, however, that we look back nostalgically at that wonderful time of excitement and blessing.

Nowadays we often hear evangelicals in Québec asking hard questions, their disappointment occasionally bordering on frustration. They wonder what happened to make the Québécois population so cool to the Gospel now after such a great time of warmth and openness in the past. Some church members feel guilty for not witnessing like they used to. Pastors who remember the “boom” days are well aware they aren’t seeing as many or the same type of conversions and baptisms. Denominational leaders ponder why they have to spend so much of their efforts on maintaining harmony in their existing churches. They see that new church plants are very rare.

Leaders of parachurch ministries—Christian day schools, theological schools, Christian camps, literature ministries, campus ministries, etc.—have virtually all reduced their expectations for their ministries aimed at French Canadians. With few exceptions, their organizations are surviving in Québec primarily by diversifying their ministries to work with the growing numbers of ethnic evangelicals. The Québécois Baby Boomers converted during the revival wonder why their young adult children of the '90s see so little “good news” in the evangelical message and way of life.

Hard questions indeed. Where did we come from? Where are we going? The purpose of this chapter is to propose an interpretative analysis of the evangelical revival in Québec in a way that will shed some light on our strategies for the future. To do so, we will use a time-tested anthropological theory of how revivals work. Our goal is to show what the revival accomplished and what evangelicals are doing to maximize its accomplishments in the province. The lessons of the recent revival will also point us to new challenges Québec evangelicals must face to prepare for a new wave of Church growth. For a more detailed analysis of the Québec revival, look for a forthcoming book by Richard Loughheed, Wesley Peach and Glenn Smith, published in French by *Les Editions la Clarière*.

Before we go any further, however, we must pause to reaffirm our conviction that only God brings revival. Our theology is clear that the sovereign God of history worked in Québec in ways we will never completely understand. By using an anthropological theory we will attempt to identify some of the human factors by which God is building His church. The following graphs give us an important overview of the tumultuous church growth of the Québec revival.

Figure 16
Total Number of Organized Churches of the Three Major French Evangelical Denominations in Québec 1960 - 1995

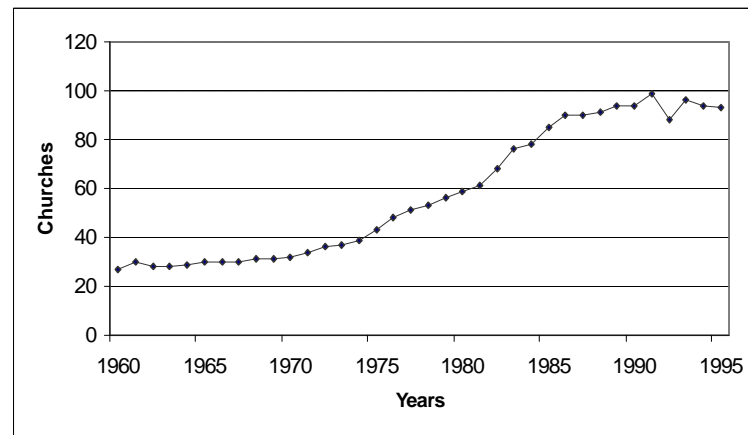


Figure 17
Total Membership of the Three Major French Evangelical Denominations in Québec 1960 - 1995

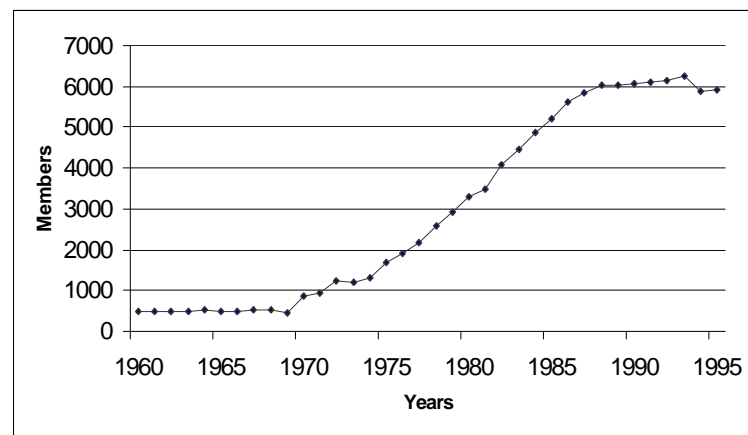


Figure 18
Total Baptisms of the Three Major French
Evangelical Denominations in Québec 1960 - 1995

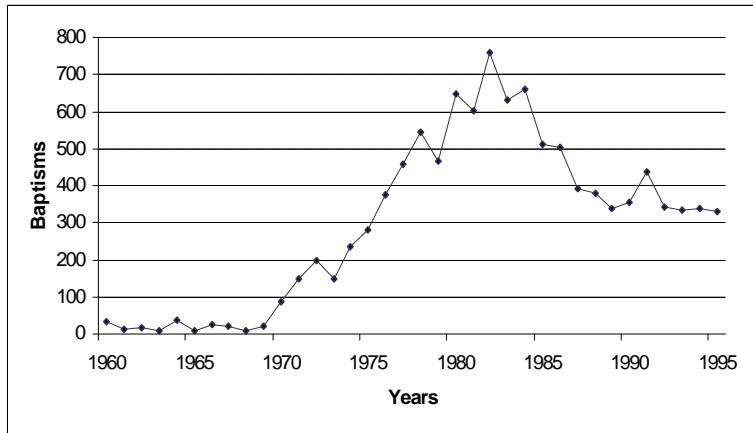
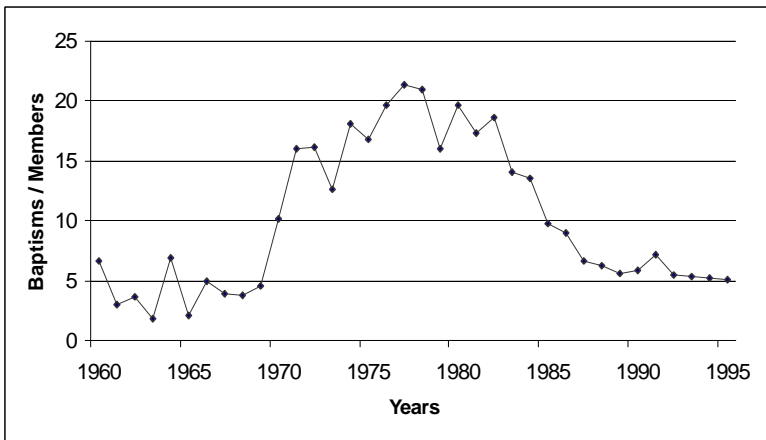


Figure 19
Percentage of Baptisms per Members 1960 - 1995



Whose Idea Was This?

Anthony F.C. Wallace, an American anthropologist now retired after a teaching career at the University of Pennsylvania, has shed much light on the individual and corporate human processes that are at work during religious revivals. He published articles and books that articulated and refined elements of his theory over a period of 28 years (from 1951 to 1978). In his first definitive presentation of the theory, Wallace defined a Revitalization Movement as a special kind of culture change phenomenon that is a “deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to reduce the stress level prevalent in the system by constructing a more satisfying culture.”¹ He observed that a new religious fervor is almost always at the centre of a cultural Revitalization Movement. In addition to emphasizing the importance of religion in cultural change, Wallace’s theory spells out the logical stages of what he calls a revitalization cycle.

As we review the following steps, or phases, we must keep in mind that Wallace intended his theory to delineate the functions that a religious Revitalization Movement accomplishes. Although we will follow somewhat chronologically through each phase of the Québec revival, we must understand that each phase can vary in order and intensity. Sometimes phases are addressed simultaneously, and sometimes they can be repeated or reworked at a later point in the movement.

The more we understand these functions, the more we will be able to make pertinent observations and predictions concerning the challenges of church planting in Québec.

Phases of Revitalization

1. Steady State
2. Increased Individual Stress
3. Cultural Distortion
4. Revitalization movement
 - a. Paradigm Resynthesis
 - b. Communication
 - c. Organization
 - d. Adaptation
 - e. Cultural Transformation
 - f. Routinization
5. New Steady State

Before we begin our detailed analysis of the Québec revival, we would do well to become a little more “at ease” with the revitalization cycle. To do that, let us recall the period of the judges in the Old Testament.

The children of Israel were prone to forget Yahweh, and the result was moral, economic and military decline. When things became unbearable, Israel cried out to God for a deliverer. Each time God sent a judge to call them back to God, revitalizing their worship and culture. Each divinely appointed leader would bring them victory over their enemies and clearer devotion to God for a generation or two. In the generations that followed, however, the Israelites would again forget Yahweh, initiating a slow deterioration in worship and culture that would result in judgement followed by repentance. God would appoint a new judge to set Israel free from her enemies. The history of Israel is a clear example of a culture that experienced the revitalization cycle.

The Québec Revival Seen as a Revitalization Movement

As we examine the recent evangelical revival in Québec, we will appreciate all the more the clarity and valuable contributions of the revitalization theory. Our format will be to present a somewhat theoretical description of each phase of the revitalization cycle. We will attempt to illustrate each phase with an analysis of some of the dominant characteristics of the Québec revival.

The Steady State Phase

Before a Revitalization Movement begins, the society is in what Wallace calls a “Steady State.” His term can be misunderstood to mean that there are no changes in the culture. Wallace insists that his term is intended to mean that the culture makes small, or controlled changes. The Steady State can continue as long as the individuals in the society are able to make minor or gradual adjustments in their cultural and religious “status quo” in ways that continue to respect and defend the validity of their basic culture.

Québec in the Steady State

The Steady State that the Québec culture knew before the evangelical revival of the 1970s and 1980s was in fact the century-old legacy of an earlier revitalization cycle. According to historian Louis Rousseau, French Québec went through the stages of a Revitalization Movement from 1830 through the 1860s. Although a small evangelical movement grew in that time of rapid cultural change, there was a much larger revival of interest in and dominance by the Roman Catholic Church. After 1900, the evangelical movement was unable to maintain its momentum within the then much stronger Catholic cultural infrastructure. The modernist theological

debates among Protestants, new pressures toward urban migration away from the rural evangelical churches, and the inescapable reality that life was easier for Québécois evangelicals when they migrated to English circles, all took a toll on the French evangelical movement. After peaking at perhaps 30,000 members in Québec at the turn of the century, the French evangelical movement had virtually disappeared by the 1950s.

Rousseau claims that the Steady State legacy of the last Catholic Revitalization Movement began to deteriorate in Québec after World War II. Thus began a new revitalization cycle that is only now drawing near completion. We believe that the recent evangelical revival in Québec is part of this broader revitalization process whose first stages are apparent in what is often called the “Quiet Revolution.”²

Increased Individual Stress and Cultural Distortion Phases

When it is not adequately maintained, the cultural stability of the Steady State deteriorates slowly and almost imperceptibly. The individuals within the culture gradually discover that their traditional beliefs and ways of life are less and less adequate for solving their daily problems. It is an increasingly confusing time for the individuals who must come to the conclusion that fewer of their culture “cues” work any more. Traditional goals of their culture can no longer be reached by traditional means. Wallace sees a direct correlation between the disorder in a culture, and the level of stress symptoms experienced by individual members of the community. The more the culture is confused the more individuals become unstable. In a broad analysis of all the evangelical awakenings in North American Church history, William McLoughlin uses Wallace’s theory to point to the disintegration of the nuclear family as the first sign of deterioration in this phase of increased individual stress.³

One of the symptoms of this phase is the increasing ineffectiveness of the culture’s religious rituals to answer the questions or even soothe the pain of the conflicts caused by cultural confusion. Participation in the “national religion” is viewed by many with contempt or apathy. Personal salvation is no longer considered possible within the confines of the existing religious paradigm.

As individuals become less and less able to satisfy personal wishes in the existing cultural confusion, there comes a point where they conclude that the changes and the stress are not the root cause of their dissatisfaction. They begin to see the culture itself as the major source of their frustration because it is not able to provide reliable satisfaction to their expectations. Thus begins the phase of cultural distortion, when the majority of the population has lost confidence in the way things work. They are openly seeking a new cultural order. Many are openly defying the existing “establishment” as inadequate. This sense of desperation is the ultimate stress pushing individuals toward cultural revitalization.

Québec in Increased Individual Stress and Cultural Distortion

The Quiet Revolution can be interpreted as a multi-dimensional cultural crisis. Québécois were openly rethinking their culture as a whole. No aspect was left unquestioned, be it the economy, morality, family roles, religion, education, politics or Québec’s place in the world and in Canada, *everything* was declared to be in need of profound and rapid restructuring. The rapid reforms of Jean Lesage’s Liberal Party, followed by the rise of the Parti Québécois, were the political manifestations of the sweeping revitalization processes at work in Québec.

Consistent with Wallace’s description, the “national religion” came on hard times. In the decade of the 1960s, weekly Mass attendance dropped from 60% to 30% of the

population. The percentage of practicing Catholics dropped by half again in the following decade. Catholic sociologist Jacques Grand' Maison describes the result: "The Québécois threw the Catholic Church in the St. Lawrence River and went on with their lives without her." Ironically, when the cultural disillusionment with traditional Catholicism was at its highest, the radical changes of Vatican II hit the remaining faithful worshippers. If the old ways had clearly become irrelevant, the new ways were equally unpopular with many traditionalists. The national religion was at an impasse.

At this point in the revitalization cycle we must keep in mind that Québec culture was not primarily "secularizing" in the sense of an outright rejection of Christianity. Québécois were trying to evaluate, rethink and restructure the unsatisfactory elements of their religious heritage, rather than totally abandon them. This was the open door for the revival that brought many individuals to an evangelical conversion experience resulting in rapid evangelical Church growth in Québec.

Resynthesis of the Religious Paradigm

Wallace states that when individuals in a revitalizing culture have come to the point of questioning their whole way of life, they do so by rethinking four fundamental psychological needs. Their first need is for a satisfying divine parental figure to provide authority and protection. Such a need is all the more evident for those whose world has become unpredictable and confusing.

Their second basic human need is the assurance that one is part of a coherent cultural system. This confidence gives the peace of mind of predictability and order, and a basis for stable personal identity as a part of that order. Wallace refers to the individual's new reference point for self-identity as a "goal culture." When everything crumbles and becomes unpredictable in the old way of life, the individual finds a

new focus of transcendent absolutes, which in turn yields a new set of directions for daily living. This reorganization provides individuals with an idea of who they are in the universe and what they are to do in their world.

Turning the page to a brighter future with a new sense of divine approval is not entirely possible until individuals can make some kind of sense of their own actions in their chaotic past. The third need that individuals must find a solution to is their crushing sense of guilt, failure and anxiety. Along with a new definition of sin comes the redefinition of a way for atonement for past failures, and new rules for avoiding further transgressions. The new "code" is the vital link between the chaotic present and the peace of the envisioned goal culture. This "code" becomes people's daily assurance that order, self-esteem and an intimate relationship with the divine are possible and in fact is being realized by their faithfulness to it.

Having lived in chronic personal and social confusion, individuals have to put to rest a fourth basic question: "What is to become of the old order and those who cling to it?" In the process of rejecting the old way, revitalized individuals relate their new vision to apocalyptic terms of the destruction of the "old" order and of all those who refuse to accept the new code. Hence Wallace also observes a "preoccupation with the concepts of sin and hell," in the early phases of Paradigm Resynthesis of Revitalization Movements. The condemnation of certain vices by a new code can be seen as a "divinely sanctioned" statement of lessons learned by personal failure. The new list of sins and judgements with the threat of eternal destruction becomes a kind of "death certificate" confirming the old order as passé and useless.

Québec in the Paradigm Resynthesis Phase

True to Wallace's observations, the personal and cultural revitalization process for individuals in Québec was indeed a

search for intimate contact with God, for a new form of social order and community, for a new way of forgiveness and for a clearer eschatology concerning the righteous and the wicked. These four needs were exactly what the evangelical believers and churches had to offer. Perfectly positioned in their responses to the culture’s pressing needs, the evangelical message and lifestyle were distinct from but clearly relevant to those who wanted to rethink the doctrines of Catholicism. The message proclaimed by evangelicals referred to as the “plan of salvation” corresponded directly to the needs of the revitalizing Québécois.

Table 31
Parallels Between the “Four Crises” and the “Plan of Salvation”

The Four Personal Crises of Revitalization	Important Elements of the Evangelical Plan of Salvation
1. Intimate contact with a divine authority figure and protector.	1. God loves you personally. You can invite Jesus Christ into your life.
2. A new goal culture which gives a new personal identity.	2. God has a wonderful plan for your life. You can be part of our new Church.
3. New ways for atonement and for avoiding sin.	3. Salvation is by faith alone, not by works. The Holy Spirit gives victory over sin.
4. Apocalyptic destruction of the old system.	4. Jesus is coming back soon. God will judge those who reject Christ.

The Communication Phase of a Revitalization Movement

According to Wallace’s theory, the people who have experienced a radically revitalizing religious conversion set out immediately to communicate their vision to those around them. Preaching “the good news” is a primary activity of the new movement even during later stages of its organizational

life. Wallace proposes that when new believers have dared to reformulate their entire lives in a way that initially sets them out as marginal or non-conformist, they will experience the inescapable urge to find “safety in numbers.” The doctrinal and behavioural injunctions they preach carry two fundamental motifs—that those who adhere to the new movement come under God’s care and protection, and that they and society in general will benefit from an identification with the new cultural model.

The methods of communication chosen by those who proclaim the message can vary widely according to the unique situation of each Revitalization Movement. The preaching can take place in mass rallies or through quiet individual persuasion and may be directed at various sorts of audiences. In more complex societies, usually only a small target audience is responsive. Wallace notes that Revitalization Movements tend to be more successful if their initial message is directed to a limited few, rather than a diluted message to a general audience.

The Communication Phase of the Québec Revival

Before the Quiet Revolution, a tiny evangelical community of less than 2,000 believers had been faithfully witnessing in Québec in a context of very strong opposition. As the culture was “cracking open” to new ideas, the Sermons from Science pavilion at the Expo ’67 in Montreal was a strategic beginning to the Communication Phase of the evangelical revival in Québec. Over the course of the pavilion’s existence, one-quarter of the entire population of Québec passed through its doors to see and hear a clear, credible plan of salvation. The pavilion organizers received over 160,000 response cards! The Sermons from Science pavilion at Expo ’67 did not, however, result in instant church growth. Its primary accomplishment was to announce on a grand scale the existence and credibility of the evangelical message. Other

mass evangelism efforts followed. Leighton Ford preached at crusades in 1983 and 1990. Alain Choquier from France, Gaston Racine, Walter de Sousa, Fernand St-Louis and the Janz team, “Québec pour Jésus” all organized local crusades from the early 1970s through the 1980s.

As important and visible as these macro-communication efforts were, most evangelism and disciple making was done at the individual and small group network level. This movement of lay witnessing was spontaneous and unorganized. New converts had their greatest effectiveness witnessing to members of their own family and their closest friends. Many young people brought in their parents. To this day it is possible to trace relational “genealogical trees” from the series of conversions that created entire new churches.

Young adult Baby Boomers, especially college students, were the primary group of new converts. They were the driving force and prime beneficiaries of the Quiet Revolution. They had the intellectual and logistical freedom to change their religious affiliation overnight—many did.

Wallace states that the Communication Phase never completely ends. Evangelicals continue to witness and see some conversions. But we can identify Mission Québec in 1990 as an important turning point. Jacques Marcoux and Richard Toupin from, “Québec pour Jésus” expended enormous amounts of time and money to “ride the wake” of Mission Québec through a series of high-quality evangelistic television shows and a whirlwind tour of mini-crusades. The momentum never translated into increased church attendance. If anything, Mission Québec confirmed to the participating churches that the cost of mass evangelism was too high to justify the mediocre results. Although there was a slight increase in baptisms in 1991, the ratings for the TV series were very low and the tour of crusades fizzled in local church fatigue. It was a great disappointment for “Québec pour Jésus.”

The Organization Phase of a Revitalization Movement

Revitalization movements often start as spontaneous, informal gatherings to share a new common vision. As the preaching of the new vision continues, the movement gains adherents who eventually form a clearly recognizable group with its own well-defined doctrinal beliefs and organizational structure.

Wallace observes that the Organization Phase of a Revitalization Movement is an inevitable consequence of its new vision dealing with the realities of human group dynamics. Hence the original visionaries or spokesmen come to be esteemed by the group with “prophetic” reverence. These prophet figures may assume a superior role in the organization as mediators or even divine representatives. A relatively small group of fervent, highly committed disciples gathers close to the prophets. These “revitalized” believers become the workers (professional or volunteer) of the new organization. Outside this inner circle is a larger group of followers who sincerely agree with the new vision but who for one reason or another do not have the same profound persevering commitment as the core group of disciples. These people follow along when the music, the messages and the momentum of the group catch their attention. They attend the meetings and occasionally give money. The followers’ allegiance is often directed more to the prophetic leader than to God. Because they lack a first-hand lasting personal commitment, followers are equally likely to be swayed “out of sync” by other personal interests that create conflicts with those of the organization.

The Organization Phase of the Québec Revival

Expo ’67 was followed by the work of missionaries, pastors and dramatically converted lay people to bring their network of family and friends into the fold of local evangelical churches.

The number of evangelical churches doubled in the 1970s and increased by 50% in the 1980s. The number of active members quadrupled in the 1970s and doubled again in the 1980s (see Figure 17). Québec church historian Richard Loughheed pinpoints the strategic role of new church planting at this point in the revival. He observes that some denominations dared to organize the impromptu gatherings of enthusiastic but immature converts into daughter churches. Other evangelical groups were slower to organize new churches and thereby missed much of the influx of new converts who were looking for places to meet together for fellowship. The Association of Evangelical Baptists was particularly effective in strategically locating their experienced leaders throughout the province with a view to supervising a network of new “pastors-in-formation.” These interns were therefore assured more success in their efforts to organize new churches.

The rapid church planting that characterized the Québec revival plateaued in the mid-1980s. As the revival wound down in momentum, many of the later church plants were forced to rejoin their larger “mother churches” for lack of new converts and finances necessary to continue growth. The strategy of subsidizing many small churches became counter productive. There have been some new church plants in the 1990s, however there seem to be more conversions and church growth in the larger “full service” churches. We believe this is true partly because the larger churches have retained a sense of momentum by the quantity and quality of their ministries. Obviously there are still urgent needs for church planting in Québec. Given however that the rapid church-planting phase of the Québec revival is now history, we must be exceedingly wise as to the type, place and duration of our church planting efforts if we hope to maximize the chances for long-term fruitfulness.

The Adaptation Phase of a Revitalization Movement

In the same way that a Revitalization Movement attracts varying degrees of loyalty, it also creates various types of opposition. The success of a new movement depends on its ability to adapt to and overcome the realities of the opposition that arises from the complex (sometimes subconscious) expectations of individuals in the society. Wallace calls this function “adaptation,” which he says can take a variety of courses to improve the “fit” of the movement in the society. Any Revitalization Movement that does not adequately respond to its sources of opposition will eventually be ignored or suppressed, regardless of its initial success.

Those outside the movement, in the name of protecting their over-zealous acquaintances from error, organize varying degrees of opposition to the new movement. Their motivation to oppose the movement can stem from genuine ignorance, their mental association of the movement with another “foreign” culture or from fear that the new movement will threaten the existing power structure from which they benefit. The degree of opposition can vary from physical repression to more subtle forms of social disapproval.

A second source of opposition can be found, surprisingly, from within the movement itself. Although new believers have radically reshaped their lives and their beliefs, not everything “fits” together ideally between their lives, the other members of the new organization and all the nuances of the new doctrines. If these “irritants” cannot be worked out over time, the movement will lose adherents.

The Adaptation Phase of the Québec Revival

The momentum of the revival in Québec grew as new converts witnessed to their network of family and friends and saw successive waves of conversions. We dare say that traces of the evangelical message filtered down virtually every

relational tributary in the society. In contrast with the concerted physical opposition that was common before the Quiet Revolution, Québécois evangelicals faced relatively diluted though persistent social disapproval. Some young adults were “cut off” by their angered parents for a while after their conversion. Some students received lower grades on papers in which they mentioned their new faith. In most cases, however, peace has been re-established either by “never talking about religion,” or by the credibility gained as the young people became successful adults. “Religious fanatics” of all types have been specifically shunned in the workplace and as a result evangelicals have learned to be more discreet in their profile. At the relational level, the Adaptation Phase has usually ended in a truce.

For all the talk of religious pluralism, there is still considerable opposition to the evangelical movement relative to their needs for legal and civic recognition of their institutions. We know of villages in Québec that have recently refused to zone land for a non-Catholic church, stating openly that the basis of their refusal was that they did not want a “cult” in their town. Fortunately, even the Roman Catholic bishops have not allowed such discrimination to continue when they are made aware of the problem.

The Québec revival saw its share of “internal opposition” as many adherents lost enthusiasm for their church involvement. The combined factors of the rapid influx of so many new believers with their unusually high expectations, under the supervision of so few mature leaders, led to many defections from the movement. Most of these departures were not caused by doctrinal disagreements but rather by interpersonal conflicts. Adherents were disappointed that the “goal culture” that they were looking for was not materializing as they had envisioned it should. Some leaders wonder how many of the “converts” of those boom days were in reality only followers rather than true disciples.

The Adaptation Phase is still an active function of the Québec revival. Perhaps it was most evident in the early 1990s when in some churches the number of departures equaled the number of new converts. Further evidence of this phase is seen as “backslidden” Baby Boomer believers are quietly returning for worship and healing, often after the break-up of their families. Québécois evangelicals also have yet to find an identity that is free from the connotation that their movement is “English” in origin. This association could create a major need for further adaptation in the future. Perhaps the recent creation of the French Canadian equivalent of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), called the Alliance Francophone des Protestants Evangéliques du Québec (AFPEQ), will be a step toward this goal.

Cultural Transformation by a Revitalization Movement

As individuals take up the cause of personal and societal salvation preached by the Revitalization Movement, individual symptoms of stress reduce rapidly. As a result of multiple “conversions” to a successful Revitalization Movement, the symptoms of cultural distortion are reduced, being replaced by an enthusiastic embracing of an organized program of group action. Wallace says that the transformation of the culture happens most effectively when a movement has the support of a controlling portion of the population. This control can be measured by the sheer numbers of converts, or by the strategic roles that certain converts play in the leadership structures of their society. By exerting its influence, the movement is able to bring into public policy elements of the “goal culture.” Thus the religious teachings of the Revitalization Movement are not relegated only to private life. The movement may not necessarily control the beliefs or the votes of a majority of citizens. It is, however, a credible, publicly recognized voice that is part of the cultural landscape. In the exchange of ideas in public debate, many

members of the society will choose to follow the teachings of the new vision because they are convinced of its advantages for them and their society as a whole.

Another indication of the transformation of the society is when the Revitalization Movement has demonstrated that it includes a successful economic system. Some Revitalization Movements must perform major changes in the economic system to set their society on the road to prosperity after cataclysmic failures. Some movements limit their reforms to certain aspects of the whole (such as establishing a new work ethic, banning slavery or returning to a market economy). Wallace's key concept is that the organizations that embody the Revitalization Movement must themselves be economically viable and they must propose economic guidelines that are realistic and beneficial for the society in general.

Cultural Transformation as a Result of the Québec Revival

The Québec media have yet to finish "settling accounts" with past abuses by the Catholic Church. "Church" in general and obedience to a "divine" code in particular are concepts that carry negative connotations in the public arena and are viewed with suspicion on the personal level. Québécois are no longer rethinking the answers proposed to them by Christianity. They have generally come to believe that no answers are possible.

Québécois evangelicals have a huge challenge engaging their culture in the public arena. The efforts of the major denominations and parachurch ministries are still woefully marginal in a society whose older generations (Builders and Boomers) saw the Gospel pass by, and decided that the Church (Catholic or evangelical) was not for them. With a few exceptions, the Baby Busters who are not in acute crises are generally untouched by evangelical ministries.

Even with all the boom conversions and church planting, Québécois evangelicals account for about one-half of one percent of the French Canadian population in most areas of the province. The one happy exception is the town of Granby which has an evangelical penetration of about 3% of the population. The evangelical churches in the Granby area have a united, positive public image. Granby area pastors are "on a roll," talking optimistically of moving ahead with more aggressive church growth and participation in the public life of their region. One Granby pastor said recently, "We want Granby to start taking evangelicals seriously." Unfortunately, few pastors in other parts of Québec feel any momentum for entertaining such thoughts.

Sensing the need to develop a higher level of public visibility and credibility, the "Québec pour Jésus" evangelists turned deliberately from "conversion crusades" to credibility campaigns. Singer-evangelist Richard Toupin tried (with mixed success) to penetrate the public media with his high-quality concerts and recordings. Jacques Marcoux shifted his focus to teach young Québécois men how to make real transformations in their relationships at home and at work. Christian Direction's heavy involvement in public education, YWAM's (Youth With A Mission) street ministry to Montreal's gay community and other specific public ministries to Québec's needy all show that the evangelical movement is taking up the challenge not to stay shut out of the public arena.

Whether by choice or by force, Québécois evangelical churches are facing the challenge of demonstrating the economic viability of their new vision. It is not so much for lack of leaders nor for lack of outreach ministries that evangelical churches are regrouping for survival. Their struggle is mainly economic. As we have seen, the end of the Organization Phase left many daughter churches in the beginning stages of growth without the influx of new,

employed believers to complete their planned expansion. Montreal's profound political and economic difficulties have only compounded the lack of internal resources. Since the early 1990s the evangelical movement has been "downsizing" the number of Québécois churches and at the same time upgrading the size and quality of those churches which have survived. Given the realities and challenges of this phase of the revival cycle, we must not be too concerned at the loss. But we must keep asking when, where and how to begin planting new churches that will be better equipped to overcome the now less favourable growing conditions.

Routinization of the Revitalization Movement

As the Revitalization Movement progresses through its phases, the organizations that carry the new vision must sooner or later take on an additional focus, that of routinization. The innovations that initially caused some to convert to the new movement soon become "normal" because of their proven ability to reduce stress in individuals and in the society. As these innovations become routine, the movement's organization no longer has the role of bringing about change, but rather that of maintaining the gains of the accepted innovations. The only responsibilities that the organization retains are those of: 1) preserving and interpreting the doctrine and practices of the movement, 2) reminding the society of the history of the movement and 3) maintaining a system of transfer of leadership. The transmission of the beliefs of the movement to the next generation, and more specifically handing the reins of power of the organization over to a new generation of leaders, is a crucial step in the Routinization Phase.

Ironically, the elements that brought revitalization; i.e., rapid restructuring of a new way of life and dynamic preaching by revitalized leaders, are now of little use and

may even be censured because the focus of the organization has changed from innovation to maintenance. The drive of the movement's leaders changes from engaging and influencing the whole society to maintaining the purity and practice of their specific organizations. Wallace says that religious Revitalization Movements reduce their expectations from being forces for cultural change to maintaining themselves as denominations.

The children born in the movement face a very different set of motivations from those of their revitalized parents. Whereas joining the movement in the first generation was a question of tearing down the old way and rebuilding a new order, the challenge for the second generation is to appreciate and preserve the heritage handed down to them. If the first generation leaders and members are not able to meet this challenge their movement will basically die out with them. If the young people of the movement are able to successfully embrace the vision of their parents and if they are given permission to continue to adapt it to their world, then the movement will have completed the Routinization Phase and is heading into a new Steady State. Hence McLoughlin observes that each Revitalization cycle, from increased individual stress through the completion of the Routinization Phase, takes from 30 to 40 years, the time required for a new generation to embrace and live out freely the full consequences of the new vision.

Routinization of the Québec Revival

The dynamics of the Routinization Phase are presently very apparent in the Québécois evangelical movement. In the late 1970s almost every denomination attempted to start a school to meet the pressing needs for leadership training. Since that first wave of excitement, a handful of training centres has been able to focus their programs for a particular

niche of the evangelical student clientele. Another indication of the change from organization to routinization is the shift away from evangelism and church planting. The young Québécois leaders want formal, high-quality education so they can become recognized teachers. One school's recent motto reflects the agenda of the Routinization Phase that now characterizes the evangelical movement: "20 years already, let's transmit our heritage!"

Some of the first Québécois pastors of the revival have continued innovatively formulating their doctrine and practice in ways that have caused friction and division within their denominations. Some of the strongest leaders have left and divided the very denominations they helped found. Innovation is no longer appreciated by the organizations that would rather solidify their gains than take on a new vision.

Evangelical parents are struggling to raise their children to appreciate the value of their church's message and lifestyle. Organizing and maintaining Christian day schools are now primary activities of the evangelical movement. Evangelical youth ministries are just beginning to take shape. Our observations lead us to believe that over half of the Baby Boomers' children do not pursue their faith into their twenties. We have yet to see how the evangelical movement will meet these pressing challenges as it carries into the next generation.

More than 30 years have gone by since the Sermons from Science pavilion launched the Communication Phase of the Québec revival. The Revitalization cycle is rapidly drawing to an end. If we heed the lessons from the revival's phases, wise strategies for ministry in Québec can make a difference for the Church as we "complete the race" at the end of the present revival and as we prepare for future revival.

Lessons to Learn from the Québec Revival

1. Richard Lougheed's research has shown that few people saw the revival coming when it was already well underway. Even those pioneers who were praying for one and preaching for one were often late in seeing how open the door was for a time. Hence we dare not stop preparing infrastructures for expansion just because the potential for growth seems limited at the moment. The denominations that lacked trained Québécois leaders were the least able to respond at the time of unexpected openness for church planting.
2. The Québec revival started with young adults. Yet young adults are now on the outer fringes of our Baby Boomer dominated churches. If we want to be in a position to "ride the next wave" of disciple making in Québec, we will have to focus on young adults.
3. We need not be too discouraged that the rate of conversions and baptisms dropped after the revival. We haven't necessarily "done something terribly wrong to deserve this." Revivals are a time of exceptional interest and growth. Over time, however, they are not the norm. European francophone evangelicals have maintained steady church growth even with slower conversion rates. Increased religious fervour cannot be maintained by programs alone. We must be creative, prayerful and patient in our present circumstances.
4. Church planters in Québec will see their churches grow if they are able to attract and retain "rebounding" evangelical boomers. There is a significant population of revival "drop-outs" who are working through their own "adaptation phase" after being "burned" by difficulties in their evangelical church experience. Many of these folks are now divorced. A loving stable church can help them

heal. Healthy churches can also attract new believers of the Baby Buster generation. Those who are willing to pay the price for creative, long-haul disciple making will see an increase in worship attendance.

5. James Engel introduced English-speaking evangelicals to the idea that there are many steps in the journey toward repentance and faith.⁴ Jim Petersen called these steps “mini-decisions.”⁵ Our post-revival tendency is to measure our evangelism efforts by the number of decisions and baptisms, *particularly compared to revival time*, and therefore conclude that we are now relatively ineffective. Perhaps we should give ourselves the conceptual “space” to see that any concerted effort to move people up the Engel scale is evangelism, whether we see conversion imminently or not. Evangelicals saw very little fruit from 1900 to 1967. But they were faithful in their sowing. By the events of the Quiet Revolution, God brought Québécois to conversion in massive numbers. Let’s celebrate the sowing as well as the reaping.
6. It has been our thesis that the Québec revival came mostly because the evangelical message and lifestyle fit very closely with what the culture was searching for, for a specific time. We are now faced with the choice of either staying the same and waiting for Québec to come around to us again, or of restructuring the logic of our message and methods to respond to what Québécois are searching for now.⁶ We have come to a point where we need to rethink, once again, the way we do church, daring to experiment and open to taking risks to explore current modes of receptivity. Neither Jesus Himself nor the apostles presented the “good news” in the same way to each audience. They adapted their message to human and social situations, the dominant religious conceptions, and the capacity for change within each individual. The greatest miracle of the book of Acts was that the Church

as a social organization was able to radically restructure itself to include non-Jews. It was this profound reorganization of doctrine and practice that moved the Great Commission forward.

7. If we decide to rethink our approach, we must be willing to pay a price. Our restructuring may well have to be more profound than adding “contemporary seeker services.” We must forthrightly consider two new problems that were not issues in the last revival.

First, the vast majority of Québécois are not presently “seeking” in traditional theistic avenues. The farther Québécois progress as a post-modern society (and research shows that they are farther down that road than the rest of North America), the more unlikely they are to relate to the Biblical concepts of an infinite, personal Creator from whom they are alienated by their sin. A “creed crisis” results—how will we relate the Gospel more effectively given this culture’s post-modern worldview? We are in a fresh evangelistic setting.

The second problem is more logistical. Research of the Québécois culture shows their growing tendency to shun all structured religious organizations. In other words, we have a profound “confidence crisis” as it relates to the institutional church in the province. Our present efforts to improve church ministries are helping us to attract and retain believers. This is an important step. But we must not be content with these efforts inasmuch as they do so little to engage the majority of distant and distrustful unbelievers.

8. The Organization Phase that could result from the next mass movement of personal conversions could differ radically from all existing church paradigms. Let’s dream a little. If, for example, the Buster generation is really as “colour blind” as some researchers say it is, then perhaps

the rapid growth of ethnic churches in Québec could embrace young French-Canadians in a way that the established all-white Baby Boomer churches could not. There may come a day when evangelicals participate in the restructuring of the culture's concept of what is "Québécois."

9. As we contemplate the history of Québec evangelicalism, we cannot avoid the conclusion that revivals are not the result of our schemes. As we look to the future it is time to begin a concerted effort of prayer for God to work in Québec, first in His church, and then in the population as a whole. Perhaps we should invite all of the Canadian churches to join us in prayer for God's powerful, gracious moving in Québec. Prior to the Québec revival, evangelicals prayed fervently because they were painfully aware that their efforts in evangelism accomplished very little. Our greatest need again is a deeper sense of our need for God to work. What we do in prayer, faithfully and fervently in the "slow times," will contribute to a greater harvest in God's time.

Action Points

✍ Does the rise of New Age thinking in Québec "freeze out" the Gospel at every point? What possible new doors do New Age religions open for us to pass through with the Gospel?

✍ What evangelical ministries should be prioritized in a culture that distrusts organized religion of any kind?

✍ What can be done realistically to revitalize campus ministries in Québec?

✍ Are we wise to maintain racial distinctions in our church planting (English, French, First Nations, specific immigrant groups)? American church growth theories say we should. Under what conditions should we change our approach?

✍ What can evangelicals do to maximize French-English partnership in church planting in spite of the Canadian unity dilemma?

✍ What are appropriate strategies for recruiting new church planters in Québec?

Chapter Notes

- ¹ A.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements", *American Anthropologist*, Vol LVIII, pp. 264-281, April 1956.
- ² Louis Rousseau, "Crise et éveil religieux dans le Québec du XIXe siècle", *Interface*, Jan-Fév, pp.24-31, 1990.
- ³ William McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp.13 and 205, 1978.
- ⁴ James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, p.45, 1975.
- ⁵ Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*, Colorado Springs, Navpress, pp.150-152, 1989.
- ⁶ This is one of the important points of Dr. Reginald Bibby's *Unknown Gods: the Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada*, Toronto, Stoddart, 1993 and Jacques Grand'Maison's *Le défi des générations*, Montreal, Fidès, 1995.