Canadian Pentecostal Diversity: Incorporating the Many Voices

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Abstract

An important and neglected aspect of Pentecostalism in Canada is its cultural diversity. In this article I offer a multicultural interpretation of Canadian Pentecostalism examining several ways in which the voices of “other” European groups have largely gone unheard, especially the German, Scandinavian, and Italian. I then recontextualize the story by including aboriginal, black, and new immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I also suggest some reasons why Canadian Pentecostalism has not incorporated the voices of these groups into its history and provide a research agenda for Canadian Pentecostal studies.

Keywords

Pentecostalism; multiculturalism; diversity

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From the beginning many Pentecostal churches began as independent entities and chose to remain so. But hundreds of Pentecostal denominations arose as well, including this one: “The founding fathers and mothers of the Assemblies of God met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, on April 2-12, 1914, to promote unity and doctrinal stability, establish legal standing, coordinate the mission enterprise, and establish a ministerial training school.” It would be difficult to exaggerate the significance of this event. Of the some 280 million Pentecostals worldwide, more than 67 million belong to the Assemblies of ... When push came to shove, some Pentecostal churches and denominations have proved themselves protective of orthodox and evangelical Christianity. History, politics, arts, science & more: the Canadian Encyclopedia is your reference on Canada. Articles, timelines & resources for teachers, students & public. The Pentecostal movement in Canada reflects some of the same patterns experienced in other religious movements, including a period of initial rapid growth, a decisive tendency toward a distinctive organizational style, a slow evolution toward an "establishment" attitude, and the levelling off and fragmenting of the movement into a variety of organizations and religious trends. The Pentecostal movement (including the more recent charismatic and "third wave" streams) is now said to represent one in four Christians worldwide, crossing denominational as well as geographical boundaries (Barrett 1982; Cox 1995). It is estimated that some 12% of all Americans are Spirit-baptized, with believers crossing denominational lines and found in classical Pentecostal churches, newer independent Charismatic sects, Roman Catholicism and all Protestant denominations (Green, et al. 1997). In summary, underlying the Pentecostal understanding of prophecy is a biblical hermeneutic which acknowledges the release of the prophetic during the "end-times."