

Quenching the Spirit:  
The Transformation of Religious Identity  
and Experience in Three Canadian  
Pentecostal Churches

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

According to Census Canada, after eight decades of consistent growth Canadian Pentecostal affiliation reached an all-time high of 436,435 individuals in 1991. A decade later, the results of the 2001 Canadian census revealed that Pentecostalism underwent a precipitous 15.3 percent, or 66,969 affiliate, decline—the first in Canadian Pentecostal history. Scholars of religion assumed that this decline in affiliation represented an actual decrease in the number of Canadian Pentecostal adherents. Drawing on 42 personal interviews, 158 survey responses, content analysis of material culture, and one year of participant observation within three Canadian Pentecostal congregations located in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, I provide an alternative interpretation of the decrease in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation that pays closer attention to both the data contained in the census as well as important changes in religious culture that have occurred at the congregational level.

I demonstrate how the decrease in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation recorded by Census Canada does not alone provide adequate evidence to claim that Pentecostal adherents abandoned their congregations at a rate of more than 15 percent in the decade between 1991 and 2001. Instead, I argue that this decrease in affiliation can be explained by the fact that Canadian Pentecostals have experienced a transformation of religious identity, belief, and practice from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical categories significant enough to be detected by the census. When asked, for instance, to describe their religious affiliation, 86 percent of interview participants in this study chose a generically evangelical or Christian moniker rather than the term “Pentecostal.” This means that just 14 percent of interview participants would have been recorded as Pentecostal if they answered in a similar way on the census instrument. The significant proportion of the participants in this study that did not identify, believe, or behave the way that Canadian Pentecostals did just a few decades earlier, I believe, helps explain the dramatic, if misleading, 2001 census results.

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It is necessary to first acknowledge the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation without whose participation in this project this thesis would truly not exist. I did my best to describe the often very intimate details that these participants entrusted to me with both honesty and respect and I hope that they find this to be an accurate, if not always flattering, representation of the religious life of their congregations.

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Finally, and most importantly, I would like to express my gratitude to my wife, Becky, and to my son, Alasdair, for their unconditional love and support over the course of my doctoral studies. They provided the strength that I needed to bring this project to completion, and so I appropriately dedicate this thesis to them.

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## **Dedication**

For Becky and Alasdair

“Do not quench the Spirit.”

1 Thessalonians 5:19

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# CHAPTER 1— INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE PROBLEM

In May 2003 when Census Canada released the results regarding religious affiliation gathered two years earlier in the 2001 census, it revealed a change that no sociologist or scholar of religion had anticipated: Canadian Pentecostalism registered a staggering 15.3 percent or 66,969 affiliate loss between 1991 and 2001, the first decline in Canadian Pentecostal history. What was so puzzling about this change was that Pentecostal affiliation had reached an all time high in Canada just a decade earlier.

In 1991 the census showed that 436,435 individuals (approximately 1.6 percent of the Canadian population in 1991) identified as Pentecostal (Wilkinson 2006, 16–17; 2009, 4). In fact, the number of Pentecostals in Canada had grown remarkably since 1911, the first year that Pentecostals appeared in a Canadian census. In that year the census recorded 515 Canadians who identified as Pentecostal in what would have been only a handful of churches located largely in the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, where the two earliest centers of Canadian Pentecostalism—Toronto and Winnipeg—were located. By 1921, the number of Canadians identifying as Pentecostal grew to 7,012, marking a 1,361 percent increase in just a decade. Pentecostalism continued to grow in Canada for the next seven decades without any sign of ceasing. At the dawn of the new millennium the success of Pentecostalism in Canada was so apparent that sociologist Peter Beyer confidently claimed, “Pentecostalism is growing in almost all regions of Canada” (2000, 85).

In the decade between 1991 and 2001, however, something changed. Upon closer examination, it became clear that after several decades of consistent growth in conservative Protestant affiliation, a number of these denominations experienced marked declines. The relative decreases in affiliation between 1991 and 2001 within the Salvation Army, Pentecostalism, and the Christian Reformed Church, for instance, each exceeded decreases within the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, three of the fastest declining Christian denominations in Canada just a decade earlier. What was perhaps most perplexing was Pentecostalism’s transition from one of the twentieth century’s fastest growing Christian denominations in Canada, to one of the fastest declining. What was even more troubling was that no one was able to explain why this had happened.

The recent decline in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation is all the more puzzling given the fact that Pentecostalism is growing at an incredible rate in many other parts of the world. The results of a survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life reported that as many as 5 percent of Indians, 11 percent of South Koreans, 26 percent of Nigerians, 30 percent of Chileans, 34 percent of South Africans, 44 percent of Filipinos, 49 percent of Brazilians, 56 percent of Kenyans, and 60 percent of Guatemalans are Pentecostals (Lugo et al. 2006, 76–94).

With its more than 525 million estimated adherents worldwide, Pentecostalism is practiced by approximately one in every thirteen people, and one in every four Christians, on the planet (Barrett,

Kurian, and Johnson 2001, 4). The last two decades have seen a procession of books each claiming that Pentecostalism constitutes one of the most important religious and social movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Alexander 2009; Allen 2009; Anderson 2004; Chesnut 1997, 2003; Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001; Cox 1995, 2009; Gifford 2004; Hollenweger 1997; Jenkins 2002, 2006; Kalu 2008; Kay 2009, 2011; Martin 1990, 2002; Miller and Yamamori 2007; Stoll 1990; Westerlund 2009). John L. Allen refers to Pentecostalism as, “the fastest growing religious movement in the world,” and Philip Jenkins even goes so far as to wonder, “Since there were only a handful of Pentecostals in 1900, and several hundred million today, is it not reasonable to identify this as perhaps the most successful social movement of the past century?” (Allen 2009, 377; Jenkins 2002, 8).

One obvious way to account for the decline in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation contained in the 2001 census results is to interpret these results as representing a real decrease in the actual number of Canadian Pentecostal adherents. Could Pentecostals be experiencing an upward climb on the socioeconomic ladder, and, as a result, be leaving behind “a sect of the poor” for one of the “churches of the middle class?” (Niebuhr 1929). Could higher levels of respect, education, and income mean that Pentecostals are now leaving a religious tradition intended for the socially, culturally, and economically deprived for more respectable religious options? (Anderson 1979). Or could Pentecostalism, along with several other Christian denominations, be the victim of a prevailing loss of religiosity within Canadian society that has caused many of its adherents to simply drop out of its ranks altogether? (Bruce 2002). Despite the plethora of theoretical options available that might explain the decline in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation as representing a real decrease in the actual number of Pentecostal adherents, there exist at least four main problems with any such explanation.

First, denominational statistics collected by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, which accounts for as many as 60 percent of all Canadian Pentecostals, did not themselves record the kind of decreases in attendance, numbers served, or number of congregations, that would normally accompany such a dramatic decrease in adherence as that recorded by Census Canada. In fact, between 1991 and 2001, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada recorded an *increase* of 10,000 members. While certainly not as large as the increases of previous decades, this casts serious doubt on any attempt to explain the decrease in affiliation recorded by the census as representing an actual decrease in Canadian Pentecostal adherence (Wilkinson 2006, 17–18; 2009, 4–5).

Second, census data on religious affiliation does not correspond to the actual number of adherents within any particular denomination. These numbers simply represent the percentage of people who report a certain religious affiliation or identity. Question twenty-two on the 2001 Canadian Census—the only question on religion—included the following information to guide census takers: “What is the person’s religion? Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practicing member of that group.” What this means is that the numbers collected by Census Canada only point to religious self-identification, and, at best, is only ever an intimation of the actual number of practicing adherents in any given denomination. As Paul Froese explains: “Individual religiosity is usually measured by belief, behavior, and identity. But these aspects of religiosity are by no means in perfect correlation” (Froese 2008, 106). In other words, someone can self-identify with the United Church of Canada but never actually attend church or believe or practice any element of the United Church tradition. Conversely, someone might self-identify as a “Christian” or “evangelical” but

regularly attend and be a committed member of a Pentecostal church. The numbers of actual practicing adherents within any particular religious tradition, then, can be either much lower or much higher than their religious affiliation or self-identity may otherwise suggest.

Third, Census Canada recorded an increase of 121 percent (approximately 427,000 individuals) among those who reported a generic Christian identification such as “Christian,” “Apostolic,” “born-again Christian,” or “evangelical” between 1991 and 2001. These titles, particularly “Apostolic,” are used synonymously by Pentecostals across Canada and all over the world in order to describe themselves (Wilkinson 2006, 17; 2009, 6). Thus, a number of the respondents whom census enumerators lumped into this amorphous category would actually be practicing Pentecostals. Furthermore, since at least the early 1990s, a number of sociologists of religion in both Canada and the United States have observed the rise of what they call “generic evangelicalism.” One important component of generic evangelicalism is the increasing tendency not to identify oneself according to traditional denominational categories (i.e., Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, etc.), but, rather, as simply “Christian,” “evangelical,” “born-again,” or “Christ-follower,” as well as a whole host of other generic monikers (Ellingson 2007; Miller 1997; Reimer 2003; Sargeant 2000). Bearing these observations in mind, it is easy to see how even a small portion of this large increase among those who reported a generically Christian or evangelical religious identity could more than account for the decline among those individuals who no longer chose the term “Pentecostal” to describe their religious affiliation on the census, but who may very well continue to attend Pentecostal congregations.

Finally, the census also recorded an increase of 43.9 percent (approximately 1,460,000 individuals) among those who chose not to report any religious preference between 1991 and 2001. Question twenty-two on the Canadian Census allowed census takers to record one of two possible responses to the religion question. The first simply included a space to write the individual’s religious preference with the instructions: “Specify one denomination or religion only.” The second option contained a circle that could be marked with an “X” in order to record “No religion.” Contrary to some simplistic interpretations, the so-called “religious nones” category is not comprised of only atheists and agnostics. Sociologist David Eagle, for instance, explains that while most religious nones in Canada “rarely attend church,” the results from the General Social Survey administered by Statistics Canada reveal that 7 percent of religious nones report attending church at least yearly, and 3 percent attend church weekly or monthly (2011, 188, 194). This means that 10 percent, or 146,000, of all the additional Canadians who were recorded as “religious nones” in the 2001 census, actually attended church, and some could have certainly been Pentecostals.

## **1.2 THE HYPOTHESIS**

These observations led me to initiate a study of both individual and congregational religiosity in three Canadian Pentecostal churches in the Region of Waterloo in an attempt to understand the decline in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation. Other than being fairly certain that this decline was not the result of a decrease in the actual number of Canadian Pentecostal adherents (due to the reasons just discussed), I began this study with no clear idea of how I was going to explain the dramatic change recorded by Census Canada. This uncertainty, however, quickly dissipated after the first few weeks of fieldwork.

Following one Sunday morning service at Freedom in Christ (one of the three congregations where I conducted the research for this study) my wife and I were invited along with a few others to have lunch in the home of a couple from the congregation. Once the dishes were cleared following the meal, we gathered in the living room to talk. I immediately saw the opportunity to informally ask a few questions relating to my research. Before long I asked a man in his early thirties who had been attending Freedom in Christ with his wife and two children for more than six years: “Is it important to you that Freedom in Christ is a Pentecostal church?” After I asked the question, he stared at me with a puzzled look on his face for several seconds, brows crossed, and said, “Freedom in Christ is a Pentecostal church? I didn’t know that.” Without a second thought, and as casually as if I had just asked him whether it was important to him that the chicken we ate for lunch was free range, he refocused his attention and joined another conversation. Although my interviewee did not display even the slightest sense of concern regarding what he had learned about the denominational identity of his congregation, I, to say the least, was shocked.

I wondered how it was possible that someone could not know (or even appear to care) that the church that he and his family had been regularly attending for more than six years was Pentecostal. I immediately thought that perhaps this individual was particularly unobservant or especially disinterested in the matter of denominational identity, and, as a result, this fact had went unnoticed by him. I attempted to hide the perplexed look on my face and proceeded to pose similar questions to about a half-dozen other people gathered in the same living room that Sunday afternoon. To my astonishment, I heard person after person give nearly identical answers to my questions: “Freedom in Christ is a Pentecostal church?” Many of these individuals—most of them highly committed and regularly involved members—apparently had been attending Freedom in Christ for years without being aware that it was a Pentecostal church. Furthermore, one man who was aware that he was attending a Pentecostal church did not appear to know what this meant. He responded to my question by saying, “Yes, I knew Freedom was a Pentecostal church, but aren’t Pentecostals just something like Baptists?” Sufficed to say, I left lunch that morning with a hunch—later confirmed by a year of fieldwork—that provided a possible explanation for the puzzling 2001 census results.

The decrease in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation recorded by Census Canada does not provide adequate evidence to claim that Pentecostal adherents have abandoned their churches at a rate of more than 15 percent in the decade between 1991 and 2001. *Instead, my hypothesis is that this decrease in affiliation can be explained by the fact that Canadian Pentecostals are experiencing a significant transformation of religious identity and experience from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical categories.*<sup>1</sup> In other words, a significant proportion of those individuals who attend Canadian Pentecostal churches are simply no longer identifying, believing, or worshipping as they did just a few decades ago, and this transformation accounts for the dramatic, if misleading, census results.

This development represents a reversal of the phenomenon described by Grace Davie as, “believing without belonging” (1994, 2000) and more accurately represents what Danièle Hervieu-Léger calls “belonging without believing” (2006). It is important to note that most Canadian Pentecostals have

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<sup>1</sup> I define religious identity as religious affiliation or religious self-identification, and I define religious experience as belief and practice.

not become as religiously inactive as the Europeans that Hervieu-Léger uses this term to describe. Nonetheless, many Canadian Pentecostals appear to be “belonging without believing” in their own way. That is, attending Pentecostal churches without acquiring the degree of commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity, belief, and practice that is necessary in order to influence their religious self-identification on a census form.

Over the last two decades Pentecostal pastors and denominational leaders from Newfoundland to British Columbia have noticed a significant change in the way that Pentecostals self-identify, what Pentecostals believe, and the ways in which Pentecostals practice their faith. If one were to walk into many present-day Pentecostal churches in Canada on a Sunday morning, one would no longer find evidence of the ecstatic and emotive practices traditionally associated with Pentecostalism, such as being baptized in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, publicly proclaiming a word of prophecy, being slain or falling down under the power of the Holy Spirit, or dancing in the Spirit. Rather, one might wonder if they had accidentally wandered into a Baptist, Brethren, Christian and Missionary Alliance, or Mennonite church. In many Pentecostal churches, the songs sung, the topics of the sermons preached, the rites performed, the curriculum used to educate, the books being read, and even the terminology, would be very similar, if not identical, to what they would find within a whole host of other conservative Protestant churches across Canada and the United States.

What is perhaps more interesting is the question of whether or not the average church seeker would even be able to find a Pentecostal church in many communities across Canada. This is not because they do not exist, but because many Pentecostal churches have removed the word “Pentecostal” from their names. For instance, a random examination of the names of the ten churches affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in Mississauga, Ontario (where the national office of the denomination is located) in 2009 included: “Christ for Life Ministries,” “Faith Alive Christian Centre,” “Gift of God Church,” “Heartland, A Church Connected,” “Iglesia Evangelica Hispana Emmanuel,” “La Semance de Vie,” “Logos Christian Family Church,” “Portico,” “Victory Community Church,” and “West Edge Community Church.” The term “Pentecostal” was not found in the name of a single one of these churches, a phenomenon by no means unique to the city of Mississauga. Changes made to church names may appear as a rather weak indication of a shift in religious identity. However, names convey meaning, mark identity, and can reflect much deeper transformations that are occurring below the surface of ordinarily observed religious life.

This rather simple illustration demonstrates the complex process that some scholars of American Pentecostalism have identified as “the evangelicalization of Pentecostalism,” which describes the gradual alignment of American Pentecostalism with the broader American evangelical tradition, often at the expense of Pentecostal denominational and theological distinctiveness (Blumhofer 1993b; Paterson 2007; Poloma 1989, 2006; Poloma and Green 2010, 25; Robeck 2002, 922–925; Spittler 1994, 112). These changes are not unique to Pentecostalism, but form part of a much broader phenomenon occurring within many other North American Protestant denominations (Ellingson 2007; Miller 1997; Reimer 2000, 2003; Sargeant 2000; Wagner 1997). Sam Reimer describes this trend as the emergence of a “transnational generic evangelicalism,” while Stephen Ellingson refers to this process as an evangelical “colonization” (Ellingson 2007, 178–185; Reimer 2000, 242; 2003, 15, 39). Conservative Protestant churches in North America are undergoing a gradual, but continual,

transformation from traditional and denominational identities, theologies, and practices to homogeneous, generic versions.

Nancy Ammerman has also documented a similar homogenization within liberal Protestantism that she calls “Golden Rule Christianity.” This form of religious commitment is defined by an ethical interpretation of Christianity where, she found, “the most frequently mentioned characteristic of the Christian life was that people should seek to do good, to make the world a better place” (Ammerman 1997, 197). Sociologist Christian Smith has uncovered an analogous religious attitude among American teenagers that he identifies as, “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” He argues that the defining features of this religious outlook include the convictions that: “1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth. 2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. 3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. 4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. 5. Good people go to heaven when they die” (2005, 162–163).

While some very limited attention has been paid to the evangelicalization or homogenization of American Pentecostalism, this phenomenon has been completely ignored in Canada. *The overarching objective of this study, then, is to provide a detailed description of just how exactly Pentecostal identity, belief, and practice have been transformed from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical categories in three Canadian Pentecostal congregations.* This description will, in turn, provide the evidence that is required to substantiate my hypothesis that the changes in Canadian Pentecostal affiliation recorded by Census Canada are the result of a shift in Canadian Pentecostal identity and experience.

### **1.3 THE IMPETUS FOR CHANGE**

Over the last two decades sociologists of religion have increasingly observed the growth of a group of individuals, not unlike many of the participants in the present study, who demonstrate a preference for some degree of religious autonomy and prefer to describe their religious identity, beliefs, and practices as primarily “spiritual” rather than “religious” (Barker 2004; Chandler 2008, 2011; Corrywright 2003; Dawson 2006; Forman 2004; Fuller 2001; Hanegraaff 1996, 1999; Heelas 1996; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Lynch 2007; Roof 1993, 1999; Stark, Hamberg, and Miller 2005; Tacey 2004; Wuthnow 1998; Zinnbauer et al. 1997; Zinnbauer et al. 1999). It was in the decades immediately following the Second World War that growth among this cohort—often labeled “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR)—began most precipitously, particularly in the United States. The emergence of the SBNR coincided with, among other things, an increase in global awareness and immigration (pluralism), the desire to choose and shape one’s own identity (individualization), the considerable expansion of industrial production and corporate marketing (consumerism), the deep-seated conviction that institutions could no longer be trusted (anti-institutionalism), and the growing suspicion that many of the previously taken-for-granted traditions were no longer capable of providing ontological certainty (uncertainty) (Bauman 1988, 62; 2001, 144; Beck 1999, 10; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 2).



Beginning particularly in the 1960s a number of North Americans reacted to the rise of pluralism, individualization, consumerism, anti-institutionalism, and uncertainty, at least in part, by transitioning from what Robert Wuthnow calls “a spirituality of dwelling” to a “spirituality of seeking.” “A spirituality of dwelling,” Wuthnow explains, “emphasizes *habitation*: God occupies a definite place in the universe and creates a sacred space in which humans too can dwell; to inhabit sacred space is to know its territory and to feel secure” (1998, 3–4, emphasis original). “A spirituality of seeking,” Wuthnow continues, “emphasizes *negotiation*: individuals search for sacred moments that reinforce their conviction that the divine exists, but these moments are fleeting; rather than knowing the territory, people explore new spiritual vistas, and they may have to negotiate among complex and confusing meanings of spirituality” (1998, 4, emphasis original). With the existence of many more religious options in a social context where choice was highly valued and the existing religious institutions and traditions were viewed with suspicion, spiritual experimentation and hybridity became much more common.

This, what Wuthnow calls, “new spiritual freedom” (Wuthnow 1998, 52–84), created the conditions to allow many North Americans to begin searching for religious meaning outside of traditional religious institutions and particularly Christian denominations (Carroll and Roof 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987; Wuthnow 1988). This new post-denominational religious freedom did not, however, come without a price. Jettisoning the apparatus of traditional religious structures also meant letting go of the certainty that they provided (Roof 1999, 16, 84, 309–313). Those individuals who preferred to negotiate their own way through new spiritual terrain in favor of more traditional forms of spiritual habitation, participated in what Wade Clark Roof calls a “spiritual quest culture” (1999, 59). Roof defines this quest culture as, “a search for certainty, but also the hope for a more authentic, intrinsically satisfying life” (1999, 10).

By participating in this quest culture, individuals are able to experiment with new forms and expressions of spirituality in which, as Robert Wuthnow explains, “the process of seeking—the journey—now becomes more important than the destination” (Wuthnow 1998, 160). Spiritual seekers often focus exclusively on the liberatory elements of individualization and the freedom that can be experienced outside of traditional forms of religious certitude. Spiritual seekers prefer to concentrate on the discovery of the expansive self “usually described,” Roof explains, “in terms of feelings, sensitivities, expressiveness, or simply as ‘individuality’” (1999, 66). Nonetheless, both Roof and Wuthnow are keen to point out that this type of journey spirituality is not without its drawbacks, including the need to continually reinvent itself in search of the certainty that is the price of its very existence.

The development of spiritual questing and seeker spirituality occurred alongside the related but independent emergence of a pervasive therapeutic culture in North America. The parents of the baby boomers pioneered some of the first group therapy, twelve-step, self-help, and recovery programs during the self-actualization and human potential movements of the 1930s and 1960s led by psychologists Trigant Burrow, Kurt Goldstein, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow. The implicit acceptance of the need for self-improvement and the normalization of the intense and sustained focus on the felt needs of the individual, marked what sociologist Phillip Rieff describes as “the triumph of the therapeutic” (1966; see also Campbell 1987). Robert Bellah and associates describe the therapist as an important image or type that “reinforces the traditional individualism of American culture”

(2008, 104). They explain how this ubiquitous therapeutic culture—which they call expressive individualism (borrowing from Talcott Parson’s idea of the “expressive revolution”)—“exists for the liberation and fulfillment of the individual” (Bellah et al. 2008, 47; Parsons 1974).

In a very real sense, then, religion in the latter half of the twentieth century became privatized, or, perhaps more accurately, subjectivized, and was significantly influenced by the inherent conviction found within expressive individualism that, as Bryan Turner writes, “feeling good is equivalent to being good” (2011, 71). With correlates to both Wuthnow’s concepts of habitation and negotiation and Bellah and associates’ notion of expressive individualism, Peter Berger has argued that in the latter half of the twentieth century, religion was to a large extent redefined from a transcendental reality to a component of the human consciousness (1965, 41). In other words, religious reality no longer required the search for the divine within discreet religious institutions and traditions, but could be found simply by exploring the depths of one’s own desires and self-reality, what some observers have labeled “psychological polytheism” (Hillman 1989, 38–45; Moore 1992, 66–67; Wuthnow 1998, 160–161).

Institutional forms of religion were not immune to the emergence of a spirituality of seeking and the values of expressive individualism. Expressive individualism, for instance, has exerted a particularly powerful influence within North American Protestantism, which already contains a strong tradition of religious individualism (Shain 1994, 138; Zafirovski 2011, 35). Commenting on the discernable presence of expressive individualism within North American evangelical literature, theologian George Lindbeck writes: “Acceptance of Christ as one’s personal savior is still the touchstone or shibboleth of piety in this evangelical literature, but the Jesus one accepts is no longer chiefly the forgiver and redeemer from sin. He is rather, ‘the friend who helps one find happiness and self-fulfillment’” (1986, 369–370). The recasting of the image of God as the creator and sustainer of the universe who is to be feared and honored, to that of a kind of master therapist who is instead consulted and recommended, was a consistently encountered theme during my fieldwork.

Referring specifically to the phenomenon of seeker spirituality, Roof explains that, “the spiritual impact of this subculture is even bigger than statistical estimates would suggest. There is a boundary problem considering that many people who are affiliated with a church, synagogue, or temple embrace teachings, practices, and sensitivities derived from this broad movement” (1999, 204). In other words, there are many individuals who consider themselves to be very much a part of religious institutions who at the same time participate in the spiritual quest culture. Siobhan Chandler has recently made the important observation that many Canadians who call themselves SBNR could certainly be described as “progressive, liberal seekers,” but they also simultaneously maintain “some connection to organized religion” (2011, 33). This observation casts serious doubt on the outmoded idea that religious nones and the SBNR are not present within institutional forms of religion. They certainly may have a deep suspicion of religious institutions and a loose relationship with religious tradition, but this also does not mean that they have completely jettisoned these institutions or traditions.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chandler reserves the term “spiritual definitely not religious” (SDNR) for the relatively smaller portion of individuals who “are more inclined to view religion and spirituality as distinct, separate spheres” (2011, 42).

I believe that the definitional ambiguity surrounding the discussion of who exactly comprises the SBNR cohort identified by Roof, Chandler, and others is in large part due to the fact that the concomitant increase of the SBNR and the homogenization of religious identity and experience within Protestantism are both symptoms of the same underlying cultural developments, namely seeker spirituality and expressive individualism. For instance, not unlike the SBNR, many Protestants in North America argue that their experience of Christianity is not a religion, but, rather, a “faith,” “journey,” “life-style,” “relationship,” or “spirituality.” In his widely read book, *The End of Religion: Encountering the Subversive Spirituality of Jesus* (2007), Canadian Pastor Bruxy Cavey argues that Christianity is not a religion, but, rather, a unique form of spirituality. He writes: “The Jesus described in the Bible never uses the word *religion* to refer to what he came to establish, nor does he invite people to join a particular institution or organization. When he speaks of the ‘church,’ he is talking about the people who gather in his name, not the structure that they meet in or the organization that they belong to” (2007, 43, emphasis original). Cavey’s sentiments are echoed by dozens of best-selling Protestant authors across Canada and the United States who have attempted to reframe their traditions in order to integrate the values of seeker spirituality and expressive individualism (Bell 2005; McLaren 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010; Miller 2003; Pagitt 2003; Rollins 2006, 2008, 2009; Tomlinson 2003).

In summary, while I argue that the specific or immediate impetus for the transformation of Canadian Pentecostal identity and experience is the result of the infiltration of generic evangelicalism within the congregations that I studied, I also believe that this relatively recent religious innovation acts as a carrier for the much broader developments of seeker spirituality and expressive individualism, which are also found in most other aspects of contemporary North American society. Generic evangelicalism will be explained in greater detail in the following chapter. For the present time, however, it is enough to say that many of its central emphases can be seen as strong correlates with the values that undergird seeker spirituality and expressive individualism, and that generic evangelicalism often imports these values into congregations under the guise of a neutral form of evangelical Christianity. In later chapters I will demonstrate how these values—especially those associated with expressive individualism, which I more frequently refer to as therapeutic, expressive individualism—have significantly shaped the religious identity, beliefs, and practices of the members of the three congregations that I studied.

The pervasive North American convictions that religion should be both negotiable (seeker spirituality) and personally fulfilling (expressive individualism) have resulted in a social and religious climate where it is acceptable for nearly all aspects of religious tradition to be, borrowing a term from Wuthnow, “tinkered” with, in order to provide the most personally “relevant” and “rewarding” religious experience possible. In particular reference to young adults<sup>3</sup> who now comprise the single largest demographic of North Americans, Wuthnow elaborates: “spiritual tinkering was not just a form of restlessness that characterized baby boomers and then could easily be reversed among their offspring. Spiritual tinkering is a reflection of the pluralistic religious society in which we live, the freedom we permit ourselves in making choices about faith, and the necessity of making those choices in the face of uprootedness and change” (2007, 135). The transformation of Canadian

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<sup>3</sup> Wuthnow defines young adults as those between twenty-one and forty-five years of age (2007, 6–7).

Pentecostal identity and experience, then, cannot properly be understood as the result of a single or even primary social process (i.e., social mobility, deprivation, secularization), but is, rather, the result of a complex combination of influences that require careful and detailed analysis in order to accurately describe and explain.

#### **1.4 PLAN OF THE STUDY**

In the next chapter I outline the methods that I used in order to measure religious identity and experience within the three Pentecostal congregations that provide the central field of data for this study. I begin by fleshing out in greater detail what it is that I mean by the term “generic evangelicalism” as well as a few other important terms. Next I discuss the criteria that I used to select the three churches, the interview and survey instruments, and the basic demographic information provided by the participants. I conclude the chapter by addressing the larger methodological concerns of generalization in qualitative research and my relationship to the three congregations.

Chapter 3 provides a brief introduction to the Pentecostal tradition, which is especially important for readers who lack familiarity with the movement. Here I offer a functional definition of Pentecostalism, outline the North American origins of Pentecostalism, describe the emergence of Pentecostalism in Canada, and suggest ideal-types of traditional Canadian Pentecostal identity, belief, and practice. I argue that before it is possible to measure whether or not Canadian Pentecostal identity and experience have indeed been transformed, we must first establish static, historical types for these categories that can then be used as a rule against which to measure changes that exist within Pentecostalism both over time and between different geographical locations.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 are the core of this study. They provide the raw data necessary to demonstrate my hypothesis. Chapter 4 is where the reader first becomes acquainted with the voices of the participants through some of the ethnographic material collected during the course of this study. Here I present brief vignettes of the three congregations, and also provide short life histories of the senior pastors of each of the churches.

In Chapter 5 I describe the preponderance of a generically evangelical religious identity among the members of the three congregations. I propose a continuum of religious identity comprising of: (1) traditional denominational identifiers, (2) latent denominational identifiers, and (3) nondenominational identifiers. This continuum can be used to categorize and understand the ways that various Pentecostals, and possibly members of other religious traditions, choose to describe their religious affiliations. The 88 percent of interview participants who used a generically evangelical or Christian term rather than the term “Pentecostal” to describe their religious affiliation, provides strong evidence for my hypothesis that Canadian Pentecostal identity is being transformed from traditional Pentecostal to generically evangelical categories.

Chapter 6 examines how the individual members of the three congregations have modified their beliefs and practices regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues—Pentecostalism’s two most distinctive characteristics. I argue that those elements of Spirit baptism and glossolalia that have been either jettisoned or retained are those that, respectively, either oppose or reinforce a largely therapeutic understanding of these experiences.

In chapter 7 I detail participants' encounters with divine healing, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena such as angels, demons, and the practice of exorcism. Unlike the previous chapter, Chapter 7 demonstrates how a number of the individuals that I spoke with have maintained some important traditional Pentecostal experiences. I argue, however, that these individuals have not retained their beliefs and practices regarding divine healing, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena because of any special commitment to the Pentecostal tradition. Rather, I explain that these commitments have been retained because the idea that God wishes to relieve suffering through healing, protection, and deliverance already fit into the modern, therapeutic understanding of religion predominant within these generically evangelical congregations.

## CHAPTER 2— MEASURING PENTECOSTAL IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE

### 2.1 WHAT IS GENERIC EVANGELICALISM?

Throughout the course of this study I often use the term “generic evangelicalism” and refer to the three congregations that form the basis for this study as “generically evangelical” churches. This term is also sometimes used in association with others such as “new paradigm churches,” “alternative congregations,” “seeker-sensitive churches,” and “emerging churches.” These terms can be confusing to those outside of (and even to many within) conservative Protestant religious culture. Because of this, I will now take the time to define these terms in an attempt to bring some clarity to some of the most common nomenclatures currently used to describe contemporary conservative Protestant churches.

The Canadian theologian John G. Stackhouse was probably the first scholar to make use of the term generic evangelicalism in any kind of systematic way. Stackhouse differentiates between two basic types of twentieth century Canadian evangelicals. First are a group of more ecumenically minded evangelicals who are willing to compromise specific denominational elements within their traditions in order to, Stackhouse argues, promote the idea of a united evangelicalism for the purpose of exerting a greater, more concerted influence upon the moral future of Canadian society. Stackhouse identifies these evangelicals as “evangelicalists” and as being a part of a “transdenominational evangelicalism” (1998, 9–10, emphasis original). Second, are a group of evangelicals who, although they share with transdenominational evangelicals a commitment to the same basic set of evangelical beliefs, practices, and values, nonetheless prioritize particular denominational emphases over the ideology of a united evangelicalism, and, as Stackhouse writes, “would be seen as generic ‘evangelicals’ per se, members of the set one might call (with apologies to C.S. Lewis) ‘mere evangelicality’” (1998, 10).

In short, Stackhouse uses the term “generic evangelicalism” to identify what I and other sociologists of religion currently refer to as either traditional or denominational evangelicalism. What Stackhouse refers to as “transdenominational evangelicalism” is actually what most contemporary sociologists of religion today have in mind when they use the term “generic evangelicalism”—evangelicals who modify their traditions often at the expense of diluting their traditional denominational characteristics. Stackhouse’s usage of the term generic evangelicalism, then, is out of step with the way that it is now most commonly used. His impact on the present discussion lies in the role that he played as an early progenitor of the idea of a “transdenominational evangelicalism” in both Canada and the United States, which was picked up and furthered by later scholars (Reimer 2000, 231; 2003, 21, 119; Stackhouse 1998, 4, 9, 10, 12, 15, 54, 61, 70, 77, 94, 112, 119, 127, 139, 168, 171, 181, 185, 188, 189, 196, 198, 202, 204; Stackhouse 2000, 113–128).

The next individual to use the term generic evangelicalism in any substantive way was the Canadian sociologist, Sam Reimer. The central focus of much of Reimer’s research has been to

identify the similarities and differences between American and Canadian evangelicals (1995; 2000, 228; 2003, 4–5). In order to compare and contrast evangelicals across national boundaries, Reimer had to first develop an appropriate definition of evangelicalism. To do this he differentiates between two basic definitional strategies that are alternatively based on either (1) belonging or (2) belief and behavior (2000, 228–229).

Perhaps the best-known example of a belief and behavior-based definition of evangelicalism is the one proposed by the British historian, David Bebbington. Bebbington argues that evangelicals are best understood as those Christians who are highly committed to a quadrilateral of traditionally significant evangelical beliefs and behaviors, namely: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism (1989, 1–19). While Reimer recognizes that such belief and behavior-based definitions have their place in specific applications, he prefers to define evangelicalism according to belonging, and more specifically, as a particular subculture shared across various conservative Protestant denominations. He explains:

I focus on evangelicalism as a *subculture*, limiting the term to those who participate in conservative Protestant denominations. Since I study the effect of the evangelical subculture on individual evangelicals, it is necessary to study those who actively participate in the subculture. Alternatively, one could study evangelicalism as a *movement*, which would include all those who meet a certain set of evangelical believing and/or behaving criteria, regardless of their denominational affiliation or religious identity. In other words, belief and behaving definitions will include conservative mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics in the evangelical category. These conservatives meet evangelical criteria but are not embedded in the evangelical subculture. (2000, 229, emphasis original)<sup>4</sup>

Reimer examined the characteristics of Christians belonging to this evangelical subculture from various denominations in both Canada and the United States. He discovered that, except for: (1) a larger disparity among American versus Canadian evangelicals regarding what they say they do and what they actually do, (2) the predisposition of American evangelicals to view national history and politics through a moral and religious lens, (3) the increased tendency towards political conservatism and extremism among American evangelicals, and (4) higher proportions of irenicism among

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<sup>4</sup> A few years later in his book, *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide* (2003), Reimer clarifies his subcultural definition of evangelicalism further: “Denominational definitions, belief-based definitions, and self-identification measures have all been used in previous research to distinguish evangelicals from other Christian traditions. For my purposes, a denominationally based definition is best since churches in conservative Protestant denominations are the institutional ‘carriers’ of the evangelical subculture. A belief-based definition—which typically defines an evangelical as one who believes in a personal God, in the divinity and unique saving work of Jesus, and in the unique authority and inspiration of Scripture—would include conservatives in Catholic and mainline Protestant churches, but they would not be part of the evangelical subculture to the same degree. For the same reason, self-identification is insufficient for this study, since some claim to be evangelical who are not involved in evangelical institutions, which others who are actively involved do not espouse the evangelical label” (6–7).

Canadian evangelicals, evangelicals in Canada and the United States were nearly identical (1995; 2000, 235–236; 2003, 118–151). Reimer demonstrated that, “In areas of religious experience, belief, morals, practice, and commitment, differences are minimal” (2003, 142). This observation led him to posit the existence of a “transnational generic evangelicalism” in Canada and the United States (2000, 242; 2003, 15, 39). While this “transdenominational transnational evangelical subculture” (Reimer 2003, 21) allows for national and even regional differences, especially in areas of a political or social nature (Reimer 1995), it represents a remarkably homogenous, shared religious culture that unites evangelicals in both Canada and the United States through a vast network of clergy, colleges and seminaries, conferences, curriculum, institutions and professional associations, literature, music, movies, television, and a whole host of new media platforms including blogs, social media, software, and websites.

Reimer’s recognition of the existence of a generic evangelicalism has been corroborated and even expanded in terms of its denominational reach by American sociologist, Stephen Ellingson. Ellingson found significant evidence of a generically evangelical religious culture in several Evangelical Lutheran churches in the San Francisco Bay area. He defined those churches that adopted the generic evangelical paradigm as: individualistic, emotive, pragmatic or utilitarian, technique-driven, needs-focused, contemporary in music and technology, homogenous, therapeutic, moralistic, marketing savvy, passive in participatory orientation, and obsessed with church growth (2007, 111–113). He writes: “worship in the evangelical tradition appeals to emotion and experience rather than intellect and doctrine and will experiment extensively with any technique or technology to create an environment conducive to conversion” (2007, 113). Ellingson perceives the emergence of generic evangelicalism within the congregations that he studied as a largely regrettable process of the evangelical “colonization” and homogenization of American Lutheranism (2007, 179–185).

I believe that the phenomenon within conservative Protestantism identified by Stackhouse, Reimer, and Ellingson is the same trend that Donald E. Miller caught only a glimpse of in California and labeled as “new paradigm churches” (1997, 1) and what Margaret Poloma and John Green describe within the Assemblies of God as “alternative congregations” (2010, 25). I am not attempting to argue that all of the churches that these scholars described were exactly the same. To be sure, some of the congregations that Reimer included in his study were much more traditional and loyal to denominational distinctives than many of the churches examined by Ellingson, Miller, and Poloma and Green. What I am arguing, rather, is that the promotion of a generically evangelical orthodoxy, and the adoption of a similar form or way of doing church, represents a common and very significant transformation in late-twentieth century and early twenty-first century North American Christianity.

Generic evangelicalism is certainly not a completely coherent religious movement, but, rather, is better described as a prevailing cultural trend that scholars have detected in many different contexts across Canada and the United States. It is difficult for individuals who have engaged in fieldwork within these types of congregations to deny that, as Richard Kyle explains, “Denominational lines have broken down, theology has been diluted, religious traditions have gone to the way side, and the parachurches have become increasingly important. Consequently, a generic evangelicalism has come to the forefront” (2006, 312).



It is necessary to point out that there exists a tremendous degree of congregational variety within this vast swath of generically evangelical congregations across Canada and the United States. While generically evangelical congregations all promote a markedly similar “kit” of conservative Protestant identity, beliefs, and practices, this kit can be assembled in substantially different ways, resulting in a range of options for how congregations choose to package this religious culture. Two of the largest and most important approaches to packaging generic evangelicalism are what are often described as seeker-sensitive churches and emerging churches (Poloma and Green 2010, 38).

Seeker-sensitive churches (or simply, seeker churches) emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly with the founding of Bill Hybels’ Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois in 1975, and Rick Warren’s Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California in 1980. These congregations and others like them were built with the intention of attracting largely baby boomer religious seekers by packaging conservative Protestant belief and practice “in an innovative, contemporary form” (Sargeant 2000, 1). “A seeker church,” according to Kimon Howland Sargeant, “is one that tailors its programs and services to attract people who are not church attenders” (Sargeant 2000, 2). This often involves a rock band playing contemporary music, the use of drama and multi-media presentations, a practical and encouraging message, and an overall casual, upbeat, and welcoming experience with little pressure for commitment.

Seeker churches share a number of other common characteristics and include churches that: (1) are markedly anti-institutional and nondenominational in emphasis, if not in actuality, (2) have historically drawn the majority of their members from the baby boomer generation, (3) value clergy who are pragmatic over those with formal theological education, (4) emphasize contemporary, soft-rock worship, (5) usually include some kind of small group ministry, (6) encourage (and in some cases even require) informal dress, (7) prioritize tolerance and individualism, and, as a result, de-emphasize offensive religious symbols such as crosses and topics such as the crucifixion, hell, and judgment, (8) stress technique and method over liturgy, (9) embrace a corporate culture and intentionally utilize current marketing practices to increase attendance, and (10) above all else, focus on the incorporation of religiously inactive seekers by being sensitive to their felt needs.

Emerging churches are a much more recent development on the North American religious landscape. In the 1990s a number of conservative Protestant clergy in Canada and the United States began to feel that the seeker church approach was both too blatantly consumeristic and failed to connect with the “Gen-X” and “Millennial” cohorts who no longer identified with the modern, rationalistic, and propositional form of evangelicalism favored by their baby boomer parents or grandparents (Belcher 2009, 9, 35–36; Marti 2005, 36; Poloma and Hood 2008, 12). *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (2001), written by former English Professor and nondenominational pastor, Brian McLaren, marked a kind of beginning for the emerging church movement. McLaren’s book is a fictional dialog between Dan Poole, a conservative Protestant pastor who is experiencing a crisis of faith, and Neil Everett Oliver, a former pastor and now high school science teacher. Poole stands as a type for disaffected evangelicals everywhere, while Neil (who prefers to be called Neo) stands as a type for “a new kind of Christian.”

Through his conversations with Neo, Dan gradually comes to realize that Christianity is not simply about traditional ecclesial structures and correct doctrine, but more about an ongoing spiritual

relationship and journey (two key words within the emerging church). This new kind of Christian is someone who attempts to mould a wholly new vision of the Christian faith that is more attentive to postmodern conceptualizations of epistemology and ontology. Theologian Ray Anderson explains that emerging churches promote “second-order change,” which “produces a new system and new way of behaving rather than a new behavior within the same system” (2006, 21). In practical terms, this means that emerging churches are often not simply the retooling of an existing conservative Protestant church, but like Brian McLaren’s own church, are totally new communities intentionally designed from the ground up.

The emerging church is notoriously difficult to define, as one of its main emphases has been the avoidance of the modern tendency to erect foundational categories and definitions. Nonetheless, Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger identify three core and six derivative practices that they believe define the emerging church: (1) identifying with the life of Jesus, (2) transforming the secular realm, (3) living highly communal lives, (4) welcoming the stranger, (5) serving with generosity, (6) participating as producers, (7) creating as created beings, (8) leading as a body, and (9) taking part in spiritual activities (2005, 43–45). This oft-cited definition of emerging churches is so ambiguous that it could refer to almost any Christian congregation, and while certainly pointing to some of the legitimate themes commonly emphasized within the emerging church, it does not work as an adequate definition of the movement.

Many evangelicals do not fully understand or accept the emerging church movement. Scot McKnight began an article in *Christianity Today* by summarizing the caricature that many outsiders have drawn of the emerging church:

It is said that emerging Christians confess their faith like mainliners—meaning they say things publicly they don't really believe. They drink like Southern Baptists—meaning, to adapt some words from Mark Twain, they are teetotalers when it is judicious. They talk like Catholics—meaning they cuss and use naughty words. They evangelize and theologize like the Reformed—meaning they rarely evangelize, yet theologize all the time. They worship like charismatics—meaning with their whole bodies, some parts tattooed. They vote like Episcopalians—meaning they eat, drink, and sleep on their left side. And, they deny the truth—meaning they've got a latte-soaked copy of Derrida in their smoke- and beer-stained backpacks. (2007)

Much like the positive definition suggested by Gibbs and Bolger, negative stereotypes of the emerging church identified by McKnight, while containing an element of accuracy, are equally unhelpful in trying to identify the movement (for another example see, DeYoung and Kluck 2008, 20–22).

At its most basic and popular level, the emerging church movement is a type of protest, first beginning within conservative Protestantism and now found throughout much of North American Christianity, against traditional forms of Christian doctrine and church leadership (Belcher 2009, 40–43). At the congregational level, emerging churches are those that often feature: (1) contemporary

music and alternative forms of artistic expression, (2) dialogical and discussion-oriented messages rather than expository preaching or propositional teaching, (3) an outward, social justice orientation, (4) an emphasis on orthopraxis over orthodoxy, given that adherents often purport that truth is positioned, and, thus, elusive, (5) engagement with popular culture, and (6) political liberalism.

For the purposes of this study, then, I understand generic evangelicalism as comprising all of the above movements. No matter how they are variously labeled, new paradigm churches, alternative congregations, seeker-sensitive churches, and emerging churches each stress a movement away from traditional, denominational distinctives towards a homogenous version of evangelical identity, belief, and practice.

## **2.2 THE SELECTION OF THE CHURCHES**

Due to the lack of research that focuses exclusively on Canadian Pentecostalism, the primary data that I use in order to demonstrate my hypothesis is derived from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in three churches belonging to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. All three of the churches are located in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (or simply, Region of Waterloo) in the province of Ontario. The three churches, which will be introduced in much greater detail in Chapter 4, are Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly (both seeker-sensitive churches), and Elevation (an emerging church). This ethnographic research was conducted during a twelve-month period of study beginning in September 2009 and ending in August of 2010.

In order to select which three congregations I would eventually use as case studies, I implemented two criterion-based selection strategies that helped to significantly delimit the number of congregations that I would eventually have to choose from. First, I used a comparable case selection strategy that isolated those churches that belonged to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. When using a comparable case selection strategy, Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul explain, “The researcher chooses cases because of their similarity along central characteristics of interest to the researcher” (2010, 160). One of the most important characteristics of interest in this study was, obviously, the denominational affiliation of the churches being studied.

There are thirteen different Pentecostal denominations in Canada (not all of them found in Ontario), and countless more Charismatic, independent, and house churches that could also easily fall under the broader “Pentecostal” umbrella (Wilkinson 2009, 5). I chose to focus on congregations that belonged to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada for three important reasons.

First, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is the largest Pentecostal denomination in Canada. It accounts for more than 60 percent of all Canadian Pentecostals, and includes approximately 232,000 adherents, 1,100 congregations, and 3,000 credential holders (Wilkinson 2009, 4). The size of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada means that the denomination is a particularly significant bellwether for understanding religious change across the greater spectrum of Canadian Pentecostalism.

Second, I wanted to eliminate as many variables as possible to ensure a fair comparison of the congregations being examined. In other words, because each of the three congregations that I studied belonged to the same denomination, they each officially adhered to the same tenets of faith and

practiced and shared a common history. This meant that if I found differences in identity, belief, and practice when comparing the three congregations, these would not be the result of unique denominational characteristics, and would more likely reflect an actual change in religious culture.

Third, I am a minister in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. As a result, I am more familiar with the tradition and have access to certain confidences, denominational officials, events, and resources within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada that I would not have had access to within other Canadian Pentecostal denominations.

In addition to using a comparable case selection strategy to isolate congregations that belonged to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, I also used this technique to identify churches that were located in the same geographical setting. The Region of Waterloo's website explains that it had an approximate population of 533,700 people in 2008 with the largest cities being Kitchener (224,500), Cambridge (127,900), and Waterloo (120,800). Some other important communities in the Region of Waterloo where many of the participants in this study also reside include the smaller towns of Elmira, New Hamburg, Ayr, Breslau, and St. Jacobs. At the time that I designed the study there were a total of sixteen churches belonging to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in the Region of Waterloo: seven in Kitchener, four in Cambridge, three in Waterloo, one in Elmira, and one in New Hamburg. Of these sixteen churches, five were ethnic congregations, including a Croatian, a Korean, a Spanish, and two German congregations. I decided against including any of these churches in the study in the interest of reducing as many outlying cultural, ethnic, and historical particularities from the analysis as possible.

I initially planned to study a total of five congregations. As I began to visit the eleven remaining non-ethnic congregations, however, it soon became apparent that this number of churches would result in spreading myself too thinly across the churches, and would not allow me to acquire a rich enough picture of the individual congregations. In order to further delimit the total number of potential case studies, I implemented a second criterion-based selection strategy called a dichotomous case selection strategy. When using a dichotomous case selection strategy, LeCompte and Schensul write, "The researcher first defines a characteristic of interest and then creates a scale by which individuals can be arrayed in accordance with how much of that characteristic they possess" (2010, 159). The characteristic of interest that I wanted to identify was, of course, commitment to generically evangelical modes of identity and experience. Instead of developing my own scale for measuring this characteristic, in the spring of 2009 sociologist Margaret Poloma suggested that I use the four-fold typology that she and colleague John Green had recently developed for the research that led to their book, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (2010), which was specifically designed to identify Pentecostal churches that have been "evangelicalized" (13, 39, 115).

Poloma and Green's typology categorizes denominational Pentecostal churches (those belonging to classical Pentecostal denominations as opposed to independent, nondenominational, or Charismatic congregations) according to the degree that their members exhibit a strong sense of traditional Pentecostal identity and adhere to traditional Pentecostal experience (beliefs and practices) (Poloma and Green 2010, 19–44). Poloma had previously administered a pastoral survey in 1999 completed by 447 pastors from the Assemblies of God in the United States, and a congregational survey sent to

twenty-one Assemblies of God churches and completed by 1,827 adherents. Poloma and Green subsequently determined the average levels of commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity and experience within these twenty-one congregations, which resulted in four major groupings of Pentecostal churches.

First are those churches that score above average on both Pentecostal identity and experience, and can be described as traditional Pentecostal churches. These are churches in which many adherents would identify themselves as Pentecostal and adhere to traditional Pentecostal belief and practice. Pentecostal congregations composed of ethnic minorities or recent immigrants are often traditional Pentecostal churches (Poloma and Green 2010, 29).

Second are those churches that score above average on Pentecostal identity, but below average on Pentecostal experience, and could be called evangelical Pentecostal churches. Many adherents in these churches would openly identify as Pentecostal, but would be less committed to traditional Pentecostal belief and practices, and so, despite their desire to being labeled Pentecostal, they would act and believe much like other evangelical Christians. Even though Poloma and Green label this group of Pentecostal churches as “evangelical” their above average support of Pentecostal identity distinguishes them from the type of generically evangelical churches that I wished to study.

Third are those churches that score below average on Pentecostal identity, but above average on Pentecostal experience, and can be called Renewalist or Charismatic Pentecostal churches. The adherents in these churches would be ambivalent at best regarding their identification with a Pentecostal denomination, and are more concerned with the experience and use of the gifts of the Spirit. These churches often gain their members from Charismatic, independent, or nondenominational churches. Members of these churches do not typically bring with them a high degree of loyalty or interest in denominational identity, but are usually looking for the next “move of the Spirit” or “revival” and tend to migrate to whatever church promises such experiences regardless of denomination.

Finally, are those churches that score below average on both Pentecostal identity and Pentecostal experience, and can be identified as alternative Pentecostal churches. In these churches, many members do not identify with a Pentecostal denomination or adhere to traditional Pentecostal belief and practice. The only feature that even locates these congregations of the Pentecostal spectrum is the fact that they officially affiliate with a Pentecostal denomination. Congregations belonging in this last group of churches can be very different from one another, and could be seeker sensitive churches, emerging churches, or home churches. It was this last category of Pentecostal churches that I was interested in studying.

It was not my goal to administer Poloma’s survey instrument within the eleven remaining churches in order to determine congregational averages of commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity and experience. This would have allowed me to label these congregations according to Poloma and Green’s typology and isolate which were alternative Pentecostal congregations. Nonetheless, I developed an alternative, and admittedly far less scientific, procedure for measuring the levels of commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity and experience. Using Poloma and Green’s typology as a guide, I proceeded to observe a Sunday morning service, as well as speak with some of the members and the pastors of the eleven remaining churches. This investigation was, I felt, adequate to

determine where these eleven churches fell on Poloma and Green's typology. I determined that six of the eleven congregations exhibited the characteristic of interest that I wanted to study—low rates of commitment to both traditional Pentecostal identity and experience—and could accurately be identified as what Poloma and Green call, “alternative congregations” (Poloma and Green 2010, 25–26).

In addition to selecting churches according to denominational affiliation, geographic location, and generically evangelical forms of identity and experience, I also wanted the case studies to represent some diversity in congregational setting. In other words, I wanted to select a maximum of one case study from any one city or town, and I wanted the case studies to include an urban, a suburban, and a rural congregation. These criteria, as well as conversations with the pastors of the remaining congregations, led me to select Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation as the three churches that best fit the characteristics of interest, and where I was confident that the leadership understood my role as a scholar of religion as opposed to a marketing or church growth consultant.

### **2.3 THE INTERVIEWS**

My ethnographic research yielded two primary sources of information that form the basis of this study. First, and most important, are a series of in-depth interviews that I conducted with forty-two individuals—fourteen from each congregation. After approximately thirty-five interviews I experienced theoretical saturation—no new material or patterns were being uncovered—and as a result, I decided to stop interviewing participants once I reached forty-two interviews.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in their entirety. All participants except five of the pastors—Tracy Dunham and Del Wells at Freedom in Christ, Hansley Armoogan from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Brandon Malo and Steve Tulloch from Elevation—were given pseudonyms in order to protect their identity. It would have been nearly impossible to protect the anonymity of these pastors while also using the actual names of the congregations. As a result, these individuals granted me permission to use their real names. Interviews were conducted in participants' homes, interview space generously provided by each of the churches, and in an office provided by the department of religious studies at the University of Waterloo.

The interviews consisted of seventy-two semi-structured questions, meaning that I followed a pre-established set of questions with each participant (see Appendix A). I would sometimes abandon questions and pose new ones when a particular line of questioning either did not elicit the type of information that I wanted or was threatening to a particular participant. I also asked the pastors of the churches an additional nineteen questions relating to areas of organizational function and denominational relationship. Asking an established set of questions was particularly helpful as it allowed me to compare participants' responses both within and across congregations. Interviews ranged in length from 30 to 130 minutes, with an average interview length of 60 minutes. A number of individuals were interviewed more than once when clarification was needed, and some also provided me with additional information through email. In addition to the forty-two individuals interviewed at three congregations, I also interviewed denominational officials at the district (provincial) and national levels, and attended denominational meetings and events where I gathered fieldnotes.

In selecting interview participants, I implemented nonprobability quota sampling methodology in order to ensure that the sample reflected the population parameters of interest as closely as possible. Quantitative research, which aims to collect individual attribute data such as age, income, frequency of an activity, and preferences, requires the use of either probability sampling (the survey of a random sample) or census enumeration (the survey of an entire population) in order to ensure that the respondents are distributed as evenly as possibly throughout a population. The objective of qualitative research, which aims to collect more complex cultural data relating to cultural and social processes, requires the use of nonprobability sampling. This ensures that respondents are made up of a sufficient proportion of cultural experts or key informants who can intelligently reflect on these complex cultural and social processes (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999, 74).

I knew that because supporting my hypothesis required a close examination of very specific and complex cultural processes, namely, religious change, I needed to talk not only with a cross-section of ordinary church members, but also with long-time members and clergy who would be better able to reflect on the way that their tradition has changed over time. H. Russell Bernard explains: “Nonprobability samples are always appropriate for labor-intensive, in-depth studies of a few cases. Most studies of narratives are based on fewer than 50 cases, so every case has to count. This means choosing cases on purpose, not randomly. In-depth research on sensitive topics requires nonprobability sampling ... when you are collecting cultural data, as contrasted with data about individuals, then expert informants, not randomly selected respondents, are what you really need” (Bernard 2006, 186–187).

To make sure that my sample included a sufficient number of these cultural experts I established specific quotas among the fourteen individuals that I interviewed in each congregation. These included each member of the pastoral staff, one non-clergy staff member, and one current or former lay leader. The remainder of the respondents were divided as evenly as possible according to age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (as far as I was able to determine). The primary techniques that I used in order to recruit interview participants were, first, simply approaching individuals directly once I got to know them through my participation at each of the congregations, and, second, contacting participants through email and telephone in response to a list of possible participants given to me by the pastors of each of the churches.

Basic demographic information was gathered from the interview participants by using an interviewee information form that I requested each participant fill out prior to beginning the interview. Not including the five participants who declined to provide their age, the average age of the interview cohort was forty years, the median age was thirty-three years, and the youngest and oldest participants were nineteen and seventy-two years of age, respectively. Twenty-four of the participants were men (57 percent) and eighteen were women (43 percent). The higher proportion of male participants is almost entirely the result of the greater number of both pastors and lay leaders who were men. Of the seven pastors who were interviewed, for instance, five were men. Twenty-two participants described their ethnicity as “Canadian,” another eleven as “Caucasian,” two as “White,” two as “Dutch,” one as “USA,” one as “Trinidadian,” one as “Jamaican,” and two gave no response.

**Table 1. Basic demographic information for the interview cohort**

	Name or “Pseudonym”	Date of Interview	Church	Age	Marital Status	Reported Religion	Occupational Category	Highest Level of Education
1	“Trevor”	11/09/2009	FIC	36	M	Non-denominational	Professor	Doctoral
2	“Mavis”	4/10/2009	FIC	54	M	Christian	Manager	Masters
3	“Arthur”	5/10/2009	FIC	26	M	Christian	Foreman	College
4	“Colin”	19/10/2009	EPA	29	M	Christian	Financial Advisor	College
5	“Caroline”	22/10/2009	EPA	24	S	Christian	Pastor	College
6	“Gordon”	22/10/2009	EPA	27	M	Pentecostal	Student	College
7	“Amy”	22/10/2009	FIC	47	M	Christian	Administrator	Bachelors
8	“Harold”	27/10/2009	FIC	N/A	M	Grace-centered	Director	College
9	“Derek”	2/11/2009	ELE	34	M	Christian	Teacher	Doctoral
10	“James”	28/11/2009	ELE	48	M	Christian	Software Architect	Bachelors
11	Steve	2/12/2009	ELE	52	M	Christian	Pastor	Masters
12	Del	2/12/2009	FIC	57	M	Pentecostal	Pastor	College
13	“Martha”	7/12/2009	ELE	25	S	Christian	Social Worker	Masters
14	Brandon	14/12/2009	ELE	32	M	Christian	Pastor	College
15	Hanslev	16/12/2009	EPA	38	M	Christian	Pastor	Bachelors
16	“Alice”	18/12/2009	FIC	29	S	Christian	Student	College
17	“Gwen”	19/01/2010	FIC	N/A	M	Christian	Customer Service	High School
18	“Kelly”	21/01/2010	ELE	31	M	Christian	Administration	College
19	“Mike”	19/01/2010	EPA	33	S	Christian	Auto Mechanic	College
20	Tracy	22/02/2010	FIC	29	M	Christian	Pastor	Bachelors
21	“Thomas”	22/02/2010	FIC	33	S	Pentecostal	Sales	College
22	“Shane”	23/02/2010	EPA	27	M	Christian	Pastor	College
23	“Dennis”	24/02/2010	ELE	36	M	Christian	Civil Servant	Bachelors
24	“Annie”	01/03/2010	ELE	33	M	Christian	Marketing	Bachelors
25	“Isabel”	16/03/2010	EPA	52	M	Christian	Homemaker	High School
26	“Emily”	18/03/2010	FIC	53	M	Christian	Administration	High School
27	“Albert”	31/03/2010	ELE	20	S	Christian	Student	College
28	“Edward”	31/03/2010	ELE	38	M	Christian	Administration	College
29	“Jeremy”	5/04/2010	ELE	20	S	Christian	Student	College
30	“Elizabeth”	7/04/2010	ELE	29	M	Christian	Homemaker	Bachelors
31	“Sidney”	7/04/2010	ELE	35	M	Christian	Sales	College
32	“Henry”	8/04/2010	FIC	32	M	Christian	Insurance	Bachelors
33	“Jennifer”	21/04/2010	EPA	19	S	Christian	Student	College
34	“Ben”	23/04/2010	EPA	70	M	Pentecostal	Retired	College
35	“Clara”	23/04/2010	EPA	72	M	Pentecostal	Retired	College
36	“Elsie”	26/04/2010	EPA	29	M	Born-Again	Homemaker	College
37	“Kevin”	27/04/2010	EPA	N/A	M	Christian	Fire Fighter	High School
38	“Lucy”	27/04/2010	EPA	61	M	Christian	Administration	High School
39	“Ruth”	28/04/2010	EPA	N/A	M	Pentecostal	Homemaker	High School
40	“Percy”	3/05/2010	ELE	50	M	Christian	Director	College
41	“Jane”	7/05/2010	FIC	44	M	Christian	Accountant	Bachelors
42	“Toby”	30/08/2010	ELE	N/A	S	Christian	Social Service	Masters



Six participants had a high school education, eleven had some college or university education, ten had college diplomas, nine had undergraduate degrees, four had masters degrees, and two had doctoral degrees. A little more than 35 percent of participants had at least an undergraduate degree, which is more than four times greater than the national average for Pentecostals (8.2 percent), and more than two times greater than the national average for all Canadians (15.4 percent) (Religions in Canada 2001). There exist at least three possible explanations for participants' above average educational attainment. (1) The presence of seven universities within an approximately one-and-a-half hour drive of Kitchener-Waterloo could mean that university education is accessed at a higher rate by Pentecostals in the region. (2) Those individuals with higher levels of education might have been more inclined to participate in the study. (3) The pastors might have suggested their more highly educated members as interview subjects.

## **2.4 THE SURVEY**

The second primary source of information for this study was provided by a fifty-six question survey that I administered within each of the three congregations using the online service, Survey Monkey (see Appendix B). The survey included five categories of questions and was intended to collect information regarding participant's religious identities (questions 1–10), religious beliefs (questions 11–23), religious practices (questions 24–33), social values (questions 34–45), and demographic information (questions 46–56).

Due to the fact that I had access to the entire population of these congregations, I did not use a random sampling, but, rather, conducted a census enumeration, or entire population survey (LeCompte and Schensul 2010, 97). In other words, I made the survey available to every adult member of the three congregations. The survey yielded 158 completed responses (fifty from Freedom in Christ, thirty-eight from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and seventy from Elevation) from the total adult population of 515 people (125 from Freedom in Christ, 90 from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and 300 from Elevation), for a response rate of just over 30 percent. The 158 completed responses include all those individuals who read through the entire survey, but this does not necessarily mean that each respondent answered every question. The total adult population, or sample frame, was derived from a combination of congregational statistics, head counts that I conducted, and the churches' contact lists.

Survey participants were recruited using three primary techniques. First, after the purpose of the survey was carefully explained during a Sunday morning service, the members were asked—either by the senior pastor or myself—to complete the survey at their earliest convenience. Second, I created an insert that explained the purpose of the survey and contained the survey's web address, which was then handed out to each attendee during the same Sunday morning that the announcement was made. Finally, I asked the pastors to send a reminder email message containing the same information to their member contact lists a few days following the initial announcement. I also made paper copies of the survey available to individuals who did not have internet access, which were subsequently submitted to me confidentially at which point I manually entered the results.

**Table 2. Basic demographic information for the survey respondents**

	FIC	EPA	ELE
Number of respondents who completed the survey	50	38	70
Percentage of adult population who completed the survey	40	42	23
Median age of respondents	31–35	41–45	26–30
Percentage of respondents who were men / women	56 / 44	44 / 56	42 / 58
Percentage reporting a visible minority status	7	4	6.5
Percentage who were married	86.1	92	67.7
Median household income in 2009 before taxes	\$85,000–\$89,999	\$75,000–\$79,999	\$50,000–\$54,999
Percent of respondents with at least a bachelors degree	39.5	20	53.2
Most commonly reported occupational category	Professional (34.9%)	Professional (25%)	Student (33.9%)
Percentage of respondents who owned their own home	78	88	56.5
Most common city of residence	Kitchener (74.4%)	Elmira (66.7%)	Waterloo (59.7%)

The literature on survey methodology has established that the average response rate for online surveys is anywhere from 10 to 30 percent, which can be considerably lower than mail surveys (Bourque and Fielder 2003, 17; Sue and Ritter 2007, 8). Contrary to common perception, however, these lower response rates do not necessarily affect the quality of the data if care is taken when constructing questions and avoiding sampling bias (Foddy 1993). Sue and Ritter explain: “Overall, the research indicates that when compared with mail surveys, online surveys’ response rates are lower, response speed is higher, and data quality is the same or better” (2007, 7).

Furthermore, there exists a growing scholarly consensus that higher response rates do not affect a survey’s accuracy in predicting the opinions of a larger population. The American Association for Public Opinion Research has recently concluded that, “studies that have compared survey estimates to benchmark data from the U.S. Census or very large governmental sample surveys have also questioned the positive association between response rates and quality ... Results that show the least bias have turned out, in some cases, to come from surveys with less than optimal response rates. Experimental comparisons have also revealed few significant differences between estimates from surveys with low response rates and short field periods and surveys with high response rates and long field periods” (AAPOR 2008).

In other words, low response rates are not negatively correlated with data quality. The reliability of my survey results is also further enhanced by the fact that I administered the survey to the entire population at my research sites, meaning that I greatly diminished the possibility of sampling bias. In short, the 30 percent response rate that my survey achieved provides a reasonable basis from which to make generalizations regarding the remaining members of the three congregations. Of course, what

this survey does not do is provide adequate evidence from which to make generalizations regarding the larger Canadian Pentecostal population existing outside of my three research sites. At best, both the interviews and surveys only intimate possible trends existing across Canadian Pentecostalism, which need to be confirmed by additional research.

The survey revealed some interesting demographic information about the members of the three congregations. For instance, 56.7 percent of respondents indicated that they had been attending their current church for five or less years, suggesting a relatively high turnover rate among members. Only 47.4 percent and 37 percent of respondents indicated, respectively, that they had attended a Pentecostal church prior to coming to their present congregation and that they had attended a Pentecostal church most frequently as a child. This means that most members came to their current churches from non-Pentecostal backgrounds.

The survey also showed that 56.7 percent of respondents reported that they attend four Sunday morning church services in a typical month, and 52.3 percent of respondents claimed that they give at least 10 percent of their income to their church, the traditional Pentecostal expectation. The median age of respondents was thirty-one to thirty-five years of age, while 47 percent of respondents were men and 53 percent of respondents were women. Other than two respondents who described their ethnicity as “Other,” two as “Black,” and four as “Asian,” the rest claimed their ethnicity to be “White.” 20 percent described their marital status as “never married,” 74.6 percent as “married, never divorced,” 3.8 percent as “divorced,” and 1.5 percent as “separated.” All but 5.7 percent of married respondents indicated that their spouse attended the same congregation. Respondents’ median annual household income was \$65,000-\$69,999, with 17 percent of respondents reporting an annual household income greater than \$100,000. A total of 42 percent—7 percent greater than the interview participants—of respondents indicated that they had earned at least an undergraduate degree. Only 3.1 percent of respondents indicated that they were “laid off, looking for work,” with the single largest group of participants, 28.7 percent, describing their occupation as “professional.” Seventy percent said they owned their own home, and the majority of respondents indicated that they lived in either Kitchener (34.1 percent), Waterloo (32.6 percent), or Elmira (15.5 percent).

The interviews and survey were supplemented with a few other important sources of information. These included twelve months of sustained participant observation within each of the three churches, interviews with denominational leaders, content analysis of the sermons and songs performed at each of the three churches, and an examination of the material culture present at each of the churches. Some of the materials that I analyzed included annual business meeting reports, curriculum, orders of service, promotional materials, religious literature, and website content. The personal interviews, surveys, participant observation, and content analysis provided an excellent range of data collection methods in order to triangulate my research results (LeCompte and Schensul 2010, 180). Except for a few interesting areas of inconsistency that will be discussed and explained later, these data sources corroborated one another, and together provide a rich picture of the religious identity, beliefs, and practices of the members of the three congregations.

## 2.5 A NOTE ON GENERALIZATION IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

I need to be clear from the outset that I do not intend my explanation for religious change within Canadian Pentecostalism—which is limited to the investigation of only three congregations—to be imposed as a kind of model for all other Pentecostal churches experiencing similar transformations. More research needs to be done in order to confirm the findings that I present in this study. Based mainly on the epistemological insights of Émile Durkheim I do believe, however, that if a specific cultural or social pattern is found in a few segments of a population, that it *might* (Durkheim would say it *must*) be found in other manifestations of that same population.<sup>5</sup> Clifford Geertz appropriately

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<sup>5</sup> In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (2001) Durkheim rejected the ideas that knowledge, or the categories of understanding, originated through either experience, as Hume and the empiricists contended, or exist *a priori*, as Kant proposed. Durkheim believed that empiricism denied what he saw as an obvious universalism found within the categories of understanding existing throughout the various societies of the world. He also believed that apriorism was unable to account for the vast differences, or particularities, found within these same societies. Conversely, Durkheim argued that human thought is neither fully available to the senses (Hume), or innate (Kant), but, rather, that it is socially constructed (Durkheim 2001, 13, 17). Much like the social constructionism developed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman (1966), and possibly revealing the debt that these authors owe to Durkheim's epistemological framework, Durkheim writes: "the categories of human thought are never fixed in a definite form. They are made, unmade, and remade incessantly; they vary according to time and place" (2001, 16).

In order to solve these inconsistencies, Durkheim effectively replaced Kant's immutable categories that were unable to account for their own origins, with his concept of "collective representations," which he explained arise out of "a vast cooperative effort that extends not only through space but over time" (2001, 18). According to Durkheim, collective representations are in a sense derived from empiricism in as far as they are constructed from an individual's experience of objects and the consequent ideas that they elicit in the human mind. These representations are at the same time, however, universal, and transcend human experience, not because of some indiscernible givenness or divine origin like Kant proposed, but, rather, because they can be universally constructed, although in different forms, across all human cultures, and in all periods of time, so long as there exist human beings to interact with one another in order to do the collective work of social world construction.

For Durkheim, then, human knowledge, including religion, is a product of a dialectic between empiricism and apriorism, or humanity's experience of the world, and the universal ability, in fact, need, to construct a world. It was this rather innovative reconceptualization of enlightenment epistemology that allowed Durkheim to argue that by studying only a single, primitive religious tradition, it was possible to extrapolate the most characteristic or "essential" elements of religion in general. Because Durkheim believed that all human knowledge, or collective representations, are socially constructed in a virtually universal manner across all societies, it seemed entirely logical that if he could uncover the elements that make up the most fundamental religious ideas within the most primitive religion, then he would have unlocked the fundamental elements of religious life. These elements, he believed, would manifest themselves universally in all religions, although in different forms.

In the conclusion of the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim writes: "Some will object that a single religion, whatever its geographic reach, constitutes a narrow basis for such an inference. We would not dream of dismissing the advantage of extended testing of a theory's authority. But it is equally true that when a law has been proved by a well-designed experiment, this proof is universally valid" (2001, 310). Later, referring to what he perceives to be the privileged place that some individuals are quick to give general ideas, while denying the same privileged position to particular ideas, he writes: "it is inadmissible that logical thought should be characterized exclusively by the widest scope of the representations that constitute it ... The general

reminds those of us who engage in qualitative research that “it is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something” (1973, 20). In other words, cultural and social observations garnered from specific cases often correspond to the broader existence of the same or similar phenomena. One of the common mistakes made by qualitative researchers is that they often assume, rather than suggest, that their observations may correspond to other cultural and social settings.

Durkheim argued that (based on his development of what is likely the first truly sociological epistemology), reasonable hypotheses regarding a larger population (or social life in general) can be ascertained through the careful study of a particular manifestation of that population (or a particular aspect of social life). This is, in many respects, the epistemological basis for the entire practice of ethnography, that is, if it is ever thought to be more than what Harry F. Wolcott terms, “haphazard descriptiveness,” or, rather, the very careful study of isolated and totally unique cultural phenomena that do not hold any corresponding significance for understanding anything else (Wolcott 2008, 75). Despite postmodernist and poststructuralist critiques that observe the relative and situated nature of all forms of knowledge, the central objective of ethnography essentially and necessarily remains: “understanding culture in general by studying cultures in specific” (Wolcott 2008, 80).

Unlike Durkheim I do not think that qualitative research of one or a few cases is generalizable to an entire population. I do think, however, that it is entirely reasonable to use the insights gained from qualitative research in order to generalize to theoretical propositions, which can be subsequently tested, expanded, confirmed, or disproved, and which may or may not be found to be true in other segments of the same population (Becker 1991; Creswell 2009, 193; Maxwell 1992; 2005, 115–116; Payne and Williams 2005; Ragin 1987, 112, 167–168; Shadish 1995; Stake 2010, 197–198; Yin 2009, 15). I agree with Karen O’Reilly who writes:

Theoretical generalisation is when a theoretical statement is used to explain relationships between phenomena, or to summarize and make sense of disparate observations ... The theories that ethnographic research produces and/or refines are stories about connections between things that may have relevance beyond the ethnographic situation in which they were produced, but, of course, remain open to revision and refinement in the light of new empirical data. In other words, like more empirical generalisations, they remain modest and we remain skeptical of them. This involves acknowledging, reflexively, that though we have rich and complex data, we are always working with fragments of the real that have come to us through various means of translation, interpretation, and critique. However, for now they are the best we can do. (2009, 86)

In other words, virtually all qualitative researchers attempt to generalize the applicability of their findings to some degree. This, however, must be done responsibly, which usually means in the

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exists only in the particular: it is the particular simplified and impoverished. The general, then, cannot have virtues and privileges that the particular does not” (2001, 327).

direction of theory generation and refinement, rather than propositions regarding large and unstudied populations.

Obviously there exist a variety of problems with the particularities of Durkheim's argument, such as his assumptions regarding an underlying religiocultural structure existing within all human societies regardless of geography and history, his latent social evolutionism, and the essentialist and overly reductionistic elements of his methodology. With these limitations clearly in view, I believe that the reapplication of Durkheim's somewhat problematic macro sociocultural theory with the important caveats that I have just noted, maintains much of its explanatory power and potency. In the spirit of Durkheim, I hope that this study, which is both severely geographically and historically isolated, can be used to generate and refine a theory that might explain the broader social transformation occurring within other Canadian Pentecostal congregations. Many excellent scholars of religion have extrapolated their insights gained from isolated, qualitative research in order to provide an explanatory framework for what might be happening in the lives of those that far exceeded the geographical and historical scope of their original studies (see for instance, Neitz 1987; Tweed 1997, 2006).

## 2.6 THE INSIDER/OUTSIDER PROBLEM IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Due to the fact that I am not only a Pentecostal practitioner and minister, but also a member of one of the three churches that comprise this study—Freedom in Christ—it is important that I clarify my relationship to the community that I am studying. I find the typology developed by Raymond L. Gold to be particularly helpful in order to define one's relationship with a research community (Gold 1958, 217–223). Gold suggests that there are essentially four basic roles that the qualitative researcher can assume: the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant, and the complete observer (see also Creswell 2009, 179; Knott 2010, 262–269). The dichotomy between the perspectives that Gold refers to as “the complete observer” and “the complete participant” have a unique history within the academic study of religion, and comprise what Russell McCutcheon calls the “insider/outsider problem in the study of religion” (McCutcheon 1999).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The contemporary debate over these two methodological positions owes its origin at least partly to a group of scholars who were among the first to consciously differentiate their work from the study of Christian theology. They believed that it was possible to perform a truly impartial and positivistic comparison of religious phenomena, which they often classified according to their own set of external categories. Two of the most important figures that pioneered this approach were Friedrich Max Müller and Cornelius Petrus Tiele who described it as, *Religionswissenschaft*, or “the science of religion” (Müller 1873; Tiele 1897–1899).

Another group of scholars who were also part of the broader science of religion school and wished to compare religious phenomena believed that they could gain an understanding (*Verstehen*) of the very essence (*Wesen*) of religion through an empathetic appreciation for the perspective of the traditions that they studied. They aimed to organize these religious phenomena according to intrinsic categories arising from the phenomena themselves. The two most important scholars in this school were William Brede Kristensen and Gerardus van der Leeuw who adopted the designation, *Religionsphänomenologie*, “the phenomenology of religion,” from the earlier scholar, Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye (Chantepie de la Saussaye 1887–1889; Kristensen 1960; van der Leeuw 1933).

Personally, I find the roles of either complete observer or complete participant far too limiting; the former makes conducting qualitative research nearly impossible, and the latter makes achieving critical distance equally as difficult. Rather, I prefer to assume the role of either participant-as-observer or observer-as-participant, which, I believe, allows room for a sufficiently critical as well as deeply participatory approach. The participant-as-observer describes someone who is already a member of a particular religious community who at some point decides to study that tradition, thus initiating their status as an observer (see for instance, Marti 2005; Poloma 2003; Shapiro 2006). The observer-as-participant, however, describes an individual who decides to study a tradition of which they are not a part, but within which they intend to assume a participatory role of some kind for the purposes of conducting their research (see Duncan 2008; Salomonsen 2002; Tweed 1997).

Because I was a Pentecostal and a member of one of the church's being studied prior to commencing my research, I consciously assumed the role of participant-as-observer: a Pentecostal who knew many of the people that I would be observing and interviewing, but who attempted to augment, not mitigate, this role with that of critical observer. Critics of insider research are probably correct in observing that insiders will never be able to achieve the distance necessary to provide the most critical assessment of a tradition. I can accept this. At the same time, however, I would argue that this is the cost, and one that I am willing to pay, for gaining a level of familiarity with the intricacies of the culture and access to the community that is very rarely granted to an outsider. As Keith Warrington aptly writes, "to understand Pentecostalism, it is a significant advantage to be a Pentecostal" (2008, viii).

The fact that I was an insider served to alleviate the reticence of several interview participants, who may have otherwise remained close-lipped to an outsider who these same participants may have feared was aiming to belittle both their personal experiences and religious tradition, which is an all too common trend within the academic study of Pentecostalism (McCloud 2007, 90–97). Also, there were numerous resources, most importantly denominational events and meetings, that provided tremendous amounts of data from a variety of sources, which are only open by way of invitation. This is not my attempt to claim "secret knowledge" or to fabricate some sense of epistemological authority, but is simply a matter of fact within a tradition that has been maligned by scholars and the public since its inception.

This being said, the insider, no matter how confident they are of their ability to achieve and maintain a critical distance from the tradition and their participants, must be ever mindful of the fact that, as Jone Salomonsen writes, "we as scholars are indeed permitted spiritual and personal development from our work, but we may not end up as scholarly converts and proselytizers. Proselytizing and sound academic analysis are two different genres" (2002, 20). Similarly, Michel Desjardins reminds us that, "The academic study of religion ... is based on the premise that

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While these two historical approaches have been largely abandoned in their pure forms, they remain helpful for understanding two contemporary groups of scholars within the academic study of religion who remain divided among those who, on the one hand, prefer a distanced, impartial, and reductionistic examination of religion, Gold's complete observer (McCutcheon 1997; Segal 1983), and, on the other hand, those who favor an immersive, empathetic, and antireductionistic assessment, Gold's complete participant (Brown 1991; Mernissi 1991).

interpreters, regardless of their own religious beliefs, can—indeed must—distance themselves from the texts and traditions under examination. The purpose is to understand rather than judge, and to focus on the human elements of religion in the social contexts in which they arise. The existence of God, for instance, or the truth claims of any particular group, cannot be proven empirically, so they are kept out of the discussion” (1997, 13–14). It is this delicate balance between both participation and identification inside the tradition and observation and critical reflection outside of the tradition that I attempted to negotiate while studying and representing these three congregations. Only the reader can judge whether I was successful at achieving this balance or not.



## CHAPTER 3— THE PENTECOSTAL TRADITION

### 3.1 DEFINING PENTECOSTALISM

Before I introduce the Pentecostal tradition through the discussion of Pentecostal origination, identity, theology, and practice, it is important to first explain how it is that I understand and use the word “Pentecostal.” I discern four major approaches to defining Pentecostalism commonly used within the academic study of the movement: (1) social scientific, (2) theological, (3) historical, and (4) phenomenological. Below I will briefly describe these definitional traditions, and explain which approach I adopt for the purposes of this study.

Some of the first and most enduring definitions of Pentecostalism were social scientific, and attempted to define the tradition according to some of its most common social and cultural characteristics. Perhaps the most unusual Pentecostal practice is glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, causing many early observers to define Pentecostals as those who spoke in tongues, which they believed to be the result of either demon possession or mental instability (McCloud 2007, 90–91). While a glossolalic definition of Pentecostalism is certainly too simplistic to explain all of the global varieties of the movement, it was not entirely inaccurate, particularly within the North American context. As we will see later in this chapter, many early Pentecostals explicitly chose the practice of glossolalia in order to differentiate themselves from other Christians.

Other early assessors argued that Pentecostals were not simply the demonic or mentally deprived, but, rather, the either culturally, economically, or psychologically deprived who found in Pentecostalism the social compensation for what they lacked in the other aspects of their lives (Anderson 1979; Calley 1965; Lalive d’Épinay 1969; Rolim 1985). “For Pentecostals,” Robert Mapes Anderson wrote, “ecstasy was a mode of adjustment to highly unstable circumstances over which they had little or no control” (1979, 231). Pentecostalism was believed to provide an oasis in what was for many an otherwise brutal existence consisting of long hours of work, low pay, and squalid working and living conditions.

Defining Pentecostals simply as those who were deprived, however, failed as an adequate explanation of Pentecostal affiliation on several empirical and theoretical levels (Stewart 2010b, 144–154), not the least of which was the fact that, as historian Grant Wacker rightly observes, “Contrary to stereotype, the typical convert paralleled the demographic and biological profile of the typical American” (2001b, 205). In other words, the average American Pentecostal was nearly identical to the average American. While more recent social scientific understandings of Pentecostalism have improved on the poor track record of their disciplinary ancestors (see for instance, Coleman 2000; Droogers 2001; Freston 2001; Martin 2002; Poloma 2003), the faults of these earlier social scientific attempts cause many of the leading scholars of Pentecostalism to seriously question whether or not social scientists are capable of providing a robust, non-reductionistic explanation of the movement.

Other scholars have attempted to define Pentecostalism theologically. One of the most prominent examples of a theological definition of Pentecostalism was developed by Donald W. Dayton. He took issue with social scientific definitions of Pentecostalism that attempted to explain Pentecostal affiliation as a result of some amalgam of economic, psychological, or social antecedents. He especially rejected a strictly glossolalic definition of Pentecostalism, which he argued had three major limitations. First, it fails to differentiate Pentecostals from other Christians, not to mention members of other religions who also practice tongues speech. Second, it promotes ahistorical and hagiographical accounts of Pentecostal origins and ignores a close examination of the historical record that may lead to other nontraditional points of origination. Third, it ignores theological understandings of the movement, and instead prioritizes social scientific perspectives, which view glossolalia as an “abnormal response” to either real or relative deprivation (1987, 15–16).

Conversely, Dayton explained that a careful examination of the historical and theological roots of Pentecostalism, particularly within North American Methodism, but also within Anglicanism, Puritanism, and Pietism, reveals a basic *gestalt* or pattern of theological commitment that provides a much more robust theological definition of Pentecostalism (1987, 17–18). Early Pentecostals developed a Christological construct called the full-gospel or the four-fold gospel, which, Dayton argued, served as a theological definition of the movement and included the beliefs in Jesus as: (1) savior, (2) baptizer in the Holy Spirit, (3) healer, and (4) soon coming king (1987, 17–28).

One obvious problem with Dayton’s definition of Pentecostalism, or any other definition that attempts to define Pentecostalism according to a particular set of theological commitments, is that it will ultimately fail to include the diversity of individuals and traditions around that world that are often subsumed under the rubric “Pentecostal.” Such a definition, Allan Anderson explains, “can only neatly be applied to ‘classical Pentecostalism’ in North America” (2004, 10). Dayton’s definition works best to understand and define North American classical Pentecostalism, but fails to accurately describe Pentecostalism’s many global permutations.

Another important approach to defining Pentecostalism is the historical, which defines Pentecostals as those who share a historic connection with particular events in Pentecostal religious history. The first generation of Pentecostal historians, such as Zelma Argue, Frank Ewart, Stanley Frodsham, Donald Gee, Gloria Kulbeck, and B.F. Lawrence, developed largely hagiographical accounts of Pentecostal origination in which it was believed God’s supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit, usually upon the members of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906, was thought to mark the beginning of the movement (Stewart 2010a, 17–18). This position was eventually challenged by another generation of historians, such as Vinson Synan (1997), William W. Menzies (1971, 1975), David D. Bundy (1975), and Donald W. Dayton (1987). These scholars traced the origins of the movement more broadly to also include the Methodist Holiness and Keswick movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Definitions of Pentecostalism that require direct, historical links to western evangelicalism, however, are problematic because they exclude a whole range of so-called Pentecostal movements and institutions around the world that developed independent of these religious traditions (Anderson 2007; 2010, 23–25).

More recently, the German historian of Pentecostalism Michael Bergunder has argued that Pentecostalism must be defined according to the dual criteria of diachronicity (historical connections

with Pentecostal beginnings), and synchronicity (contemporary interrelations with other Pentecostals) (2008, 2010). He explains: “The first criterion demands that everything we count as Pentecostal must be connected within a vast diachronous network that goes back to the beginning of Pentecostalism ... the second criterion demands that only that which is linked together in a synchronous network can be called Pentecostalism” (2008, 12). Put more simply, Bergunder defines Pentecostalism as a network of individuals, churches, and institutions that share a common historical root to Pentecostal beginnings and are also recognized by other Pentecostals as being part of the same loose network that they themselves inhabit.

The obvious problem with Bergunder’s definition is that whoever the scholar studying Pentecostalism, or the adherent practicing it, perceives to comprise or control these two networks, is granted the representational power of defining the tradition and determining who is and who is not a Pentecostal. In other words, if at any point the individuals, churches, and institutions that most scholars or adherents consider to most accurately define the diachronic or synchronic Pentecostal networks, do not for some reason include other individuals, churches, and institutions who also consider themselves to be Pentecostal, then, according to Bergunder’s definition, we must exclude this latter group from being considered Pentecostal. For instance, in a particular geographical region or historical era in which those holding the representative power within the dominant Pentecostal networks consider Trinitarian theology a criterion for network status, then non-Trinitarian, Oneness Pentecostals would necessarily be excluded from being considered Pentecostal. For this reason, Bergunder’s historical definition of Pentecostalism is also inadequate to describe the global and often mutually contested composition of the contemporary Pentecostal movement.

An additional definitional strategy commonly employed by scholars of Pentecostalism, and the approach that I adopt in this study, is the phenomenological. The pioneering scholar of global Pentecostalism, Walter J. Hollenweger, explained the rationale for this type of definition when he wrote, “Worldwide there is so much variety that about all one can say is that a Pentecostal is a Christian who calls himself a Pentecostal ... It's not a strictly theological definition but a phenomenological one” (1998). Some may rightly wonder how it is that I can adopt such a definition of Pentecostalism given that I have already indicated that most of the participants that I spoke with explicitly did not identify themselves as Pentecostal. While most of the participants did not describe themselves as Pentecostal, they did, nonetheless, regularly attend churches that were affiliated with an explicitly Pentecostal denomination. A scholar of religion would not question that an individual who regularly attended a Hindu temple to pray and give offerings, but with whom the amorphous term “Hindu” did not resonate, was, from a strictly phenomenological point of view, what Westerners call a Hindu. I simply applied the same phenomenological principle to participants in the present study. If an individual either called themselves a Pentecostal or regularly attended a Pentecostal church (whether they were aware of the fact that the church they attended was Pentecostal or not) I considered them a Pentecostal.

Scholars who adopt a phenomenological definition of Pentecostalism recognize the inherent danger in establishing narrow social, theological, or historical criteria, such as the necessity of glossolalia, Spirit baptism, or historical links with the North American Holiness movement, in order to define who is and who is not a Pentecostal. Such narrow definitions will necessarily exclude large numbers

of individuals who do not fit neatly into these criteria, but who share, as Allan Anderson explains, “a family resemblance that emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit” (2010, 15).

In order to address this problem, a number of scholars have developed broad, phenomenological typologies that attempt to account for the diversity found within the global Pentecostal movement (Anderson 2010, 16–20; Burgess and van der Maas 2002, xvii–xxiii; Hollenweger 1997, 1; Miller and Yamamori 2007, 25–31). While there exists little consensus regarding the number and names of the various types, most scholars agree that there exist at least three major branches within the global Pentecostal movement. First are classical Pentecostals who attend churches sharing historical roots with the Holiness, Reformed, and Oneness denominations formed in North America during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Second are Charismatics who are members of non-Pentecostal denominations and include, for example, Anglicans, Baptists, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics who, beginning primarily in the 1950s, adopted Pentecostal theology, practices, and spirituality, but decided to intentionally remain within and “renew” their existing denominations. Third are Neo-Pentecostals (also sometimes called Neo-Charismatics, Independent Charismatics, and Proto-Pentecostals), which include nondenominational and independent Christians all over the world who have adopted some aspects of Pentecostal theology, practice, and spirituality, but who are not affiliated with either classical Pentecostal or traditional Christian denominational bodies. Some scholars use the term “Renewalists” to refer to all three of these groups of Christians. In this study, however, I simply use the term Pentecostal to refer to all three of these groups as a whole, while the terms classical Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Neo-Pentecostal are used to identify the individual segments of the larger, global Pentecostal movement.

### **3.2 PENTECOSTAL BEGINNINGS**

The origins of Pentecostalism are traditionally traced to two important revivals that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States. The first began in Topeka, Kansas on 1 January 1901 under the leadership of Charles F. Parham (1873–1929), and the second in Los Angeles, California on 9 April 1906 under the auspice of the African American William J. Seymour (1870–1922). While Pentecostalism emerged as a discernable religious movement in the first decade of the twentieth century it did not, however, simply appear out of thin air as traditional narratives of Pentecostal origination often purport. Rather, the beginning of Pentecostalism was the result of the adoption and adaptation of a number of important religious currents already well underway within the broader spectrum of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Anglo-American evangelical revivalism.

Two of the most important of these influences were the Keswick and the healing home movements. The first emphasized the renewing power that the “infilling” of the Holy Spirit offered Christians in order to live a “higher life” of victory over the power of temptation and sin (Bundy 1975, 1993; Marsden 2006, 72–101). The second represented a burgeoning industry of independent homes and missions established all over the world that aimed to provide prayer and guidance for those seeking divine physical healing (Curtis 2007; Opp 2005). While both of these movements played an important role in the development of early Pentecostal theology and spirituality, it was the Methodist Holiness movement that was perhaps most responsible for giving shape to the emerging Pentecostal

movement. The Pentecostal historian William W. Menzies, for instance, writes that the Holiness movement was “the cradle in which the Pentecostal revival was rocked” (Menzies 1975, 97). Additionally Vinson Synan believes that, “What made Pentecostals different from their predecessors was the teaching that the charismata, especially the gift of tongues, was the sign of receiving the subsequent ‘second blessing’ ... Pentecostalism was basically a modified ‘second blessing’ Methodist spirituality that was pioneered by John Wesley and passed down to his followers in the holiness movement, out of which came the modern Pentecostal movement” (1997, xi).

Here Menzies and Synan argue that Pentecostals are really Methodists who simply added speaking in tongues to the Holiness doctrine of entire sanctification (a second spiritual experience following justification) as a means of verifying the authenticity of the experience (Dayton 1987, 176–178). This is, as both scholars duly acknowledge, an over simplification, however, the relationship between the Holiness movement and Pentecostalism runs deep. Donald W. Dayton goes as far to write that, “Pentecostalism cannot be understood apart from its deep roots in the Methodism experience” (2009, 171).

The individual who perhaps most articulately explains the relationship between the Holiness movement and Pentecostalism is the historian Donald W. Dayton. In his important book, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (1987), Dayton explains that the theological ideas of John Wesley (1703–1791), the founder of Methodism, underwent an elaborate process of revision that laid the necessary groundwork needed to make Pentecostalism a possibility. John Wesley taught that there existed two works of grace leading to salvation that took the form of distinct religious experiences in the life of the believer: (1) justification and (2) sanctification. Justification is the spiritual process that occurs at the time of conversion when one makes a profession of faith during which God forgives the various sinful acts (or “actual sin”) that an individual has committed over the course of their life. Sanctification, Wesley and future Methodists believed, is a second spiritual process that occurs sometime after justification, whereby God cleanses the individual from the effects that all humans suffer from existing in a perpetual state of sin resulting from the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (or “original sin”), thus removing, or at least seriously mitigating, an individual’s desire to sin.

Wesley understood sanctification as both a crisis (an event) that happens at a distinct moment in an individual’s life, as well as a process, or the gradual increase in holiness over the entire span of one’s life. Wesley’s thoughts on sanctification were augmented by those of John Fletcher, Wesley’s self-appointed successor who was never able to take up this role given that he died before Wesley. Fletcher described the second blessing of entire sanctification as the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” and preferred to think of it as an event that occurred at a fixed point in one’s life, which differed from Wesley’s preference for both the event and process motifs (Dayton 1987, 35–60; 2009).

It was not until after the American Civil War (1861–1865) that the Holiness movement, which Dayton refers to as “the middle term between Methodism and Pentecostalism,” gained serious traction within Methodism (2009, 178). These postbellum Holiness adherents followed in the tradition of Fletcher in two important ways. First, they placed much more emphasis on the experience of sanctification as a distinct event as opposed to a gradual process, which they preferred to call “entire sanctification.” This was thought to complete the process of salvation initiated in conversion,

and to make it possible to live a perfect life of holiness without sin. Second, they also commonly referred to entire sanctification as “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” which denoted that, in addition to holiness or perfection from sin, this second work of grace also provided power for Christian service.

In time, a more radical faction within the larger Holiness movement decided to separate this single second work of grace held to within Methodism and the mainstream Holiness movement into two distinct works: (1) entire sanctification, which came to refer exclusively to the attainment or growth in holiness, and (2) the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which became solely used to designate the acquisition of supernatural power. Thus, members of the radical Holiness movement, such as the Canadian R.C. Horner and the American Asa Mahan, proposed three separate works of grace leading to salvation: (1) justification (at the time of conversion), (2) entire sanctification (providing holiness), and (3) the baptism of the Holy Spirit (giving power) (Anderson 2004, 19–38; Dayton 1987, 35–114; Synan 1997, 22–67).

These three-work advocates were thought of by most members of the Holiness movement as heretics, and the majority of Methodist and Holiness denominations banned this three-work theology from their official church teachings, instead retaining only justification and sanctification as the two necessary experiences leading to salvation. The importance of this theological innovation in preparing the way for the development of Pentecostalism is difficult to overstate. The three works of grace paradigm established the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a distinct spiritual event in the life of the believer, which then only required the adoption of speaking in tongues (a not uncommon occurrence within Holiness circles) as a definitive sign or evidence of the authenticity of this experience in order to mark Pentecostalism as a distinct theological tradition from both Methodism and the Holiness movement. In other words, as Donald Dayton writes: “One need only to add the practice of ‘speaking in tongues’ to have full-blown Pentecostalism” (2009, 184).

It is important to realize that the concepts of a third work of grace or “third blessing,” the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues, each on their own, added nothing new to late nineteenth and early twentieth century evangelical revivalism; they were each adhered to and practiced by numerous evangelicals. What was truly novel about Pentecostalism, however, was the specific arrangement of these three concepts that required speaking in tongues as a necessary evidence of the third blessing baptism of the Holy Spirit, which proved to be one of the most important combinations of religious concepts developed in the twentieth century. As Donald Dayton again explains: “Popular Evangelicalism was indeed at the time but a hairsbreadth from Pentecostalism. That hairsbreadth of difference was the experience of speaking in tongues as the evidence of having received the baptism with the Holy Spirit” (1987, 176).

The individual who was responsible for putting these varied pieces together into a coherent theological system, and thus earning himself the title of “the founder of Pentecostal theology” (Jacobsen 2003, 18), is Charles F. Parham. Parham was an itinerant Methodist preacher from Kansas who left the Methodist Church in 1895 in order to begin his own independent healing ministry within the broader Methodist Holiness movement after personally experiencing divine physical healing. In 1900, Parham subsequently established Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas for the purpose of training aspiring evangelists in his unique brand of Holiness theology. As the story goes (the historical record is hagiographically clouded) before leaving Topeka on a three day preaching

excursion, Parham asked his thirty-four students to read through the Book of Acts and attempt to discern what the “Bible evidence” of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was. Upon returning to Topeka, Parham’s students reported that they had discovered that the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was “glossolalia” or speaking in tongues. Parham and his students dedicated 31 December 1900 to praying to receive this experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, modeled after the disciples who gathered in the upper room to wait for the promised Holy Spirit after the ascension of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Either that evening or the following day, one of Parham’s students, Agnes Ozman, asked Parham to pray for her in order to receive the Spirit baptism. According to those gathered at the school, Ozman then spoke in tongues, which Parham later described as Chinese, and within days, Parham and the other students also experienced the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit (Anderson 2004, 33–35; Goff 1988, 62–86; Robeck 2006, 40–52; Synan 1997, 89–92).

Parham then toured throughout the United States and Canada preaching his new message of Spirit baptism, which he called the “Apostolic Faith,” as he believed that it was directly related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit experienced by the apostles in the book of Acts. In 1905, Parham established Apostolic Bible Training School in Houston, Texas. It was here in January and February of 1906 that William J. Seymour, the son of emancipated slaves from Louisiana, came to accept Parham’s teachings on Spirit baptism. Due to the segregation laws in place at the time, Parham, who was by no means a racial reformer, but who also highly valued the adoption of his new Pentecostal doctrine among African Americans, permitted Seymour to listen to his lectures by sitting in an adjacent room to the one in which Parham taught the white students, where Seymour listened to Parham through an open door (Robeck 2006, 4).

Seymour was soon invited to temporarily assume pastoral responsibilities in a small African American Holiness church located at 1604 East Ninth Street in Los Angeles, California. The current pastor, Julia W. Hutchins, was preparing to travel to Liberia to engage in missionary work and was looking for a replacement to watch over her church while she was away. Seymour promptly accepted the position and, with financial assistance from Parham, arrived in Los Angeles on 22 February 1906. Even though Seymour had yet to experience this new Pentecostal blessing for himself, his commitment to Parham’s theology was such that he immediately began to share this new doctrine with the members of the congregation. As was the case among most Holiness adherents at the time, the members of Seymour’s congregation believed that there were only two works of grace leading to salvation: justification and entire sanctification, which served to provide, as earlier Methodists wrote, the “double-cure” for sin. When they heard Seymour teaching about a third blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues, it is possible that this reminded them of the earlier radical Holiness third work heresy (Robeck 2006, 44–63).

Seymour, however, by referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a third blessing, was not suggesting that there existed more than two works of grace; he affirmed the Methodist two-stage understanding of the order of salvation. Rather, Seymour was proposing that the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues was a completely different type of experience that could grant the believer a greater degree of power for Christian service, but which was in no way tied to the order of salvation. This theological nuance mattered little to the members of the congregation,

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<sup>7</sup> See Acts 2.

as the new Pentecostal doctrine simply shared too close a resemblance with the third work heresy, and was also a great offense to the many members who believed that they had already experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit and empowerment at the time of their sanctification. As a result, Hutchins and the leadership of the Holiness Church Association, to which the congregation belonged, promptly ejected Seymour from the church on 4 March 1906 (Jacobsen 2003, 70; Robeck 2006, 63).

Fortunately for Seymour, who was now out of a job and a place to live, two former parishioners, Edward and Mattie Lee, invited Seymour to stay in their home until he could decide what to do next. Before long, Seymour had begun a small prayer group in the Lee residence, which was attended by a growing number of members from the church on East Ninth Street. Soon the group grew to the point where they needed a larger meeting space at which time they relocated to the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street. Seymour's prayer meeting continued to attract more African Americans who were interested in his teaching on the new Pentecostal blessing. On Monday 9 April 1906, after returning home from work complaining that he felt ill, Edward Lee asked Seymour if he would pray for him to overcome this illness. Seymour, as well as Lucy Farrow, a friend of Seymour's from Houston, laid hands on and prayed for Lee that he might be healed from this ailment. Lee then fell to the floor and spoke in tongues, thus receiving the Pentecostal blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit according to Parham's model (Robeck 2006, 63–67).

Later that night, gathered at the Asberry home, Seymour shared the story of Edward Lee's experience, and, within minutes, others began to speak in tongues, experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once news of what was happening at the Asberry home began to spread throughout the city and the Holiness church networks, the number of people hoping to either witness or experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit for themselves swelled so great that the front porch of the Asberry home collapsed under the weight of those gathered to watch and listen. Three days later, on 12 April 1906, Seymour would also share in the new Pentecostal experience. With the growing crowds making the need for a larger venue obvious, the next day Seymour secured the lease for a former African Methodist Episcopal Church that had suffered a fire, and most recently served as a storage facility. The new meeting space was located at 312 Azusa Street and Seymour would later give it the name, Apostolic Faith Mission.

It was 312 Azusa Street, despite the fact that the revival initially began in the Lee and Asberry homes, that Vinson Synan correctly identifies as: "the most famous address in Pentecostal-charismatic history" (1980, ix). With this new location secured, and news of the revival spreading rapidly throughout Anglo-American Holiness networks, Azusa Street began to draw large numbers of not only African Americans and other racialized minorities, but also many whites, from all across the United States and around the world. The important symbolic role that the Azusa Street mission played within the early Pentecostal ethos, and perhaps the paternalistic racism implicit among the white leadership of the movement, is attested to by the fact that on three separate occasions, prominent white Pentecostal leaders attempted to take control of the mission from Seymour: Charles F. Parham in 1906, Florence L. Crawford in 1908, and William H. Durham in 1911 (Robeck 2006, 67–86, 318).

While the revivals in Topeka and Los Angeles each played an important role in the dissemination of Pentecostalism throughout the United States and abroad, it is important to avoid viewing these revivals and their leaders through the mythical veil, common among some Pentecostal adherents and



historians alike, who tend to understand either Topeka, or more commonly, Los Angeles, as the isolated source of Pentecostal origins (Creech 1996). The fact is that there were Pentecostal revivals containing similar phenomena occurring all over the world years before the events in Topeka and Los Angeles took place. There were also numerous Pentecostal missions and revivals that began at the same time and even after Azusa Street that were not, however, connected with what was happening in the United States (Anderson 2007; Stewart 2010a).

As I noted earlier, these various theological innovations comprised what Dayton refers to as a basic *gestalt* of Pentecostal belief and practice. The earliest Pentecostals augmented the three blessings pioneered by the radical Holiness movement with the additional beliefs of divine healing and the second coming of Jesus Christ, in order to form the full-gospel, the beliefs in Jesus Christ as: (1) savior, (2) sanctifier, (3) baptizer in the Holy Spirit, (4) healer, and (5) soon coming king. Eventually, Dayton explains, those Pentecostals who came from a Reformed theological background, as well as many members influenced by the largely Reformed Keswick movement, who, lacking any kind of loyalty to Wesley or the doctrine of sanctification, dropped sanctification as a key Pentecostal experience in favor of a four-fold or foursquare gospel: (1) Jesus Christ as savior, (2) baptizer with the Holy Spirit, (3) healer, and (4) coming king (Dayton 1987, 17–28).

These developments resulted in two major divisions within the early Pentecostal movement: the Holiness (sometimes called Wesleyan), five-fold Pentecostals, and the Reformed (sometimes called Baptist), four-fold Pentecostals. The Holiness wing of Pentecostalism advocated two works of grace, justification and sanctification, and a third blessing baptism of the Holy Spirit that is not tied to the order of salvation, possessed a significant African American constituency, thrived in the southern United States where the Holiness movement was most strong, and is today represented by denominations such as the Church of God in Christ, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. The Reformed wing of Pentecostalism conflated the two works of grace held within Holiness Pentecostalism into a single “finished work” of grace (justification simultaneously including sanctification) that occurs entirely at the time of conversion, viewed the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second blessing unrelated to salvation, contained a predominantly white constituency, was initially more successful in the northern and western United States and Canada, and now includes the Assemblies of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Reformed Pentecostal paradigm represents the predominant theological position among Canadian Pentecostals.

The early Pentecostal movement would undergo another theologically significant innovation when Australian Frank Ewart and American Glen Cook re-baptized each other in the name of “Jesus Only,” in response to a sermon they heard by Canadian Pentecostal Robert E. McAlister at a camp meeting in Arroyo Seco, California in 1913. In his sermon, McAlister, who had previously received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street in 1906, was reflecting on the differences between Jesus’ instructions to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”<sup>8</sup> and the practice of the apostles who only baptized in the name of Jesus.<sup>9</sup> He concluded that by using the

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 28.19.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2.38.

names “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” in the book of Matthew, Jesus was speaking parabolically about himself and that the apostolic baptismal formula found in Acts was, in fact, more reflective of the singular nature of God. The theological reflection that Ewart, Franklin Small, Andrew Urshan, and the highly influential African American, Garfield T. Haywood, subsequently devoted to this concept resulted in a third major stream within the Pentecostal movement known as Oneness Pentecostalism. Oneness, Apostolic, or Jesus Only Pentecostals, as they are variously referred to, reject the doctrine of the Trinity, and require that members be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ alone. The majority of Oneness Pentecostals derive historically and theologically from the Reformed, four-fold Pentecostal stream, and today include denominations such as the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the United Pentecostal Church (Dayton 1987, 18–19; Reed 2008). Here, in a nutshell, is the early history of the three major branches of North American or “classical” Pentecostalism.

### **3.3 THE ORIGINS OF PENTECOSTALISM IN CANADA**

The two early epicenters of Canadian Pentecostalism were the ministries of James and Ellen Hebden in Toronto, Ontario, which “turned” Pentecostal on 18 November 1906, and that of Andrew H. Argue in Winnipeg, Manitoba, which began on 2 May 1907 (Miller 1994, 76; Stewart 2010a). The first historically confirmed individual to experience the Pentecostal Spirit baptism in Canada was Ellen Hebden on 17 November 1906. From this experience emerged the first Canadian Pentecostal congregation, the East End Mission or Hebden Mission, led by Ellen and her husband James in the city of Toronto. While not denying the important role played by Argue in western Canada, it seems fair to say that Canadian Pentecostalism began in Toronto in 1906, and that, as Thomas William Miller writes, “the history of the new religious movement in Ontario is of the greatest significance” (1994, 39).

The Hebden Mission was established on 20 May 1906 by the English immigrants, James and Ellen Hebden. James Hebden was born into a working class family in the industrial town of Mexborough, England on 6 December 1860, while Ellen Wharton was reared in a solidly middle class family in the small village of Gayton, England, and was born on 15 January 1865. Ellen underwent an emotive conversion and sanctification experience at the age of fifteen at the same time that the Keswick movement was sweeping across England. Given that Ellen’s father was a staunch High Church Anglican, he discouraged Ellen’s developing spirituality, which led her to leave home and move in with her older sister’s family where she could practice her newfound faith unhindered. Ellen subsequently left her sister’s home in Gayton in order to work under the tutelage of the renowned faith healer Elizabeth Baxter at her Bethshan healing home in London. It was while being mentored by Baxter in London that Ellen developed a vision of someday establishing her own mission where people could receive prayer for divine healing and be called to the foreign mission field (Miller 1986; Sloos 2010; Stewart 2010a).

After finishing her time apprenticing with Baxter, Ellen met James Hebden. James was a glass works laborer, and, like Ellen, an aspiring missionary who was raising his two children after the death of his wife. Ellen and James were soon married on 24 July 1893, had four children together, and spent the next ten years living and working in Swinton, England. In 1903, following a hurricane that devastated the Caribbean island of Jamaica, James and Ellen believed that maybe this was their

much-anticipated opportunity to begin their missionary career. Along with their four youngest children, the couple boarded a ship for Kingston, Jamaica where they established a mission. Jamaica, however, proved to be too dramatic a change for the Hebdens, and in December of 1904, the family relocated to Toronto, Ontario with the hopes of beginning a more permanent ministry.

It is difficult to know exactly why the Hebdens left Jamaica; it could have been the climate, the difference in culture, fears of safety, the inability to make friends, or even the lack of amenities. It is also possible, however, that the Hebdens were unable to carve out a sufficiently distinct niche in the already vibrant religious environment of Kingston, while Edwardian Toronto may have provided just the right degree of tension in order to allow the Hebdens' mission to stand out from the competition. Nevertheless, it took James and Ellen almost a year and a half to finally secure a former three-storey bakery and tenement building at 651 Queen Street East in Toronto where they would finally realize their more-than-decade-old vision of establishing their own healing mission. A typical week at the Hebden Mission included morning, afternoon, and evening services on Sunday, a Bible study class on Monday evening, an all day prayer meeting on Wednesday, and a divine healing service on Friday evening (Miller 1986; Sloos 2010; Stewart 2010a).

On the evening of Saturday 17 November 1906, six months after the establishment of the mission, something dramatic happened that would forever change the course of James and Ellen's ministry, as well as the very shape of the Canadian religious landscape. Ellen claimed that after being prompted by God to get out of bed and pray for improved power in order to heal the sick, she underwent a baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues, an event totally unlike her earlier experience of sanctification at the age of fifteen. Ellen then returned to bed, and when she awoke the next morning, explained to her husband what had happened to her the night before. Given that it was a Sunday, she also recounted her experience with those gathered at the mission's morning, afternoon, and evening services, during which time she again claims to have exhibited supernatural manifestations.

Within a month, James also received the baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues, and within five months between seventy and eighty others also shared in the experience. In time, Ellen would claim that God enabled her to both speak and write twenty-two different languages. What makes the Hebden Mission particularly important is that there is no historical evidence to suggest that Ellen had any previous knowledge of the revival that had already begun in April of 1906 at William Seymour's Apostolic Faith Mission in Los Angeles, California. In other words, both Ellen's experience of Spirit baptism and the beginning of Pentecostalism in Canada appear to have originated independently from the influence of Pentecostalism in the United States (Stewart 2010a).

Before long, news of what had happened at the Hebden Mission spread across the city of Toronto, and throughout the Holiness and emerging Pentecostal networks in Canada and the United States. Soon throngs of people began to visit the mission from across North America in order to experience the new Pentecostal baptism, and early Pentecostal leaders such as Daniel Awrey, Frank Bartleman, William H. Durham, and Aimee Semple McPherson visited and spoke at the mission. This radical religious experience led James and Ellen to transform their mission from the healing home ministry paradigm learned from Baxter in London, to a newly emerging Pentecostal ministry paradigm, which viewed healing as more of a crisis-event rather than a gradual process, and saw the transformation of

the second floor of the mission from a place for spiritual retreat and respite for the sick, to an “upper room,” common in many early Pentecostal missions, where visitors could pray and wait to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Sloos 2010; Stewart 2010a).

While the Hebden’s ministry was one of many firsts for Pentecostalism in Canada, their most enduring influence stemmed from the many evangelists that they equipped and sent out across Ontario in order to establish new Pentecostal churches and missions. The evangelists sent out from the Hebden mission were responsible for establishing many of the first Pentecostal churches in Canada, some of which still exist today. While the direct influence of the Hebden Mission was largely isolated to the province of Ontario, it also played an indirect role in the development of the ministries of some significant Pentecostal missionaries and evangelists.

One such example is the first Canadian Pentecostal missionary, Charles Chawner. In 1908, Chawner left his wife and two children behind in order to carry the Pentecostal message to South Africa. Eventually Chawner’s wife and children joined him, and his son, Austin, would go on to establish the first Pentecostal Bible colleges in South Africa and Mozambique, as well as a Pentecostal publishing house that translated and distributed Pentecostal literature throughout Africa. The role that the Chawners played in the dissemination of Pentecostalism on the African continent would not likely have been possible without Charles’ experience of Spirit baptism that he received while visiting the Hebden Mission in Toronto (Stewart 2010a; Wilkinson 2010).

The Hebden Mission also played a crucial role in the development of one of the most important evangelists of the twentieth century, Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. On 7 March 1907, Herbert Randall, a missionary to Egypt on furlough in Canada, received the baptism in the Holy Spirit while visiting the Hebden Mission. Sometime before May 1907, the Hebden’s sent Randall to hold meetings and establish Pentecostal missions throughout several small towns in southwestern Ontario, including the town of Ingersoll, just seven kilometers from Aimee’s family farm in Salford, Ontario. It was to the Pentecostal mission in Ingersoll that the Hebden’s subsequently sent Robert Semple, a young Irish evangelist who was visiting the Hebden’s in Toronto, to hold meetings in late 1907.

In December 1907, Aimee visited the Pentecostal mission in Ingersoll, where she was captivated by both the message and the man. Within two months of this experience she was baptized in the Holy Spirit, and just seven months after this, married Robert who introduced her to a life of international evangelism and missionary work. So important to her future work as an evangelist and denominational leader was Aimee’s early encounter with the man that the Hebden’s sent to Ingersoll, that Edith Blumhofer claims: “The three years during which she allowed Robert Semple to give her life its meaning became a watershed, the hinge on which everything else turned. Robert awakened her emotions, defined her spirituality, and took her off the farm and around the world, all before she was twenty years old” (1993a, 92). There is little doubt that without the role that the Hebden’s had in establishing the Pentecostal mission in Ingersoll, Aimee’s life would have taken a very different path (Barfoot 2011; Epstein 1993; Stewart 2010a; Sutton 2007).

In 1909, the same year that Seymour’s mission in Los Angeles began to experience significant organizational setbacks, the Hebden Mission, coincidentally, also encountered a series of organizational challenges that would have significant consequences for the future of James and

Ellen's ministry in Toronto. First, a number of Canadian Pentecostal leaders gathered in Markham, Ontario in June of 1909 in order to discuss the possibility of joining the English Anglican Vicar Alexander Boddy's Pentecostal Missionary Union (Wakefield 2007). The Hebdens, however, were adamantly opposed to any kind of official religious organization, as they believed that it would stifle the spontaneous leading of the Holy Spirit, a view not uncommon among Pentecostals at the time. The Hebdens' fierce opposition to denominationalism and organization, not to mention the fact that the primary leader of the mission, Ellen, was a woman, created a fissure between the Hebdens and the emerging body of overwhelmingly male Canadian Pentecostal leaders.

A second set of events that contributed to the increasing instability of the Hebden Mission was James' decision to leave Toronto in March of 1910 in order to help establish a mission in Algiers, as well as Ellen's decision to sell the building at 651 Queen Street East in the absence of her husband, and leave for an extended trip to England. Both James and Ellen made these extended departures from the mission in the midst of fundraising for a new church building. Even though Ellen was the mission's primary leader, her authority would have surely suffered with the absence of her husband's support. Furthermore, without either James or Ellen's presence at the mission for several months, which was at the time meeting in the Hebden's home at 191 George Street, a schism arose over concerns regarding how the Hebdens were spending the mission's funds (Di Giacomo 2009, 22; Miller 1986; Sloos 2010; Stewart 2010a).

Despite a failed lawsuit in which the Hebdens attempted to regain funds that were taken by a group of the mission's dissenting members, as well as a series of unfavorable articles written about the mission in *The Toronto Daily Star*, the Hebdens succeeded in building their new church at 115 Broadway Avenue in the spring and summer of 1913. The new church, which they named the "Church of God," was located just one block north of the previous mission on Queen Street East. The Hebdens, likely suffering from significant financial loss due to the recent schism, sold their large home at 191 George Street, and moved into a second floor apartment above the new church. In 1917, the Hebdens moved their family to a modest home at 48 Westlake Avenue, and continued to pastor the small church until their retirement in 1921, thus ending their fifteen years of ministry in the city of Toronto (Sloos 2010).

Given that the Hebdens retired in 1921, and that Ellen, the mission's primary leader, died on 1 May 1923, the influence of the Hebden Mission on the development of Canadian Pentecostalism, while significant, was also relatively brief. Additionally, the already existing infrastructure of the North American Holiness movement networks, meant that the Canadian-US border did little to impede the news of what was happening at the various US centers of the Pentecostal revival, most notably that of Azusa Street. While Canadian Pentecostalism may not owe its origins to the revival in Los Angeles, the work of Seymour at Azusa Street still exerted a considerable influence upon the development of early Pentecostalism in Canada. As Michael Di Giacomo explains:

While it can be strongly argued that the Hebden Mission influenced the development of Pentecostalism in Canada, the point should not be exaggerated. All early influential Canadian Pentecostal leaders probably came into contact with the Hebden Mission, and therefore its influence in the development of early Canadian Pentecostalism should certainly be recognized as significant. However, the US

contribution, especially the Azusa Street Mission, is undeniable and must also be given due credit in the beginning and development of Pentecostalism in Canada ... The stamp of Azusa Street on Canadian Pentecostalism is indelible. (2009, 18–19)

Thirteen years after the beginning of the Pentecostal revival in Canada, a number of Canadian Pentecostal leaders, mostly from eastern Canada, organized the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, which received its charter from the government of Canada on 17 May 1919. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada remains the largest and most influential Pentecostal denomination in Canada, currently accounting for approximately 60 percent of all Pentecostals in Canada, the remaining 40 percent being distributed among approximately twelve smaller Pentecostal denominations and numerous independent churches. In that same year, Pentecostals in Alberta and Saskatchewan decided to join the American Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God. In 1920, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada itself also joined the Assemblies of God, which further attests to the cooperation common between Canadian and American Pentecostals in the earliest decades of the movement.

In 1925 the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada left the Assemblies of God, which meant it now included Pentecostals from all of the Canadian provinces, except for Newfoundland, which was still a part of Great Britain. In 1930, Pentecostals in Newfoundland formed the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland (now the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador), which remains a distinct denomination, but which cooperates with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada allowing its members and ministers to move freely between the two organizations. Over the course of the following decades, both the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador continued to add new churches and members to their rosters (Atter 1965; Hewett 2002; Janes 1996; Kulbeck 1958; Kydd 2002a; 2002b; Miller 1994).

### **3.4 TRADITIONAL CANADIAN PENTECOSTAL IDENTITY, BELIEF, AND PRACTICE**

Before it is possible to determine whether or not a religious tradition has changed, one must choose a particular historical era, or an ideal-typical construction of that tradition, that can be used to compare the current characteristics of the tradition. In this section, then, I will very briefly outline what I believe constitutes traditional Pentecostal identity, belief, and practice. The decision to erect normative definitions or types of a particular cultural group or phenomenon will almost always require judgment. Nonetheless, I believe that the characteristics of traditional Canadian Pentecostalism that I propose are largely agreed upon by the majority of scholars familiar with the tradition. It should be noted, however, that this definitional clarity rapidly deteriorates when one examines Pentecostal communities comprised mainly of ethnic minorities, as well as Pentecostalism as it exists in its many global forms. Because the focus of this study is on white, classical Pentecostal churches, we can proceed with some confidence concerning the major modes of traditional Pentecostal identity, belief, and practice.

While Ronald Kydd was certainly correct to point out that “Canadian Pentecostals have qualified as evangelicals from the outset” (1997, 295), it is equally true that early Pentecostals, both Canadian and American, were neither completely accepted by the broader evangelical movement, nor understood

themselves primarily by the same quadrilateral of evangelical ideology (conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism) as did other evangelicals. Rather, as I have already mentioned, early Pentecostals defined themselves according to the four-fold Christological construct that saw Jesus Christ as savior, Spirit baptizer, healer, and coming king. While the first, fourth, and often even the third, of these emphases were shared by many other evangelicals at the turn of the twentieth century, the second component of the four-fold gospel—Spirit baptism accompanied by speaking in another language—certainly was not, and served to distinguish early Pentecostals from other evangelicals. As a result, Kydd again explains, “the relationship between the two groups has not always been harmonious, and this tension has frequently been palpable as evangelicals have decried Pentecostalism’s emotional excesses, while Pentecostals have scorned a lack of real power in evangelicalism” (1997, 300).

Until recent decades, then, there existed very little ambiguity surrounding whether or not someone was a Pentecostal. John Steinbeck’s portrayal of the Pentecostal Reverend Jim Casey in his Pulitzer Prize winning novel (later adapted into an Academy Award winning film), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), James Baldwin’s African American Pentecostal character Gabriel Grimes in his acclaimed novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1952), Martin Scorsese’s vision of Pentecostal murderer and rapist Max Cady (played by Robert De Niro) in his 1991 remake of the 1962 film, *Cape Fear*, Robert Duvall’s rendering of Pentecostal preacher Euliss ‘Sonny’ Dewey in his 1997 film *The Apostle*, and Heidi Ewing’s and Rachel Grady’s depiction of Pentecostal children’s pastor Becky Fischer in their 2006 film *Jesus Camp*, each clearly demonstrate that Pentecostals have routinely been characterized as largely indigent, illiterate, and sex-crazed maniacs for much of the last one hundred years (Wacker 2001a).

Even earlier in the movement’s history, the ridicule that Pentecostals received was not only restricted to their portrayal in popular media, but was also experienced through restricted access to employment and education and the burning of Pentecostal churches by other Christians, particularly during the movement’s early decades in North America. David Barrett’s claim that Pentecostals “are more harassed, persecuted, suffering, and martyred than perhaps any other Christian tradition in recent history” (1988, 1) is perhaps an exaggeration. Nonetheless, until recent decades, Pentecostals were often the victims of discrimination. One man, for instance, recounted to me that when he applied to work as a firefighter in the city of Kitchener in the 1970s he did not identify himself as a Pentecostal on the application form out of fear for not being hired. Also, two different men told me that they were denied admission to doctoral programs, one at the University of Toronto and the other at the University of Waterloo, because of being Pentecostal. In an admission interview, one of these individuals, who also happened to be a Pentecostal minister, was asked condescendingly by a faculty member at the University of Waterloo whether he wanted to pursue doctoral studies simply so that he could find interesting sermon illustrations. As a result, both of these individuals went on to earn doctorates at prestigious universities elsewhere. The historically inaccurate, but widely popular, caricature of Pentecostals, “as a crude movement of hillbillies and country bumpkins, attracting the lowly or ‘disinherited’ who sought compensation for their poor lot on earth in a theology of divine reward,” meant that there was little ambiguity surrounding the question of whether or not one identified themselves as part of this largely despised religious tradition (Griffith 1998, 222).

In addition to the often high costs of Pentecostal membership, the doctrinal and ritual requirements of the Pentecostal tradition (namely speaking in tongues as evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit), further served to solidify Pentecostal identity, given that these and other beliefs and practices were not shared by many other Christians until the wide acceptance of the Charismatic movement in the later decades of the twentieth century (Blumhofer, Spittler, and Wacker 1999). Central to Pentecostal identity in the decades before the 1990s, and even in many congregations to this day, was the necessity of having received the Pentecostal experience of Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Because of the obviously visible nature of this experience, glossolalia was a non-negotiable doctrinal and ritual requirement for Pentecostal membership and identity in Canada for most of the movement's history.

In short, either you believed and acted a certain way, and so were considered Pentecostal, or you were often excluded from part of the fold. This was, of course, a symptom of Pentecostalism's configuration as a sect during this period of its history. William Sims Bainbridge defines a sect as, "a deviant religious organization with traditional beliefs and practices," deviant meaning a, "departure from the norms of a culture in such a way as to incur the imposition of extraordinary costs from those who maintain the culture" (1997, 24). In other words, Pentecostalism's emergence from the controversial Holiness and Keswick movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in addition to Pentecostalism's recovery of traditional, although no less controversial, ecstatic Christian practices, meant a somewhat strained relationship with society and an easily defined membership. This resulted in a clearly demarcated religious identity within the broader spectrum of North American Christianity for most of its history.

Historian Douglas Jacobsen has argued that: "The years 1930 to 1955 form a distinct period in the history of Pentecostal theology" (1999, 90). He elaborates: "These were the years of second-generation Pentecostalism, and the theology produced during them was decisively shaped by the particular needs of this generation and the predilections of its leaders. The most prominent characteristics of the Pentecostal theology written during this era ... were its logical organization and systematic completeness. Never before had Pentecostals arranged their beliefs with such a degree of logic" (1999, 90). Jacobsen goes on to characterize this period of Pentecostal theological history as the age of "Pentecostal scholasticism" (1999, 90). These were the decades when Pentecostal doctrine was codified into formal systematic theologies, which both guided the movement and served as a touchstone for what it meant to be, believe, and act as a Pentecostal for much of the next several decades.

While Jacobsen's analysis focuses on the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada's sister denomination in the US, the Assemblies of God, his assertions hold true in Canada as well. The two primary sources of distinctly Canadian Pentecostal forms of both orthodoxy and orthopraxy were developed between 1928 and 1954, largely paralleling the period of American Pentecostal scholasticism identified by Jacobsen. The first source of traditional Canadian Pentecostal belief and practice is the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada's *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* (1994), which is the denomination's official rule of faith. Initially, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada did not adopt a doctrinal statement because the leadership of the denomination believed that such a statement would promote disunity in what was at the time a very diverse theological and practical tradition (Miller 1994, 116). When the leadership of the denomination did eventually decide that they needed an



official rule of faith in 1926, they largely adopted the statement earlier developed by The Assemblies of God. It was not until 1928 that the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada constructed their own distinct doctrinal statement entitled, *Statement of Fundamental Truths* (Miller 1994, 120). While there have been numerous changes made to both the format and wording of the statement over the last number of decades, the theology of the current *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* is virtually unchanged from the 1928 original in matters of distinctly Pentecostal content.

The second source for the construction of traditional Canadian Pentecostal belief and practice are the writings of James Eustace Purdie, who Peter Althouse calls, “arguably the most influential person in the formation and development of PAOC doctrine” (Althouse 1996, 3).<sup>10</sup> In addition to playing a significant role in the leadership and the development of the curriculum within the denomination’s first college, Purdie also contributed to the codification of traditional Canadian Pentecostal theology and ritual in two other important ways. First, during the 1950s, Purdie sat on the committee that oversaw changes made to the denomination’s *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*.

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<sup>10</sup> Purdie was born into a prominent and wealthy Anglican family in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island on 9 June 1880. During his teen years, Purdie was evangelized by his aunt who was strongly influenced by the Holiness and Keswick movements, and who exposed Purdie to this tradition through the periodical, *A Guide To Holiness*, the famous Holiness publication founded by Phoebe Palmer. In 1899, Purdie underwent a conversion experience, became an avid preacher throughout the area, and in 1902 enrolled at Wycliffe College in Toronto to fulfill what he understood as a call to ministry. After five years of study at Wycliffe, Purdie was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church and graduated in 1907. After graduation he was assigned to three small churches in Manitoba (1907–1908) and then to St. Luke’s Anglican Church in Saint John, New Brunswick in September 1908. Purdie took part in a number of evangelistic meetings while in Saint John, including a crusade with the Keswick theologian R.A. Torrey in 1910. In 1911, Purdie was sent to lead a parish in Campellton, New Brunswick, and in 1917 to St. James in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

In Saskatoon in August of 1919, Purdie agreed to meet and pray with visiting Pentecostal evangelists from the United States, Mr. and Mrs. Crouch, at the request of one of his parishioners. During the prayer meeting the two evangelists laid hands on Purdie when he claims that he experienced the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Purdie immediately began to teach and preach the new Pentecostal experience, which was not shared by many of his parishioners. In 1923, Purdie assumed the pastorate of a congregation in Philadelphia belonging to the Reformed Episcopal Church, but left shortly after due to health concerns. He subsequently assumed temporary leadership of his home parish of St. Paul’s in Charlottetown, and also engaged in itinerant preaching in a number of other congregations on the island.

In August of 1925, Purdie was informed in a letter from Robert McAlister, the General Secretary of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, that he had been unanimously elected as the principal of the denomination’s first ministerial training college planned to open in Winnipeg, Manitoba later that year. The decision to install an Anglican priest as the leader of the Pentecostal denomination’s first college, as well as the fact that Purdie was not consulted about the possibility of this position before receiving the letter from McAlister, was highly irregular. McAlister, however, had been made aware of Purdie’s firm Pentecostal convictions by his brother Harvey McAlister who had been a guest speaker at one of Purdie’s previous churches. It is also likely that the leaders of the burgeoning Pentecostal denomination wanted to add some credibility to their new college, which they thought could be achieved, at least partly, through the leadership of a mainline clergyman. Regardless of the unconventional nature of this decision, Purdie accepted the position as principal of Western Bible College, which he held from 1925 to 1950 (Althouse 2010, 55–78; Craig 1995, 4–17; Guenther 2009, 99–122; Kydd 1983, 17–33; Miller 1994, 84–87, 201–207; Ross 1971; 1975, 94–103).

Second, Purdie authored two texts published and distributed by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada that were intended to serve as official explanations of traditional belief and practice within the denomination. The first text is a 567 question catechism published in 1951 entitled, *Concerning the Faith*, and the second is a much shorter thirty-two page summary of Pentecostal doctrine published in 1954 entitled, *What We Believe*. In addition to all of the broadly shared evangelical beliefs and practices such as the authority of the Bible, the virgin birth, the atonement, the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus, salvation, evangelism, heaven and hell, and the second coming, Purdie also discusses the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and divine healing, the three most important traditional Canadian Pentecostal beliefs and practices. In what follows I will briefly outline how the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* and the two texts written by Purdie explain these three central doctrines and rituals, which I will then use as ideal-types for the purpose of measuring changes that have occurred within the three Canadian Pentecostal congregations that I studied.

The preamble to the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* explains that the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: “emphasizes Christ as Saviour and coming King. It also presents Christ as Healer and it adopts the distinctive position that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence when Christ baptizes in the Holy Spirit” (1994, 2). Here, in a nutshell, can be found a commitment to Dayton’s common four-fold pattern within early Pentecostalism, the beliefs in Christ as savior, baptizer in the Holy Spirit (accompanied by speaking in tongues), healer, and coming king (Dayton 1987, 15–28). When salvation and the second coming are removed, given that they are widely shared doctrines among most evangelicals, one is left with the same three distinctly Pentecostal beliefs and practices emphasized by Purdie in his writings: Spirit baptism, tongues, and healing.

While healing was indeed a pivotal doctrine and practice within early Pentecostalism, it was the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues that were the most important markers of identity and religious experience within traditional Pentecostalism. As Grant Wacker writes: “When early Pentecostals wanted to explain themselves to the outside world—indeed when they wanted to explain themselves to each other—they usually started with the experience of Holy Ghost baptism signified by speaking in tongues” (2001b, 35). Regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* explains: “The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit. Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way, and receives power to witness and grow spiritually. Believers should earnestly seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth” (1994, 4). This statement makes reference to the believer’s “yielding control” of him/herself, suggesting that the person of the Holy Spirit takes control of or “possesses” the individual, which results in a type of spiritual or mystical union with the Godhead, and particularly the person of Christ, resulting in a greater degree of power in order to both evangelize and grow spiritually (Warrington 2008, 95–130).

Additionally, the statement explains that the “initial evidence” of this experience is glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, which takes place “subsequent to” conversion. These two theological subtleties have an important place in the history of Pentecostal theology. Gary McGee explains that the term

“initial” was first used in relation to the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Assemblies of God’s *Statement of Fundamental Truths* in 1916 (1991, 103). Before long, a debate between two American Pentecostals, Daniel Kerr and Fred Bosworth, developed in which Bosworth argued that, not only tongues, but any charismatic gift could indicate the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Kerr argued that tongues alone indicated the experience and won the majority of the support within the denomination, thus securing his position as the doctrinal and ritual norm within both American and Canadian Pentecostalism (McGee 1991, 110).

Peter Althouse explains that it was not until 1927 that the word “evidence” began to be used by Pentecostals in relation to Spirit baptism, and as late as 1977 until the two terms were used together as “initial evidence,” after which time the question of whether or not one experienced speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit became a common measure of Pentecostal orthodoxy and orthopraxy as well as a requirement for ministerial credentials (2010, 69). It should be remembered from our discussion of Pentecostal origins that one of the tenets that created space for Pentecostalism as a discrete theological tradition was the idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a distinct spiritual experience that occurs sometime after conversion. The reason for this was that Holiness and Keswick Christians also advocated a baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they believed that it occurred either at the time of conversion, or at the time of sanctification. Subsequence, then, is a term used by traditional Pentecostals in order to argue for the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a distinctly Pentecostal experience, and which, for some, legitimates the continued existence of Pentecostalism apart from the Methodist and Holiness churches (see for instance, Menzies and Menzies 2000, 109–119).

Turning to the writings of Purdie, we see that questions 253 and 255 in *Concerning the Faith* ask respectively, “What is the Infilling of the Holy Spirit? ... What is the purpose of the Infilling of the Holy Spirit?” To these questions Purdie replied, “The Infilling of the Holy Spirit means that the believer, who already has a measure of the Spirit, is now filled and empowered for service, according to Acts 1:8 and 2:4 ... It means that God gives us additional power and liberty for service enabling us to freely and efficiently witness for Christ—Acts 1:8” (1951, 44). Similarly, in *What We Believe*, Purdie wrote, “the purpose of the infilling is to give us additional power in order that we may be more useful to the Lord and bring greater glory to His name” (1954, 22).

Regarding the evidences of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the answer to question 256 in *Concerning the Faith* reads: “They are: 1. The physical evidence of speaking in other tongues—Acts 2:4; 10:44–46; 11:15; 19:6. 2. Following this supernatural evidence of the Infilling of the Holy Spirit, there are practical evidences, such as power for witnessing—Acts 4:33; passion for souls; and a greater love for the Word of God, and towards all true Christian people” (1951, 44). In *What We Believe*, Purdie also explained: “The Biblical evidence that one is filled with the Spirit is that he speaks supernaturally in a tongue he has never learned (Acts 2:4) ... A further evidence of the Infilling of the Holy Spirit is that one receives power for witnessing, which every believers needs (Acts 4:33); a much greater passion for souls; a greater reverence for the Word of God, and a greater love toward all true Christian people, as well as a deepening of the prayer life” (1954, 22–23).

One will immediately notice that Purdie did not refer to the Pentecostal second blessing as the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit, but instead as an “infilling” of the Holy Spirit. Purdie preferred the term

infilling to baptism in most of his writings for a few important reasons. First, Purdie, as well as the Anglican faculty who educated him at Wycliffe, were deeply influenced by the theology and language of the Keswick movement, which preferred the term infilling over baptism when referring to this spiritual experience. Purdie appears to have followed the Keswick theologians in his use of terminology. Second, even though Purdie was a major figure within the Pentecostal movement in Canada, he remained a committed Anglican priest for the rest of his life, and avoided the use of the term baptism in relation to the second blessing so as not to disregard the historic Christian belief adhered to within Anglicanism that there exists only “one baptism.”<sup>11</sup> Third, implicit within the term “baptism of the Holy Spirit” was the Wesleyan idea that this experience formed a second work of grace that contributed to one’s salvation. Purdie, however, located himself firmly in the Reformed tradition within the Anglican Church, and did not subscribe to the idea that there were additional works of grace following justification. The use of the term infilling of the Holy Spirit, then, allowed Purdie to both accept the empowerment that this second blessing offered, but did not require him to assent to the Wesleyan notions of a second work baptism (Althouse 1996, 13–18).

It is also interesting to note that unlike the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*, Purdie offers several evidences of Spirit baptism, and even makes a distinction between the physical evidence of speaking in tongues and the practical evidences of empowerment for service including greater love for the Word of God and other Christians and a deeper prayer life. The understanding of love as an evidence of Spirit baptism is something that Purdie shared with William Seymour. After Charles Parham’s thwarted attempt to take over the Apostolic Faith Mission from Seymour in 1906, Seymour’s position regarding the evidence of Spirit baptism began to migrate away from the evidentiary tongues view pioneered by Parham, to the theme of divine love.

An article from 1907 in Seymour’s periodical, *The Apostolic Faith*, explained: “Tongues are one of the signs that go with every baptized person, but it is not the real evidence of the baptism in the every day life. Your life must measure with the fruits of the Spirit. If you get angry, or speak evil, or backbite, I care not how many tongues you may have, you have not the baptism with the Holy Spirit. You have lost your salvation. You need the Blood in your soul” (“To the Baptized Saints,” 2).

The anonymous author of this passage, which was likely either Seymour or Clara Lum, views tongues as one of many possible “signs” of Spirit baptism, and love as its true evidence. Another article from *The Apostolic Faith* dated a year later in 1908 is even more direct. It asked the question: “What is the real evidence that a man or woman has received the baptism with the Holy Spirit?” which was unequivocally answered: “Divine love, which is charity” (“Questions Answered,” 2). We can clearly see, then, a theological tradition within both American and Canadian Pentecostalism that allows for multiple signs or evidences of Spirit baptism other than glossolalia, however, it is equally clear that Canadian Pentecostal theology has maintained a stronger stance on tongues being the necessary and primary evidence than its American counterpart, while love and other attributes are always considered secondary evidences.

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<sup>11</sup> Ephesians 4.5.

Neither the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* nor Purdie's writings discuss the gift of speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues also mentioned in the New Testament.<sup>12</sup> When studying Pentecostalism it is essential to recognize that the term speaking in tongues is often used in two distinct contexts. First is the previously mentioned evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is usually understood as a unique and singular event. Second is the gift of tongues and interpretation, which Pentecostals generally believe, happens at more regular intervals, but does not involve Spirit baptism. Thus, tongues can be both an evidence of Spirit baptism and a gift used more regularly by the believer.

Douglas Jacobsen explains that early Pentecostals "recognized that the experience of tongues differed from individual to individual. Some received the ability to speak in tongues at the time of their baptism and continued to exercise that gift for the rest of their lives. Other recipients of the baptism of the Spirit spoke in tongues at the moment of their baptism and then never spoke a word in tongues again" (2003, 75). Pentecostal theologian Keith Warrington defines the gift of tongues this way:

The gift of tongues is best understood as an extemporaneous or spontaneous manifestation in a form that is a quasi-language. The speaker is in control of her/his speech and the forming of sounds; the Spirit does not manipulate or coerce the speaker into a particular speech pattern. It is possible that the sounds themselves already existed in the mind and experience of the speaker, being reconstituted in the form of the tongues s/he employs though it is also possible that they are previously unimagined phonetic forms. Most Pentecostals have concluded that speaking in tongues is a phenomenon that has divine and human elements in that the Spirit inspires the manifestation but the person articulates the sounds. (2008, 87)

That our two primary sources of traditional Canadian Pentecostal belief and practice fail to mention not only the gift of tongues, but also any of the other gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the New Testament (wisdom, knowledge, faith, miracles, prophecy, discernment) except healing, is quite interesting. Warrington explains, however, that, "Pentecostals have spent minimal time exploring the actual science or theology of tongues" (2008, 84), and it is likely that both the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* and Purdie implied the normalcy of the gift of tongues in their discussions of its evidentiary role in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* only includes a brief article on healing: "Divine healing provided in the atonement of Christ is the privilege of all believers. Prayer for the sick and gifts of healing are encouraged and practised" (1994, 5). The mention of healing in relation to the atonement is not incidental, but, rather, refers to the traditional Pentecostal belief (also shared by many other evangelicals) that Christ's death on the cross not merely provides, but actually guarantees healing to all Christians who ask for it. This is, to say the least, a problematic theology, as

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians 12.8–10, 28, 29.

it has often created a scenario within Pentecostal churches where those suffering with serious illnesses can be perceived to have a lack of faith, and even their salvation can be questioned (Warrington 2008, 271–279).

Purdie, on the other hand, had a great deal more to say about healing than contained in the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*. Question 290 in his catechism asks: “What is Divine Healing?” He answered, “It is the direct power of God operating upon the human body in response to the prayer of faith.” Question 291 addresses what divine healing is not, to which he provides two components: “1. Divine Healing is not Christian Science, which claims to heal by exercising the power of mind over matter. 2. Divine Healing is not Medical Science. Medical Science may be termed God’s second best while Divine Healing is God’s best” (1951, 49).

This passage is reminiscent of the tension that Pentecostals have had with medical science since the inception of the movement. Some Pentecostals believe that seeking medical attention, as well as owning any form of insurance, demonstrate a lack of faith on the part of the believer, and instead, those suffering from illness should seek only divine healing (Synan 1997, 192; Wacker 2001b, 191–192). This position is much less common than the one outlined by Purdie, who acknowledges the appropriateness of both divine healing and medical healing. Keith Warrington writes, for instance, that generally Pentecostals recognize “that medicine and natural curative properties of the body are examples of the world of a creative God” (2008, 280). It should still be noted that Purdie and other traditional Pentecostals would often consider medical science as a second or last resort after seeking the possibility of divine physical healing.

Purdie also asked in Question 292, “What is the Ground of Healing?” He responded: “The Ground of Healing is the work of Christ completed on the cross of Calvary” (1951, 49). Here Purdie’s commitment to the view that divine physical healing is provided in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and that it is to be preferred over medical intervention, is very clear. Traditionally, Canadian Pentecostals would pray for the divine healing of not only themselves, but also their family members, friends, and even people from outside of their church community. They believe that it is possible to receive prayer for divine healing on behalf of someone who is not in attendance at the service, or even for someone who is not a Christian. Opportunity to receive prayer for divine healing would be made in almost every traditional Pentecostal church service, in addition to small home prayer meetings and Bible studies organized throughout the week.

The most important moment in traditional Pentecostal healing liturgy, however, occurs after the communion service, which is typically held only one Sunday a month. Pentecostal theologian Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen explains that much like the Roman Catholic theology of Eucharistic healing, “Pentecostal piety and church life is open to the idea of connection between healing and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper” (2008, 126–127). What normally happens is that following communion, the pastor will invite all those seeking prayer for healing to proceed to the altar at the front of the church where the pastors, deacons, and often anyone who feels “led by the Spirit,” would pray for those gathered to receive healing. The pastor, and sometimes lay leaders, would typically anoint those seeking healing with oil according to the injunction found in the New Testament, which the pastor might also read at the initiation of the healing liturgy: “Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They

should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.”<sup>13</sup>

Purdie was particularly adamant about the rite of anointing those being prayed over for healing with oil. He wrote: “it is definitely clear that anointing the sick is part of the Christian ministry. Any Ministers who keep exempt from the practice of a healing ministry are themselves very great losers as also the Church they represent” (1954, 28). The Pentecostal healing liturgy can take as little as a few minutes to several hours of intense and loud prayer often accompanied with messages in tongues and interpretations intended to beseech God and encourage the ill. Given that this specific liturgy is performed after communion, which is typically though certainly not always the last component of a Pentecostal communion service, the conclusion of the healing liturgy generally concludes the meeting.

This brief analysis of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada’s *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* and the foundational writings of Purdie have helped me to demonstrate two important things. First, that the high social costs and theological and ritual requirements of Pentecostal affiliation meant and there existed little ambiguity regarding the question of religious identity for most Canadian Pentecostals during much of the twentieth century. Put simply, prior to recent decades, if you were a Pentecostal, you knew it. Second, a close examination of the authoritative sources of traditional Canadian Pentecostal orthodoxy and orthopraxy reveals that the three most important beliefs and practices within traditional Canadian Pentecostalism were Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, and divine healing. It is these four things, a discrete notion of Pentecostal identity, commitment to Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, and divine healing, that I believe define traditional Canadian Pentecostalism. The aim of chapters five through seven will be to demonstrate to what degree the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation have maintained and modified these elements of the tradition. Now we turn to meeting the congregations and the pastors that lead them.

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<sup>13</sup> James 5.13–16.

## **CHAPTER 4— THE CHURCHES AND THEIR PASTORS**

### **4.1 FREEDOM IN CHRIST**

The first time that I attended Freedom in Christ in the spring of 2004 I remember thinking that I was given the wrong address. At 1643 Bleams Road, located in the southwest end of the city of Kitchener, stood what I thought was a warehouse, or at best, an agricultural equipment retailer. Built with cinder blocks and adorned with commercial-grade red bricks and brown aluminum siding, the only thing that distinguished this building as sacred space was a small, white steeple rising up from the center of the roof. Even this single cosmic pillar was eradicated a few years later when water damage necessitated that the rotten wood structure be removed. It was never replaced.

As you pull into the driveway at Freedom in Christ, you cannot help but notice a large, refurbished farmhouse to the immediate left. The main level of this building is used to hold Sunday school classes, mid-week Bible studies, board meetings, community events, and sessions for a local Christian counseling agency. The second floor is a recently renovated apartment where my wife and I lived for four years while she served as a minister at Freedom in Christ. To the right of this same driveway, exactly parallel to the farmhouse, is a large steel shed that is used for storage. Next to the shed are two lit beach volleyball courts and a soccer field. At the back of the property sits a large, derelict blue barn, and a softball diamond.

During the spring, summer, and fall, Freedom in Christ's ten-acre property is used seven days a week, day and night. Most of these individuals have no connection whatsoever with the religious activities of the church. They, nonetheless, find the church's facilities to be a convenient oasis in the midst of a suburban sprawl where every foot of land is carefully divided by housing developers for the largest possible profit. There are many nights, during the summer months especially, when there are more cars in the parking lot, and more people on the various sports fields, than there are ever in attendance inside the church on Sunday morning. A foreign observer could be forgiven for concluding that the purpose of this property is recreational rather than religious. I have met numerous visitors to the property who told me that they thought that 1643 Bleams Road was city property, and were surprised to hear that it was in fact owned by a church.

Through the main doors and past the vestibule of the church is a small lobby with a welcome center. To the immediate right of the lobby is the church's main office with a door leading into the senior pastor's office. On the left side of the lobby is another small office and a toddler room. There are two small hallways that emerge from the lobby. The one on the right leads to member mailboxes, two other small offices, the fellowship hall, and the kitchen. The other hall on the left directs visitors to the washrooms, the nursery, a wall of coat racks, and the church's side exit.

A pair of double doors leads visitors from the lobby into the church's sanctuary, or main meeting space. The room that Freedom in Christ uses for its sanctuary was originally intended to serve as the church's gymnasium. The intention was always to build a larger, more traditional sanctuary when the



church grew to the appropriate size and had secured the necessary finances. To date, these conditions have not been met. To the right of the main entrance to the sanctuary is an audiovisual booth where the church's sound system, video projector, and stage lights are controlled. The walls of the sanctuary are composed of equal parts cinder blocks and multicolored bricks. Instead of pews, the sanctuary contains 200 interlocking chairs arranged in two equal sections each containing 100 chairs distributed through ten rows and ten columns with a center isle leading from the audiovisual booth to the platform.

At the front of the sanctuary is a small table used once a month to hold the elements needed to celebrate communion. Behind this table is a large platform that runs the entire width of the room and is approximately ten feet deep. Three stairs lead up to the platform, which contains a drum kit, a few guitar amplifiers, an electric keyboard, microphone stands, music stands, a few chairs, and, at the center of the platform, a simple music stand that is used to hold the preacher's notes. The room is lit by several chandeliers, but is devoid of natural light due to the lack of windows. The sanctuary at Freedom in Christ is completely bereft of religious iconography of any kind; no Bibles or hymnbooks, no banners with Scripture verses, not even the simple wooden cross which is standard operating equipment in most traditional Canadian Pentecostal churches. While the room's features make it ideal for multimedia presentations, one feels more like they are in a hotel conference room than sacred space.

The members of Freedom in Christ did not always meet at the charmless building on Bleams Road. The congregation was founded in 1939 as Doon Full Gospel Mission and occupied a quaint traditional white church building in Doon Village, in the southeast end of the city of Kitchener. In 1988, however, a ten-acre horse farm was purchased on Bleams Road where the present building was constructed with the hopes of growing the congregation. The original building in Doon was sold and is now used as a wedding chapel. When the congregation from Doon relocated to Bleams Road, their new church was surrounded by farmland and laid on the outskirts of the city of Kitchener. Before long, however, real estate developers purchased much of the surrounding farmland, and transformed it into a tight network of sprawling subdivisions and shopping complexes. As a result, Freedom in Christ is no longer a rural church, but finds itself in the middle of an ever-expanding suburban development. Much of the congregation's original membership has left the church and been replaced by other families, often with little or no ties to Canadian Pentecostalism.

The worship at Freedom in Christ is little different from what one would experience in the dozens of other evangelical congregations in the Region of Waterloo. Most practitioners arrive at the church ten to fifteen minutes before the service begins, at which time they talk with fellow members and perhaps enjoy a cup of coffee available at the welcome center located in the church's lobby. The service begins by the worship leader and worship team playing a high-energy song intended to signal the transition from this informal greeting time to the worship component of the service. After the first song, one of the pastors will address those present by giving a call to worship, providing some explanation for why it is that they worship God through music. After another three or four songs come the announcements and the collection or offering, which are both directed by the senior pastor of the congregation. The offering is followed by one or two more subdued worship songs, which is intended to prepare the worshipers for the sermon. On most Sunday mornings the senior pastor delivers the sermon. Occasionally, however, the assistant pastor or a lay leader within the

congregation will also preach. If it happens to be the first Sunday of the month, the congregation will celebrate communion. Communion usually follows the sermon and is officiated by the senior pastor with the assistance of lay leaders. Many Sunday services are concluded with a closing song, but they can also end with a simple prayer of benediction at the conclusion of the sermon, or with a question and answer period intended to engage listeners with the content of the sermon. The entire service from beginning to end, usually lasts ninety minutes, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM, sometimes slightly longer on a communion Sunday.

The attendance counts at Freedom in Christ fluctuated to a much greater degree than they did at either Elmira Pentecostal Assembly or Elevation during my study period. Some Sundays I counted fewer than 100 adults and children in attendance at Freedom in Christ, while on other Sundays there could be as many as 180 people in attendance. The average attendance that I recorded during my period of study, however, was approximately 150 people, including roughly 125 adults and twenty-five children. Freedom in Christ holds a Sunday morning worship service at 10:00 AM, a midweek program on Wednesday evenings beginning at 6:30 PM, a program for mothers and young children on Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM, and a youth program on Friday nights at 7:00 PM.

Until the summer of 2010, Freedom in Christ employed a senior pastor, assistant pastor, youth pastor, children's pastor (my wife), and secretary—all full-time positions. In the spring of 2010, however, the leadership of the church decided to terminate the youth pastor and children's pastor positions due to decreased financial giving at the church. It simply became impossible for a congregation of this size to financially support five full-time staff members. This transition left the senior pastor, his daughter—the assistant pastor, and his wife—the church secretary. The fact that all of the church's full-time staff are currently members of the senior pastor's immediate family has resulted in accusations of nepotism by some members of the congregation and has also accompanied a dramatic decline in church attendance.

The senior pastor at Freedom in Christ is fifty-eight year-old, Del Wells. Del exemplifies a thoughtfulness and openness to new ideas that is not common among senior pastors of his generation. Given that the denomination only requires a college diploma for ordination, it has typically favored authoritarian or charismatic over intelligent or contemplative leaders, which makes Del stand out among many of his peers. Del is an athletic man who enjoys running year-round, and has played a variety of sports throughout his life. He and his wife have a daughter and son who are both married and attend Freedom in Christ. Del reads widely and tries to stay current in the areas of church leadership and changes in contemporary society.

Del was raised in a Pentecostal pastor's home in Ontario, and witnessed the personal and professional challenges of being a pastor from a young age. After graduating from high school, being a pastor was not something that rose to the top of Del's list of potential career options. Instead, Del married, worked as a real estate agent, and was a supportive and very active lay leader within his local congregation. Over the next number of years, Del felt increasingly pulled towards a life devoted to full-time ministry and decided to leave the real estate business and pursue this calling. At the age of twenty-eight, he enrolled in a ministerial diploma correspondence program operated by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada for individuals who were either working full-time or lived in remote locations and could not attend one of the residential denominational colleges. In 1980, after

only a few months of study, Del was asked to serve as the assistant pastor in his home church, Hamilton Southmont Gospel Temple. Del served in this capacity for one-and-a-half years while he completed his education through the correspondence program.

At the age of twenty-nine, Del left his home church to become the senior pastor of Thedford Bethel Church in 1982 where he served for five years and saw the congregation experience growth. In 1987, Del moved to Petrolia, Ontario to pastor Petrolia New Life Assembly for fifteen years, where, again, the congregation saw significant growth under his leadership. From Petrolia Del moved to Owen Sound, Ontario where he assumed leadership of Rockcliffe Gospel Temple in 2001. This pastoral charge, he explained, “was an assignment from God for clarity for my wife and I to sort out what we were to do next. We had a real sense at that time that we wanted to finish our ministry strong, and we wanted to leave a legacy. So we ended up here at Freedom.” Before becoming the senior pastor of Freedom in Christ in 2005, Del served as the associate pastor within the congregation from 2003–2005. At the time of this writing, Del has served Freedom in Christ for a total of eight years—two as an associate pastor and the last six as the congregation’s senior pastor.

Freedom in Christ’s mission statement is, “To equip people to live a Christ-centered life through daily transformation.” The congregation’s vision statement is described as, “Transformed lives impacting our world.” The membership at Freedom in Christ strives to accomplish this vision by focusing on three core values: “Connecting: building authentic relationships—Training: learning to think and act like Jesus—Impacting: positively influencing the world for Jesus.” What immediately strikes one about the mission statement, vision statement, and core values at Freedom in Christ is that there is nothing about them that is overtly Pentecostal. Equipping people, transforming lives, impacting the world, connecting, training, and impacting are emphases that could be rallied around by the members of almost any evangelical congregation in North America. There is no mention, for instance, of wanting to help believers experience divine physical healing or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Not a single one of these most central concerns within traditional Pentecostalism is even so much as alluded to in these three congregational directives.

While the mission statement, vision statement, and core values at Freedom in Christ are bereft of any distinctive Pentecostal content, the congregation’s statement of faith did mention some of these traditional Pentecostal concerns. When I began my fieldwork in the fall of 2009, Freedom in Christ’s statement of faith read this way:

We believe in the Holy Scriptures to be divinely inbreathed, infallible, inerrant, and the authoritative Word of God. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in the persons of the Holy Trinity. We believe in the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, His unqualified deity, His sinless humanity and perfect life, the eternal all-sufficiency of His atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the Father’s right hand, and His personal coming to His second advent. We believe in holy living, the present day reality of the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord’s supernatural healing of the human body. We believe in Christ’s Lordship of the Church, the observance of the ordinances of Christian baptism by immersion for all believers and

the Lord's Supper. We believe in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed in heaven and the eternal doom of the unregenerate in the lake of fire.

In addition to all of the mainstays of generically evangelical belief (inerrancy, the Trinity, the virgin birth, the atonement, Jesus' bodily resurrection and ascension, the second coming, the two Protestant ordinances, and the existence of heaven and hell), this statement also includes mention of a number of distinctly Pentecostal elements. These include: holy living (a major emphasis within the early Pentecostal movement), the baptism of the Holy Spirit with special mention of Acts 2.4 (a passage traditionally used by Pentecostals to argue that this experience happens in addition and subsequent to conversion), the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and divine physical healing (two additional emphases that the Pentecostal movement was largely responsible for reviving within twentieth-century Christianity).

This statement of faith initially caused me to question whether or not Freedom in Christ was a more traditional Pentecostal congregation than I had initially imagined. Within a matter of months, however, I noticed that the leadership at Freedom in Christ had changed the wording of this earlier statement of faith. Most of the main elements found in the earlier statement were retained minus explicit mention of the ordinances, heaven and hell, holy living, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, and divine physical healing—all of the previously included Pentecostal content.

The section on the Holy Spirit in the revised statement, for instance, reads: "The Holy Spirit was sent from heaven by the Father and Son to live in every believer in Jesus Christ as a helper, teacher and guide. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to be witnesses of Christ and gives gifts of grace for ministry and worship. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and leads people to faith in Jesus." In addition to the role the Holy Spirit plays as a "helper, teacher and guide," the statement also mentions that the "Holy Spirit empowers believers" and that he gives them "gifts of grace for ministry and worship." The new wording of the statement is much more ambiguous than the previous statement, and the belief that the Holy Spirit empowers believers and provides gifts for ministry and worship are certainly not distinctly Pentecostal convictions. Additionally, holy living and, more importantly, physical healing—one of the most important components of traditional Pentecostal belief and practice—are not even mentioned in the revised statement. The changes that the leadership of Freedom in Christ made to the congregation's statement of faith are a clear indication of the congregation's gradual drift away from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical modes of identity and experience.

During the course of my participant observation and other methods of congregational analysis, it became clear to me that the organizational thrust of Freedom in Christ was the incorporation of new members. This was the one activity around which all others were focused and evaluated. This emphasis was not simply the result of the personal aims of the senior pastor, but, rather, was an active concern from the time the congregation relocated from Doon to Bleams Road in the late 1980s for the primary purpose of building a larger church in order to facilitate congregational growth. The explication of Freedom in Christ's core value "Impacting: positively influencing the world for Jesus" makes this congregational objective abundantly clear. It reads: "As followers of Christ, we are His advertisements, strategically placed as His representatives in our world. We encourage our people to

be positive influences in their neighborhoods, workplaces, schools and places of recreation.” The members at Freedom in Christ are unapologetically instructed to advertise or market themselves to the members of their communities for the purpose of incorporating new members into the congregation.

## **4.2 ELMIRA PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLY**

Thirty kilometers—or an approximately thirty minute drive—north of Freedom in Christ at 290 Arthur Street South in Elmira, Ontario is Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is by far the oldest of the three churches that I studied. The congregation was originally founded after members from Kitchener Pentecostal Tabernacle (now Kitchener Gospel Temple) led by the early Canadian Pentecostal pioneer, Reuben E. Sternal, held evangelistic tent meetings at the Elmira Fairgrounds in the summer of 1921. At the close of the summer months, enough members had gathered together to warrant the purchase of an old theater on Church Street where they began to hold services as Elmira Pentecostal Tabernacle. The congregation occupied various locations until they built their own church on Memorial Street in 1946 where they remained until 1989 when they purchased their current building on Arthur Street South from Woodside Bible Fellowship when they also changed their name to Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. Originally a Brethren congregation, their current building boasts an attractive brick exterior, columned entrance, and white steeple, which is much more representative of post-Second World War conservative Protestant churches than the commercial architecture found at Freedom in Christ. Elmira Pentecostal Assembly does not sit on nearly as large a piece of land, nor does it house the same variety of sports facilities, as does Freedom in Christ. It does, however, sit on a few acres of land that would make future expansion of the church facilities, or even the annexation of a portion of its property, possible.

The first time that I visited Elmira Pentecostal Assembly on a Sunday morning, I was reminded of the kind of Pentecostal churches that I attended and visited as a youth growing up in rural Nova Scotia. Like my home church, or one of the several churches that my grandfather pastored in rural Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, I was immediately and warmly greeted as I entered the vestibule of the church. In the vestibule one finds coat racks, the church’s main office, and a hallway leading to the pastor’s offices. Through the vestibule is the church’s main lobby, about the same size as the one at Freedom in Christ, which also contains a welcome center. The lobby also offers access to a hallway on the left leading to the washrooms, fellowship hall, and kitchen, as well as the entrances to a meeting room and the stairs leading to the church’s basement. Behind a large wall of windows are two sets of glass, double doors that lead into the sanctuary. The basement of the church houses a large, central meeting room connected to several classrooms that are used for Sunday school.

The two sets of double doors leading into the sanctuary create two isles leading to the platform of the sanctuary, and divide the sanctuary into three sections of wooden pews. One’s attention is quickly taken from the plain drywall interior of the sanctuary by its vaulted, wooden ceiling, and its simple, yet attractive, stained glass windows, which add an element of natural light to the sanctuary’s array of chandeliers. In the back, right-hand corner of the sanctuary is also an audiovisual booth, but unlike at Freedom in Christ, it is enclosed with a window overlooking the sanctuary so as to demarcate these technical operations from the sacred activities designated for the sanctuary.

At the front of the sanctuary at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly sits a table that is used for holding the elements in order to officiate communion once each month. Unlike at Freedom in Christ, however, the table in Elmira is very large and made out of hardwood with the words, “Do this in remembrance of me” from Jesus’ injunction in Luke 22.19 (also found in 1 Corinthians 11.24) inscribed in large letters on the front. A few steps up on the platform one also finds a drum kit, a few guitar amplifiers, a baby grand piano, microphone stands, music stands, and a large wooden pulpit that matches the significance of the communion table. At the back of the platform, behind the projector screen, is a baptismal tank, which would be used to perform baptisms in front of the entire congregation. In contrast, the one time that I witnessed baptisms being performed at Freedom in Christ, the senior pastor used a rented hot tub.

Another interesting difference between the platform of the two churches is that in Elmira, there are a few chairs on the platform where the senior and assistant pastor sit during the worship component of the service. The assistant pastor would also remain seated on the platform while the senior pastor would preach, or vice versa. At Freedom, however, all of the pastors sit in the same seats as the rest of the members of the congregation. Compared with Freedom in Christ, religious iconography abounds at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly—at least as much as it can abound in a relatively iconoclastic tradition such as Pentecostalism. In addition to the inscription on the communion table and the presence of hymnals in the pews, is a large wooden cross adorning the wall behind the pulpit that is difficult to ignore. Unlike the sanctuary at Freedom in Christ, one has little doubt that they are broaching sacred space when they enter the sanctuary at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly.

The worship at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly follows a format that is nearly identical to that at Freedom in Christ: greeting, high-energy opening song, call to worship, three-to-four additional songs, announcements and offering, one-to-two slower songs, the sermon, and the conclusion of the service. While the Sunday morning service begins at 10:30 AM—a half-hour later than at Freedom—it usually lasts the same 90 minutes, ending at 12:00 PM. The songs being sung at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly were of the same general character—many even exactly same—as those sung at Freedom in Christ.

The average weekly attendance during my fieldwork period at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly was approximately 120 people, about ninety adults and thirty children, making it the smallest of the three congregations. Elmira is a small town of approximately 12,000 residents surrounded by farms and Mennonite homesteads just twelve kilometers north of the city of Waterloo. While not exactly a “rural” church, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is about as rural as Pentecostal churches come in the Region of Waterloo. This is due to the fact that all of the churches belonging to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in the region are located in either incorporated towns or cities. One of the first things that I noticed about this congregation was the relatively high proportion of elderly members and young families with children. While Freedom in Christ has a healthy number of families with young children, it has much fewer older members and more middle-aged couples whose children no longer live in the home. In short, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly had a demographic that much more accurately mirrored the demographic of the general Canadian population.

On Sundays, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly conducts Sunday school for both children and adults beginning at 9:30 AM, followed by the Sunday morning worship service beginning at 10:30 AM, and

sometimes offers different types of devotional studies on Sunday evenings beginning at 6:30 PM. The church also offers a family night with programs for people of all ages on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, and on Thursdays both a women's Bible study at 10:00 AM and a senior high school ministry at 7:30 PM. The staff at Elmira includes a full-time senior pastor, an assistant/youth pastor, a part-time children's pastor, and a full-time secretary.

The senior pastor at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is thirty-eight year-old, Hansley Armoogan. Hansley is a physically fit man of average height, with sharp features and a humble, yet commanding, physical presence. He possesses the rare ability to make those with whom he is speaking feel that they have his full attention. It is clear that his ministry in both a large urban and two small rural Pentecostal churches serve as a potent combination of experiences for the task of leading the church in Elmira, which straddles both rural and urban modes of life.

Hansley was born into a West Indian family in Trinidad where his father converted to Christianity as a young adult and attended Bible college before engaging in evangelistic ministry throughout the island. In the early 1970s, Hansley's father decided to immigrate to Canada motivated by, as Hansley explained, "the aspirations of his children, and to provide them with more opportunity than what seemed to be present in Trinidad." Initially, Hansley's father moved to Montreal, Quebec, and, nine months later, Hansley, at the age of two, his older brother, and his mother, joined his father in Montreal in 1973.

After a few years the Armoogans moved to Waterloo, and began attending Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly, which is affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Hansley was raised in this conservative Protestant, West Indian immigrant family, and felt the call to ministry during high school. Hansley graduated from Waterloo Collegiate Institute in 1990, and immediately pursued a bachelor of theology degree from Eastern Pentecostal Bible College (now Master's College and Seminary) in Peterborough, Ontario. The school in Peterborough is the designated training institute for the denomination in eastern Canada. The minimum educational requirement for ordination within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is a three-year ministerial diploma, while, since the 1980s, many students chose to pursue a four-year bachelor of theology degree. Because of the continued emphasis on pragmatism, the educational standards for ordination within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada are significantly lower than the standard bachelor's degree and master of divinity degree required for ordination within most other Canadian denominations.

It was while attending Eastern that Hansley met his wife. In the fall following their graduation in 1994 Hansley was hired to lead the youth ministry in a Pentecostal church in Perth, Ontario. The church in Perth was quite small, Hansley and the senior pastor being the only pastors on staff. The church could not afford to pay Hansley a full-time salary although he was putting in full-time hours. Nonetheless, the Armoogans enjoyed their time in Perth, and over the course of thirteen months, they saw the size of the youth ministry grow from about seven to forty young people. A year later in 1995, Hansley was asked to interview for a position in the youth and young adult department at Kennedy Road Tabernacle, a large Pentecostal church located in Brampton, Ontario. The situation at Kennedy Road Tabernacle was radically different from the church in Perth. The youth and young adult department alone had four full-time pastoral staff and a budget twice the size of the entire church in Perth. After accepting the position, Hansley soon became the head of the department, which

ministered to approximately 400 youth and young adults. Hansley stayed at Kennedy Road Tabernacle for seven years, contributing as many as 110 hours per week to the busy ministry.

With the birth of their first and second children in Brampton, it became increasingly apparent to the Armoogans that maintaining both a healthy family life and fulfilling the expectations of the position at Kennedy Road Tabernacle were not a possibility. As a result, Hansley began investigating other ministry opportunities, and in 2001 took a position as the senior pastor of a rural Pentecostal church in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario, just outside of the city of North Bay. Pastoring this rural northern Ontario congregation allowed Hansley to both spend the kind of time with his family that he desired, as well as broaden his ministry experiences beyond the confines of a youth and young adult ministry. Hansley stayed in Sturgeon Falls for four years, and in 2005, a denominational representative suggested his name to the pastoral search committee at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. Hansley was at the same time also thinking about the possibility of moving on to another congregation. In the nexus of this combination of events, and just three weeks after the birth of his youngest son, Hansley was unexpectedly diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, and within ten days of the diagnosis he began undergoing chemotherapy. Even with Hansley's recent cancer diagnosis, the church in Elmira, which Hansley refers to as "incredibly gracious," waited for him to be well enough to interview for the position, and in the last week of August 2005, he began his role as the senior pastor at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly.

There is no doubt that Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is the most traditional of the three churches that I studied. The population is slightly older than the other two congregations, a higher number of traditional choruses and hymns are sung in Elmira, and the more rural location of the church contributes to a slower and more congenial pace of congregational life. A simple, but telling indication of its more traditional nature is the fact that Elmira Pentecostal Assembly has retained the word "Pentecostal" in its name. This is a practice—which I explained in the introduction—that is becoming increasingly less common among Canadian Pentecostal churches. Interestingly, the legal name of Freedom in Christ is actually, "Freedom in Christ Pentecostal Assembly," however, this name does not appear on the church's sign, website, or any other advertisement, and I seriously doubt if anyone other than the leadership of the congregation are aware of the church's legal name.

While traditional Pentecostal identification and experience were higher at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly than in the other two congregations, the majority of members in the Elmira church are overwhelmingly generically evangelical in their commitments. Very closely mirroring the congregational culture at Freedom in Christ, the focus of the leadership and membership at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is on developing an extensive roster of church programs for all ages in an attempt to attract as many new members as possible from a broad spectrum of religious backgrounds. This is done while at the same time remaining committed to core evangelical theological commitments. These emphases are accurately captured in Elmira Pentecostal Assembly's vision statement: "Reach with Love (Matthew 25:35–36): We will reach out to all people of every race, nationality and culture, both young and old, with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ ... Teach the Truth (Colossians 3:16): We are committed to teach people to know God and His Word, and to care for each other through His grace ... Send in Power (Luke 10:2): We are raising up people of God to send out into our township, our province, our nation and all over the world with the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel."



Elmira Pentecostal Assembly's vision statement mentions sending its members with evangelistic intent replete "with the power of the Holy Spirit," which is tempting to interpret as referring to the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit, a central doctrinal and ritual component within traditional Pentecostalism. Without specifically mentioning the terms "baptism" or "infilling," however, this statement amounts to little more than the universal Christian affirmation of the power given to all believers to fulfill Jesus' great commission at the time of their conversion.

One notices a striking similarity between the vision statement at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly—"reach with love, teach the truth, send in power"—and the core values at Freedom in Christ—"connecting, training, and impacting." Both propose a cyclical formula for community building and church growth that focuses on evangelization (reaching, connecting), followed by education (teaching, training), and finally (re)evangelization (sending, impacting). Like Freedom in Christ's mission statement, vision statement, and core values, nothing about Elmira Pentecostal Assembly's vision statement stands out as overtly Pentecostal.

Much like its vision statement, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly's statement of faith also contains a number of generically evangelical emphases. When I first started my fieldwork in Elmira, the statement of faith found on their website read this way:

"In a nutshell, here's what we believe: God is bigger and better and closer than we can imagine. The Bible is God's perfect guidebook for living. Through His Holy Spirit, God lives in and through us now. Nothing in creation 'just happened.' God made it all. Grace is the only way to have a relationship with God. Faith is the only way to grow in our relationship with God. God has allowed evil to provide us with a choice, God can bring good even out of evil events, and God promises victory over evil to those who choose Him. Heaven and hell are real places. Death is a beginning, not the end. The church is supposed to serve people like Jesus served people. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!"

The statement clearly outlines a commitment to the supremacy of God, the inerrancy of Scripture, the existence of the Trinity, creation, salvation by faith through grace, relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, an Arminian emphasis on free will, the existence of evil as well as heaven and hell, the possibility of eternal life, the priority of Christian service, and the second return of Jesus Christ. One element that is interesting about this statement is the lack of biblical references, which is likely an attempt to take on a more informal approach as opposed to traditional statements of faith that adopt a propositional format and are often riddled with biblical references supporting the various theological claims. One will also notice that in the summary of its core theological beliefs, this Pentecostal church does not mention a single distinctive Pentecostal belief or practice. There is absolutely no mention of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues as evidence of this experience, the spiritual gifts, or the possibility of divine physical healing. Given that the website is one of the church's first points of contact for potential visitors or new members, the fact that none of these distinctive Pentecostal beliefs and practices are included is quite significant, and indicates that these elements are not central to the life of the congregation.

Coincidentally, like Freedom in Christ, the leadership at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly also changed the statement of faith found on their website during the course of my fieldwork. What is most interesting about the change made to the statement at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, however, is that the change was not from a more traditional Pentecostal direction to a more ambiguous, generically evangelical one as was the case at Freedom in Christ, but, rather, in the completely opposite direction. The new statement at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly significantly expanded its discussion of each of the previously included areas of faith, but also contained several new sections, all with extensive biblical citations hyperlinked to the full text of these passages. Interestingly, when I clicked on the hyperlinks to read the biblical passages cited within the statement, I was brought to the website of Woodvale Pentecostal Church located in Ottawa, Ontario. I then discovered that Elmira's updated statement of faith had been copied in its entirety from Woodvale Pentecostal Church's website.

It is entirely possible that this change to Elmira's statement of faith was completely coincidental to my involvement within the congregation. It is also possible that the selection of a new statement of faith was the result of my constant probing of the leadership and members at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly regarding the transformation of Pentecostal identity and experience within the congregation. I did notice that some members of the leadership and laity at the church in Elmira were somewhat unsettled by the general migration from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical modes of identity and experience that my involvement in their congregation uncovered. I remember distinctly sensing that these individuals were not so much concerned that these changes were occurring, as they were that they had been uncovered or exposed. It is possible, then, that the leadership of the congregation decided to replace the earlier, more ambiguous statement of faith with a more traditionally Pentecostal statement in an attempt to reassert their commitment to the Pentecostal tradition and/or the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Regardless of the rationale behind the change to Elmira Pentecostal Assembly's statement of faith, the new statement not only expanded on the previously discussed topics, but also included sections outlining the previously unmentioned distinctively Pentecostal areas of belief and practice. Most notably, the revised statement included the declaration, "We also believe ... in the infilling of the Holy Spirit, with the initial physical evidence of speaking with other tongues, which gives power for service, and is manifested in the fruit and gifts of the Spirit ... that divine healing for the body is provided by Christ's death." Additionally, the statement also included sections under the headings: "Why we have speaking in tongues and interpretation of those tongues," "Why we prophesy," "Why we receive tithes and offerings," and "Why we publicly invite people to the altar."

Elmira Pentecostal Assembly's revised statement of faith describes a congregation that does not exist. Despite what the statement suggests, and the fact that commitment to traditional modes of Pentecostal identity and experience were higher in Elmira than at the other two congregations, my close observation of Elmira Pentecostal Assembly and the interviewing and surveying of its members, revealed that the majority of the members within this congregation adhered to generically evangelical forms of identity and experience. During the twelve months that I spent at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, it became clear that the congregation was in the midst of an identity crisis, and was attempting to decide whether or not it was a distinctively Pentecostal church, or just another evangelical church among many others. The congregation, and particularly the church's senior pastor, was straddling the fence that separated distinctively Pentecostal and generically evangelical emphases.

### 4.3 ELEVATION

Approximately halfway between Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly at 101 Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo, Ontario is Elevation, the last of the three congregations that I studied. Unlike both Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, Elevation does not own its own church building. Instead, it meets in a rented space in the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex, just a short walk away from Uptown Waterloo as well as the campuses of the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. Built in 1993, Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex houses an Olympic-size ice surface, indoor running track, a large swimming pool, a banquet hall, and a variety of meeting rooms used for conferences and community programs. By comparison, the facilities used by Elevation make Freedom in Christ look like St. Paul's Cathedral. There is nothing sacred at all about the conference room that comprises Elevation's sanctuary and the several small meeting rooms used for its Sunday school classes.

This, however, is not simply pragmatism at work, the result of the best available space for the best available price. Instead, the decision to use a recreation complex in the middle of the city was an intentional theological decision. Both the leadership and the laity at Elevation have attempted to develop an ecclesiology that deliberately challenges more traditional concepts of the sacred and profane divide. Rather than at Freedom in Christ where the warehouse style facility is the result of pragmatism and utility, the decision to meet in a recreation complex every Sunday morning represents a conscious decision to meet at a place where everyday life takes place. Instead of a space specifically designed to be separate from the rest of the world, the members of Elevation bring the Church into the daily experience of hundreds of people playing hockey, taking swimming lessons, and running the track.

The first time that I attended Elevation on a Sunday morning, I had no idea what to expect from this experimental form of church. After parking, I walked into the main lobby of the recreation complex alongside parents carrying their children's hockey bags, and one little girl skipping up the concrete steps on the way to her swimming lessons. On entering the lobby, I was unable to find any directions to Elevation. I approached a recreation complex staff member sitting behind a Plexiglas enclosure and asked her where Elevation met. She directed me to two flights of stairs to my right, which led to a landing overlooking the massive swimming pool complex below. Standing at a glass door next to an elevator was an eager looking young man who asked me if I was looking for Elevation, handed me a bulletin, and directed me up yet another flight of stairs. Here was a small vestibule that housed a few bulletin boards sitting on tripods advertising various congregational events, a table with more bulletins, some books for sale, and a large wooden box for members to give their offerings. Through the vestibule was a room to the left with several round tables and chairs where some people were sitting, talking, and drinking coffee. Next was a much larger room that obviously comprised the congregation's main meeting room, which I still find difficult to describe as a sanctuary.

To the immediate right of the narthex, as you pass through the entrance to the sanctuary, which is really just a slightly ajar folding partition wall, is the audio booth with a series of large, bundled cables running to the front of the sanctuary. The sanctuary itself is a very simple room, the cinder-block walls, fluorescent lighting, and paneled ceiling signaling that this space was designed as a

generic, multi-purpose room and not a place of Christian worship. As strange as it may sound to many Canadians who attend more traditional places of worship, these radically non-Christian surroundings are a major point of attraction for many North Americans who do not trust traditional religious institutions (Miller 1997, 1). One immediately notices the large windows on the left of the room, which open onto the ice surface and running track. This point of contact between the worship service and the hockey games and Sunday morning runners seems appropriate given Elevation's mission as a church that aims to take place where everyday life happens.

The sanctuary contains three uneven sections of approximately 350 interlocking chairs, arranged to maximize the available seating space rather than for aesthetics. These are divided by two isles leading from the back of the sanctuary to the platform at the front of the sanctuary. At the front of the sanctuary is a video projector on a trolley and a music stand that is used to hold the preacher's notes. Behind this is a platform on which sits a drum kit, keyboard, guitar amplifiers, microphone stands, and music stands. Because Elevation does not own its own facility, all of this equipment, chairs included, is set up very early every Sunday morning and torn down and stored at the recreation complex every Sunday afternoon following the service. It takes a tremendous amount of work and a committed team of volunteers to pull off each Sunday morning service at Elevation.

Worship at Elevation diverges in a few significant ways from worship at Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. First, the music at Elevation is of a near professional quality. The worship leader, vocalists, and musicians are all very well trained and provide a highly polished musical experience. While worship at Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is contemporary and utilizes a wide range of instruments and styles, the leadership allows novices and individuals with lesser degrees of talent or training (often out of necessity rather than out of an ethic of inclusion) to participate in leading the worship experience. Second, the worship service at Elevation contains more variety than at the other two congregations. While the service at Elevation is about the same duration, and would often follow the same general format, as the other two churches, it often contains elements of experimentation and improvisation, which serve to indicate that something different and significant is taking place.

For instance, in most services that I attended, someone from the congregation would be included in the service in some significant way by either sharing a spiritual insight, giving a report from a recent mission trip, or by reading a portion of Scripture purely as an act of public worship. These types of experimentation with the normal liturgy certainly occurred at Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, but they were much less common and usually reserved for special occasions and services. Finally, and most significantly, every worship service at Elevation concluded with the members of the congregation exiting the sanctuary and sitting in groups around the tables in the adjacent room in order to discuss the sermon. There is also opportunity for the members to ask the preacher specific questions about the sermon. A dialogical component of this degree was absent at Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly.

Elevation holds two Sunday morning services at 9:30 AM or 9:15 AM (the time of the service changed from the former to the latter partway through my fieldwork) and 11:00 AM from the fall to the spring. Because church attendance drops in many congregations in the area during the summer, which is compounded at Elevation by the fact that many of its members are university students, the

congregation moves to a single Sunday morning service beginning at 10:00 AM in the summer months. The average attendance at Elevation is approximately 350 people at both services. On some Sundays, however, and particularly when university students return to the city at the end of the summer, Elevation can have more than 400 people in attendance at just one of its services, requiring overflow seating. Comparatively, Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly typically look about half- or on a particularly busy Sunday, two-thirds full. Because Elevation does not own its own facility, the congregation does not hold additional meetings throughout the week where the whole church community can gather together as is done in the other two congregations. Rather, Elevation includes what are called “Affinity+” and “Focus Groups,” which are small group gatherings that are held in various locations and times throughout the week. Some of Elevation’s Focus Groups, for instance, include a mother’s group, a women’s study, a newlywed group, an early morning men’s group, and a monthly “creative communion” service called, “The Table on Tuesdays.” Elevation employs four full-time staff-members: a senior pastor, an associate pastor, a worship leader (who also assists with other administrative tasks), and an administrative assistant.

The history of Elevation is deeply intertwined with the life story of its founder and senior pastor, Brandon Malo. Brandon was baptized in the Lutheran Church and attended St. John’s Lutheran Church in Waterloo as a child. After his confirmation during junior high school, Brandon stopped attending church. He explained that it became clear to him that being confirmed meant that he was now responsible for his own faith: “I would decide whether I had to go to church or not. So after my confirmation I didn’t go to church anymore. I just kind of slept in and that was kind of the end of that.” Also contributing to his lack of involvement in the Lutheran Church was the fact that, he claimed, the church did not do a very good job of engaging its younger members: “I had a really tight-knit group of friends at the church, but the church didn’t really respond well to where we were at in our interests or needs, and they didn’t really know how to. I think a lot of us just decided to leave and not really be engaged anymore.” As a result, Brandon began to spend more time with his friends from high school and did not attend church for the next few years.

At the end of grade ten, Brandon began dating a girl (who now happens to be his wife) from high school who attended Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly. Brandon began to attend church with his new love interest. The Pentecostal church, he explained, “was pretty bizarre for me at the time. I had never heard people pray out loud. I had never seen people worship in that kind of a format. At the Lutheran Church it was always singing a hymn with a pipe organ. I had never even seen anything other than that, so it was kind of an interesting experience, and I would go because I was interested in her.”

Not long after Brandon began attending Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly, the church hosted a production of Heaven’s Gates and Hell’s Flames, a touring evangelistic drama that aims to induce viewers to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ by frightening them with images of Hell and eternal suffering. It was after attending this production that Brandon explained he became a committed Christian: “I look at it now and I think there is so much wrong with that production, but for me, at the time, I didn’t need to hear the message it had, I just needed to hear the part where they said that God loves you, accepts you where you are, and wants you to commit your life to following him. And when I heard that I was like, ‘For real? I can do this?’ So, I did. I made a commitment to do that, and it took quite a while for me to understand what that meant. I had a lot of lifestyle changes to make, but I did it.”

Brandon made the decision to commit his life to following God in 1992 at the age of fifteen. He spent the remaining years of high school becoming increasingly involved in leadership at Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly. Upon graduation from high school in 1995, Brandon enrolled in a bachelor's degree in business administration at Wilfrid Laurier University. After two years of study, however, Brandon and his now fiancée felt a calling to pastoral ministry. In May of 1997, when Brandon was driving home from a co-op interview in Mississauga, Ontario, he recounted an important experience:

I was kind of listening to this tape in the car, and a song on the tape really challenged me. The lyrics were along the lines of, 'Deep in your heart there is a tug of war, trying to figure out what your life is for,' and I really felt that God was saying this isn't what I want you to do with your life. Rather, I felt like God was telling me, 'I've called you, and it's time for you to respond.' When I was in early high school I knew I wanted to go into business. I knew I wanted to get an MBA and that was what I wanted to do with my life. I knew for years, however—I really felt God saying to me—that I have to drop that dream. You have to give it up and I'll give you something else. Everything that I've been involved with and who I am is the result of that decision.

After receiving this call to a life devoted to pastoral ministry, Brandon dropped out of his business program at Wilfrid Laurier the day before his wedding, and initiated the necessary theological education to receive ministerial credentials with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Brandon was able to get about a year's worth of coursework transferred from his two years of study at Wilfrid Laurier, and completed the remaining two years worth of course work required for a Ministerial Diploma by correspondence in just twelve months. Over the course of the following year of reading, writing, and studying to complete his program via correspondence—essentially alone in his apartment while his wife worked during the day—Brandon explained:

I started missing the campus, and thinking about my friends who were there and hadn't left. I just started thinking, how are they going to find out about Christ? When I was at university I didn't know any Christians when I was there. I know that there were Christians, but I didn't know any. None of my peers at university were Christians. I was the 'church guy' in all of my circles, and I started wondering who would connect with these people? I'm out of their lives now. I may have been one of the only people following Christ who was in their lives, for all I knew. So I started really thinking about that a lot, and God really began to impress on me that I needed to respond to that need. As I began to think about it and pray about it, this concept of starting a church for university students came to me.

Brandon had tried inviting his friends to Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly, but due to the fact that it was a heavily Charismatic or revivalistic Pentecostal church, replete with the regular demonstration of ecstatic religious practices, it proved to be ineffective in recruiting these same friends and other people within their same age cohort. He explained: "So I started having these thoughts that maybe the

thing to do is just to have a church that is just for students, would address their stage of life, would speak to their issues, would speak their language, would connect in ways that would make sense and be significant to them. So I started thinking about things and toying with things and I had this name ‘The Embassy’ sticking in my mind. I would draw little logos and come up with little slogans, but all in my mind. I wouldn’t talk to anyone about it.”

Brandon remembers two events in particular that he considers to be the breakthrough points for the beginning of The Embassy, the predecessor and sister congregation of Elevation. The first was a youth leadership conference. The speaker at the conference was mentioning that the majority of Christian young adults abandon their faith during the course of their university education. The speaker then proposed that the solution to this problem was to, in Brandon’s words, “get people so fired up for God that when they go to university they won’t lose their faith.” Brandon believed that this was a horrible strategy for campus ministry: “I was thinking, that’s not the answer at all. The answer is to be there, to actually have someone who is in their lives. Who cares how fired-up someone gets? I’ve been there. I spent two years there and knew what it was like. It’s hard to live your faith out on a university campus.”

The second event was a conversation that Brandon and his wife had with a couple that were close friends of theirs. The husband was just about to finish his Bachelor of Theology degree from the denominational college, and was offered a staff position in the church that he had interned with during his final year of studies. He mentioned that he might as well take the position because it seemed to be the most practical decision. Brandon, however, who was wrestling with this idea of starting a totally new ministry venture, reacted strongly—he admits maybe a bit too strongly—to his friend’s willingness to simply take the first available position that comes up. He explained: “When they left, my wife asked what was the matter with me. So I just spilled it out and said this is what God has put in my heart, and this is what I want to do. And she said, ‘Let’s do it.’”

Brandon then shared his vision for a church specifically designed for university students with the senior pastor of his church, who was extremely supportive of the idea. They assembled a small group of about four other leaders and launched the first Embassy meeting in September of 1998 in the Humanities Theatre at the University of Waterloo. The venture was, Brandon explains, “just this big, giant question mark. We had no clue what to expect and that was where The Embassy began.” Before The Embassy’s first service, Brandon remembers, “practically begging God to draw fifty people out because we had this massive cavernous theatre. It seated 360 people in the lower level, and another 300 in the balcony, but, as it turned out, we actually had eighty-five people in our first night and that was just way more than we ever could have expected.”

The Embassy did not experience very much growth during its first year of operation, its numbers hovering around what they were at the opening night. In the fall of 1999, however, they averaged around 140 people. In the summer of 2000 attendance increased again to an average of around 200, and in the fall of 2000 attendance jumped to over 400 people. By the fall of 2001 The Embassy was drawing an average of more than 800 students, and on some particularly busy nights, well over 1000 students to its weekly services. This significant increase in attendance required that they move to two services and switch venues to Federation Hall, the university nightclub. This was quite a contrast to the ministry operated by an official Wilfrid Laurier University chaplain whose group averaged around

twelve students per week and who initially told Brandon that the type of ministry that he had envisioned was not needed in Waterloo.

It was not long before the necessary work of operating and promoting this large student ministry began to take its toll on the small group of mostly volunteers who ran The Embassy each week. Sensing the spiritual fatigue of his volunteers, Brandon started a ministry called Embassy Unplugged in 2000. Embassy Unplugged was intended to be a small, low-key worship service exclusively for the leaders of The Embassy where they would not have to worry about planning and carrying out a high-energy event, but could simply unwind and enjoy a worship time of their own.

Initially, Embassy Unplugged had an attendance of only around fifteen to twenty people. Brandon explains: “The Embassy was always about putting together an essentially kick-butt presentation meant to demonstrate the potential of the Christian life, and we put a lot of effort into the details. So when we started Embassy Unplugged, we essentially wanted to put no effort into anything. So we just would rotate whoever would teach. Someone would come up and share some thoughts. We would share a meal together. Someone would just get up on a guitar or whatever and sing a song. It was just totally low-key, the exact opposite of what The Embassy was.”

It was a year later in September of 2001 that Brandon founded Elevation, which essentially grew out of and replaced Embassy Unplugged. The reason for this new ministry was, as Brandon explains, “people started having babies and getting married, and we kind of thought that we had to start thinking about what we were doing long term here.” Basically what happened was that some of the original members of The Embassy had now graduated from university and had started careers and families. The large-scale, high-energy, nightclub experience offered by The Embassy was no longer what families with small children were looking for. Brandon explained:

We figured our options were either: First, change The Embassy in order to include these young families. From day one we had a very focused target audience of eighteen-to-twenty-five year olds, primarily students, and secondarily young adults in the community. Parents with kids were not part of that. Second, we could basically say to these young families, ‘Thanks for coming out, but find another church.’ Or, third, we could start another church. So we kind of voted for the third option. It’s the only one that really made sense to us. And, you know, for the first couple of years, to say we didn’t care about Elevation might not be exactly accurate, but it’s pretty darn close. It was kind of like a younger sibling. The Embassy was huge. It was big. It was everything. Everyone knew about The Embassy. It was just ‘the thing.’ And Elevation, we just didn’t want it to be that. We just wanted it to be a place for us to get together and talk about faith, and not have to go through the whole gamut of stuff. But, of course, people came and it began to grow quite slowly and take on a character of its own. And we focused on things that The Embassy intentionally did not focus on.

The weekly attendance at Elevation began at about fifty people, and slowly grew to its current average of around 350 people. Brandon led both The Embassy and Elevation for four years, but in



August of 2005 decided that he needed to hire someone to take over The Embassy so that he could devote his time and energy to the maturing community at Elevation. In January 2005, The Embassy and Elevation changed their venues from Federation Hall at the University of Waterloo to the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex due to a complex series of disputes between university officials and the leadership at The Embassy and Elevation. Leaving the university campus has not affected attendance at Elevation in any significant way. The departure from the university campus, however, has dealt a serious blow to both attendance and the vision at The Embassy. It has been difficult for a church intended specifically for university students to not be on the university campus. The Embassy, however, has managed to bring some closure to their dispute with the administration at the University of Waterloo, and began meeting in the Humanities Theatre once a month in September of 2009.

There is another pastor who has also played a crucial—although more recent—role in the development of Elevation. Steve Tulloch is the fifty-two year old associate pastor of Elevation who oversees pastoral care, coaching of ministry teams, and outreach. Steve was born in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and was raised in a devout Christian Brethren (Plymouth Brethren in the US) home. When Steve was finishing high school his family moved to Richard's Landing on St. Joseph's Island, a small community about one hour southeast of Sault Ste Marie. Here Steve's family and a number of their friends planted a Brethren church named, Island Bible Chapel. After graduating from high school, Steve attended a Brethren college in Edmonton, Alberta, Mount Carmel Bible School. It was here that Steve met his future wife and the two were married in 1979.

After college, Steve and his new bride returned to Richard's Landing where he worked at Algoma Steel from 1979 to 1981 while also working towards a bachelor of arts degree in religious studies at Algoma University (then a satellite campus of Laurentian University) in Sault Ste Marie. Beginning in 1981, Steve was also asked by the leadership of the church in Richard's Landing to serve as their full-time worker (Christian Brethren churches do not traditionally use the term pastor). Steve accepted the offer and was responsible for about a third of the preaching and overseeing the children and youth programs. After graduating with a bachelor of arts in 1983, Steve and his family moved to Dallas, Texas from 1983 to 1985 so he could pursue graduate theological studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. Steve completed all of the requirements for a four-year master's degree at Dallas Theological Seminary in just two years, all while his church continued to financially support him and his family. Other than this time in Dallas, Steve and his wife led the church in Richard's Landing in addition to running a summer long children's camp each year, and teaching at the Brethren college, Kawartha Lakes Bible College, in Peterborough, Ontario. By 2001 it became clear that managing these various responsibilities was exacting too high of an emotional cost on Steve and his family. In 2002 they agreed to become the leaders of New Hope Community Church in Waterloo.

Once in Waterloo Steve had heard about Elevation and became friends with Brandon. Both Steve and Brandon felt that the two congregations shared a great deal in common, and even shared a service together in 2003. Under Steve's leadership, New Hope had experienced congregational growth, and eventually outgrew their rented space in Westvale Public School in Waterloo. Neither the school nor many members within the community wanted New Hope to leave because the congregation was extremely active in the neighborhood. However, the space was simply no longer adequate for their changing needs. New Hope tried meeting in other churches, but found that meeting in another

congregation's space on a regular basis made it extremely difficult to maintain a distinct congregational identity. New Hope also met at Bricker Academic Building on the Wilfrid Laurier University campus, which was only ever intended as a short-term solution. With these changes in venues New Hope began to experience declining attendance and a loss of overall congregational identity. Eventually, Steve explained:

New Hope found a potential facility down on King Street that had a kind of missional space and more office space than we needed. We thought that it was worth buying, but we didn't need all the office space. The question came to mind, 'Would Elevation?' I called Brandon and he and I met and talked about it. In either our first or second conversation I said to him, 'You may consider this a completely whacked idea, but would you consider the possibility that maybe we should just join up, that we might be better together? What would you think about that?' That was where the discussion went. That happened in probably March of 2008. A year and a half ago that first discussion happened, and we merged four or five months later.

After the merger in September of 2008, Brandon continued as the senior pastor of Elevation, while Steve assumed the role of associate pastor. It is difficult to accurately convey the significance of Elevation's decision to merge their congregation with New Hope. Canadian Pentecostalism is traditionally a highly sectarian religious movement and has historically perceived other Christian denominations with a great deal of suspicion. The mistrust of other denominations is perhaps exaggerated within Pentecostalism because of the tradition's insistence that only those who have experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues are living in the fullness of the Christian life. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada does allow congregations from other denominations to join their ranks as long as they agree to support the tenets and conventions of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. However, the members of New Hope were permitted to merge with Elevation without any such conditions. In fact, a number of the members that I interviewed from New Hope were not even aware that they were attending a Pentecostal church until this was revealed during the course of the interview. The fact that Elevation sought to merge with a Brethren congregation that did not support traditional Pentecostal positions, and that the leadership within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada allowed this, confirms both the degree to which Elevation had already drifted from traditional Pentecostal norms before the merger, and the casualness with which the denominational hierarchy itself regards the maintenance of distinctly Pentecostal identity and experience within their congregations.

The ambiguity surrounding Pentecostal identity and experience at Elevation is even further illustrated by the fact that Steve—the associate pastor of the congregation—does not hold any ministerial credentials with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Rather, he continues to operate under his commendation within Christian Brethren tradition granted by Missionary Service Committee Canada. When I asked Steve if he ever intends to seek ordination with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada he replied: "You know what, probably not, although I am open to that.

Brandon and I actually had a little conversation about that just yesterday. So I still haven't learned enough to know whether that is something I should do or not. There hasn't been any rush to."

When I asked Steve whether or not the fact that Elevation was a Pentecostal congregation was important to him he simply replied, "No." When I tried to probe a bit deeper into Steve's religious identity, I was expecting to find that it would be defined by traditionally Brethren concerns, however, this was not the case at all:

New Hope was not very classic Brethren. As a result, New Hope held many of the really important distinctives of Brethren churches down through the years with an open hand, or had either actually dismissed or reapplied them a little bit. So we weren't really classic Brethren. For example, I was called a pastor, which is not done in the Brethren tradition. Women were much more involved in leadership roles than they would be in most Brethren churches. We were really open to the idea of partnering with different people, and, as a result, were not very exclusive; we didn't stay to ourselves. So those things were important in the way we related to other churches, one of which was Elevation.

I discovered that Steve was probably not your typical Brethren church leader, and that from an early point in his life, he had been gradually shifting from traditionally Brethren to generically evangelical modes of identity and experience. This transformation had perhaps come to fruition in his role orchestrating the merger between New Hope and Elevation and his current leadership in a Pentecostal church. Steve explained:

I always thought that the exclusivism within the Brethren church was elitist and arrogant and prideful. I grew up thinking that we were a little more 'New Testament' than anybody else was, and I couldn't quite buy that. I thought pretty early on we probably have some good distinctives that we can value and I don't want to drop those, but I'm pretty sure that other people must have some good distinctives too. So to partner with other people—even from an early age—was important to me. I can remember as a grade twelve and thirteen student, influential Christian teens in Sault St. Marie getting together every Sunday night for a sing-a-long with the people from First Baptist, Elim Pentecostal, and People's Pentecostal.

Even though Steve explained that he and New Hope were not the classic versions of a Brethren leader or congregation, the fact that he is a pastor at Elevation with a very significant leadership role and is not ordained by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada is an important indication of the low level of commitment to the Pentecostal tradition at Elevation.

While my fieldwork at Elevation definitely confirmed that the majority of the members within the congregation were overwhelmingly generically evangelical in their commitments, it also revealed that this congregation did not follow many of the same patterns held in common between Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. For instance, Elevation's four key values, "Life Together,

Journey Mentality, Shared Responsibility, and Spirit-Centered Living,” while remaining generically evangelical in their emphases, do not fit the evangelization—education—(re)evangelization pattern shared by Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. Rather than this common seeker-sensitive model, Elevation’s core values deeply resonate with four of the nine key practices that Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger argue define emerging churches (Gibbs and Bolger 2005, 45). Life Together, Journey Mentality, Shared Responsibility, and Spirit-Centered Living correlate with Gibbs and Bolger’s key practice three (living highly communal lives), four (welcoming the stranger), eight (leading as a body), and nine (taking part in spiritual activities) (2005, 45, 121).

Unlike Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly that use seeker-sensitive evangelization techniques with a proven track record among baby boomers who respond to more blatant attempts to shape religious content according to consumer demand (Sargeant 2000), Elevation is primarily interested in recruiting the young, urban professionals who work in the thriving technology, education, and finance sectors in the Region of Waterloo. These young adults, Robert Wuthnow tells us, are looking for things in churches that the boomer-oriented, seeker churches typically do not offer. Some of these include an authentic sense of community, high-quality music that is both traditional and contemporary (i.e., hymns and modern choruses), the inclusion of the fine arts in the liturgy, opportunities for young adults to meet potential mates instead of only “family programs,” an openness towards gays and lesbians, single-parent families, and inter-religious families, as well as opportunities for both local and international ministry and service (Wuthnow 2007, 223–232).

On the one hand, Elevation’s key values—in addition to my observations and interviews—confirm that both the leadership and the laity at Elevation have managed to shape a religious community that addresses many of the needs and desires commonly expressed by young adults, which could accurately be labeled as an “emerging church.” On the other hand, the religious culture found at Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly more closely resembles the older, seeker-sensitive services that were designed to attract people who did not like church, which many contemporary observers, Wuthnow notes, believe “are now passé” (2007, 224). Elevation’s focus on this particular demographic might partly explain why they have had much more success attracting and integrating young adults and achieving a more consistent overall attendance than either of the other two congregations.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have attempted to provide an admittedly limited snapshot of each of the three congregations that form the basis for this study. There is much more that could be said, and I am sure that others would have chosen to emphasize elements that I have merely skimmed over or even ignored altogether. Nonetheless, the time that I spent at these three churches convinced me that knowing a little about the physical characteristics, activities, attendance, senior pastors, and stated values of each of the congregations provides the most important background necessary for understanding the following three chapters that draw almost exclusively on interview data gathered from individual members of these three congregations.

While the relatively low levels of commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity, belief, and practice make Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation what John Green and Margaret Poloma call “alternative congregations” they also possess a number of unique characteristics that serve to distinguish them from one another. In addition to their suburban, rural, and urban locations and constituencies, each of the three churches are currently facing their own unique challenges.

Freedom in Christ is struggling with the question of how to reorient their previously rural congregation to meet the needs of the tens of thousands of unchurched residents that now surround the church amidst the growing suburban developments of southwest Kitchener. The leadership of Freedom in Christ has adopted a largely seeker-sensitive approach in their attempt to incorporate the throngs of potential new members across the street, a strategy which has, thus far, yielded little results. The leadership at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly has also promoted a pared down, seeker-sensitive version of the Pentecostal tradition. Unlike Freedom in Christ, however, the leadership at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly is not only interested in incorporating new members, but is also attempting to use the shift towards generically evangelical themes and forms as a way to update the overall style of a congregation previously focused on meeting the needs of its previously predominant farming constituency.

The leaders and members at Elevation tend to view the flagrant, consumer-oriented, seeker-sensitive approach implemented at Freedom in Christ and Elmira Pentecostal Assembly as both outmoded and distasteful. From their very inception the objectives of The Embassy and Elevation were to provide an expression of Christian community for young people who no longer connected with either traditional Pentecostalism or the seeker-sensitive churches created for their baby boomer parents. The typical member at Elevation appears to be searching for a church that is less institutional and less consumer-focused. They are interested in something that is more “authentic” and focuses more on the “journey” of the Christian life, as opposed to the cyclical process of evangelization—education—(re)evangelization commonly espoused within seeker churches.

What the leadership and members of Elevation may be unaware of, however, is that this very autonomous, anti-consumerist form of evangelicalism has become its own unique “brand” in the local religious marketplace (Ellingson 2007, 105). Elevation—either consciously or unconsciously—has institutionalized and commoditized its very aversion to institutionalization and commoditization. Elevation’s unconventional setting and structure and its denunciation of megachurch and seeker church techniques are the very way that it distinguishes itself in the local religious marketplace. Several individuals that I spoke with at Elevation were proud that they attended a congregation that refused to curb to consumer demand like the many other churches that they have attended in the past so often did. What the members at Elevation may fail to recognize is that they themselves are paying allegiance to just another segment of the religious marketplace. Like the person who feels that they have somehow procured something truly unique by purchasing a “custom designed” laptop that, in reality, thousands of other customers have already purchased, or the individual who wishes to demonstrate their nonconformist ideals by buying “alternative” clothes and music that are marketed by multinational corporations, some members at Elevation feel that they have found a unique religious community that refuses to commoditize the Christian tradition when, in fact, they themselves have been the victims of a very successful niche marketing campaign.

## **CHAPTER 5— GENERICALLY EVANGELICAL RELIGIOUS IDENTITY**

In the Introduction I already briefly explained how when I began my fieldwork in September of 2009, one of the first things that I did was talk informally with the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation in order to gauge participants' commitment to traditional modes of Pentecostal identity and experience (Bernard 2006, 211; Fetterman 2010, 41–42; Murchison 2010, 101–105). One of the ways that I did this was by asking questions like, “Is it important to you that Freedom in Christ is a Pentecostal church?” In addition to providing the basis for the central hypothesis of this study, the responses elicited during these and other informal conversations anticipated what I found in both the personal interviews and the congregational surveys.

Of the forty-two people that I interviewed, only six (approximately 14 percent) explicitly chose the term Pentecostal to describe their religious affiliation. Furthermore, the results of my congregational surveys revealed that just 36 percent of respondents answered “yes” to the question, “Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church?” Only 7 percent of respondents said that if they were to move and needed to find a new church that they would only look for a Pentecostal church. And only 61 percent of respondents either completely agreed or generally agreed that the term “Pentecostal” accurately described their religious views, which was tied with the term “Charismatic,” compared with 79 percent for “Protestant,” 84 percent for “evangelical,” 89 percent for “born again,” and 100 percent for “Christian.”

It is important to note that I strongly suspect that for many of the 61 percent of the survey respondents who agreed that the term Pentecostal accurately defined their religious views, as well as the concomitant 61 percent response for the term “Charismatic,” this likely indicated their commitments to Charismatic or supernatural beliefs and practices, more than their commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity, beliefs, and practices. This is suggested by the fact that just 36 percent of respondents thought that it was important that their church was Pentecostal and just 7 percent would only look for a Pentecostal church if they moved. While I am not suggesting that these terms are mutually exclusive, the responses from the interviews and the surveys do clearly indicate that participants felt the label “Pentecostal” did not describe their religious self-identities as accurately as a variety of more generic terms, and suggests a situation quite different from the Pentecostalism of generations past when this degree of ambiguity would not have existed.

My objectives in this chapter are simple. I aim to demonstrate that the vast majority of the individuals that I interviewed at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation did not adhere to traditionally Pentecostal modes of religious identity. Rather, most of the members of these congregations espoused a generically evangelical religious identity with loose if any traditional or denominational linkages. The rich responses given by participants provide a fuller picture of what religious identity looked like within the three churches. In this chapter I also develop a simple typology of religious identity derived from interviews, survey data, and observations that allows us to compare the ways that individuals religiously self-identify within other Pentecostal congregations in Canada and the United States. The overwhelming majority of participants who used a generically

**Table 3. Highlights from the congregational surveys on religious identity**

	FIC	EPA	ELE
Percentage who attended a Pentecostal church most frequently as a child	64.6	41.7	14.3
Percentage who attended a Pentecostal church most frequently before coming to their present congregation	79.2	58.3	19
Percentage who indicated that it was important to them that their current church was Pentecostal	60.9	64.5	4.8
Percentage who indicated that if they had to find a new church they would only look for a Pentecostal church	8.7	19.4	0.0
Percentage who completely agreed that the term “Pentecostal” accurately described their religious views	52.2	61.3	5
Percentage who completely agreed that the term “Christian” accurately described their religious views	95.7	87.1	87.3

evangelical or Christian term to describe their religious affiliation provides strong evidence for my hypothesis that Canadian Pentecostal identity is being transformed from a traditional Pentecostal to a generically evangelical form.

### 5.1 TRADITIONAL DENOMINATIONAL IDENTIFIERS

Over the course of conducting personal interviews with the members of the three congregations, a discernable pattern emerged regarding the way that interview participants described their religious identities. All of the interview participants fell into one of three main groupings ranging from a high to a low degree of denominational affinity, with a significant number somewhere in between these two extremes. I labeled the first group of participants within this typology “traditional denominational identifiers.” This meant two things. First, when asked the question, “What term would you use to describe your religious views?” their first answer was “Pentecostal.” Second, when asked, “Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?” they explicitly answered, “Yes.” To my surprise, this category included just six, or approximately 14 percent, of the forty-two participants.

Consider, for instance, the response of Gordon, a twenty-seven year old student from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious views?

Gordon: I would say that I am a Pentecostal. Maybe not an extreme Pentecostal, but a Pentecostal.

Author: But you wouldn’t be opposed to using the label Pentecostal to describe yourself?

Gordon: No, never.

Author: Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church?

Gordon: Yes, it is important to me.

Author: Why?

Gordon: That's a good question. I wouldn't be opposed to going to a non-Pentecostal church, but it's important to me because I really believe in the working of the Holy Spirit and that he still works in people's lives today. I think that this is an important aspect of the Church. That would be my main reason why it's important to me that this is a Pentecostal church. Not so much that we stick to the historical roots of Pentecostalism, but stick to the belief that the Holy Spirit does work in people's lives today in the many different ways that he does.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Gordon: I do, yeah.

Ruth, a middle-aged woman also from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, was another traditional denominational identifier.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious beliefs?

Ruth: Well, I would just tell people that I am a Pentecostal.

Author: Would you?

Ruth: Yes. I'm not ashamed of that. I'm more proud of it now than when I was a kid. When I was a kid going to school, well, Pentecostals were labeled as 'funny.' They thought that we were the 'Holy Rollers' and I didn't want anybody to know that I attended a church that was being made fun of. Well, you probably heard all of those kinds of stories? Did you? That we swung from the chandeliers?

Author: These opinions were not as common when I was growing up, but I have definitely heard people make snide remarks about Pentecostalism, especially within the university context, though mostly in jest.

Ruth: I had people tell me that they saw people in my church swinging from the chandeliers. I said that this was impossible because the windows were too high and they were stained glass. They said that we acted weird and we rolled around the aisles. Oh,



you name it, it was said. Nobody says that anymore. They don't label us the same way. Maybe we were kind of strange to them then because we spoke in tongues, so they thought something funny was going on in there.

Thomas from Freedom in Christ shared this same commitment to traditional Pentecostal identity, but with an interesting nuance.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious beliefs?

Thomas: Because I am a more technically minded person, I would just tell them the name of my denomination—that I belong to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada—which makes them ask the question, 'What is that?' This, then, allows me to explain exactly what my religion is. I believe that if I just say, 'Pentecostal,' that they might think they know what this means, but because the word Pentecostal has such a broad definition, their understanding might not accurately reflect what I believe. I would rather give them a thirty-second blurb of who I am and of my religion.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Thomas: I'm a fully pledged Pentecostal person. That is the church that I chose to participate in 100 percent.

Where Thomas differed from Gordon and Ruth is that he was raised in New Brunswick, which boasts one of the largest populations of Oneness, or non-Trinitarian, Pentecostals in Canada. As someone brought up in a congregation belonging to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in New Brunswick, it was necessary for Thomas to include the above degree of denominational specificity if he wished to clearly differentiate himself from the much-maligned Oneness Pentecostals. Thomas rightly feared that if he simply told other New Brunswickers that he was a Pentecostal, that they might assume that he was a Oneness Pentecostal. When Thomas moved to Ontario he continued using this same degree of denominational specificity when describing his religion because he was unaware that Oneness Pentecostals were a much smaller minority in Ontario.

To document the responses of the three remaining interview participants who also maintained traditional denominational identities would be redundant as there is not much in the way of distinction or gradation that can be made among this group of respondents. The objective here is simply to observe that they were a few individuals that I interviewed who remained committed to traditional Pentecostal identity, and to provide a point of contrast for the other interview participants. As one might expect given my description of the three congregations in the previous chapter, four of the six traditional denominational identifiers that I interviewed came from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly (the most traditional of the three congregations), two came from Freedom in Christ, and I did not encounter any traditional denominational identifiers at Elevation (the least traditional of the three congregations).

## 5.2 LATENT DENOMINATIONAL IDENTIFIERS

I labeled the second group of interview participants in my typology of religious identification—from the greatest to the least degree of denominationally affinity—“latent denominational identifiers.” Unlike traditional denominational identifiers who held a firm sense of Pentecostal identity, when I asked this second group of participants the question, “What term would you use to describe your religious views?” they provided either a generically evangelical or a generically Christian response such as, “Christian,” “evangelical,” or “born again.” However, when I asked participants in this group the question, “Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?” they, often after much consideration, answered, “Yes.” This category included fourteen people or approximately 33 percent of participants. The reason that I call this group of interview participants “latent denominational identifiers” is because their first instinct was to not identify as Pentecostal, and many only hesitantly acquiesced to considering themselves Pentecostal, often with very specific nuances or qualifications.

Consider, for instance, Arthur, a twenty-six year old construction foreman who attended Freedom in Christ. Arthur was raised in a devout Christian Reformed home and attended a Christian Reformed church in Kitchener until going to college. Arthur’s wife was raised in a Baptist family, and after the two were married, they attended Immanuel Pentecostal Church in Kitchener for approximately three years before attending Freedom in Christ in 2007. Arthur and his wife chose to attend a Pentecostal church after they were married as a compromise between the Christian Reformed and Baptist traditions. Even though Arthur did not choose the term Pentecostal to describe his religious identity, and maintained a commitment to Reformed theology that sometimes clashes with the largely Arminian, that is to say free-will orientated, theology within the Canadian Pentecostal tradition, he still, in an interesting way, considered himself to be a Pentecostal.

Author: What led you to initially come to Freedom?

Arthur: Our decision to switch churches was led mostly by the availability of programs for our children at Freedom.

Author: If you had to choose a term to describe your religious views, what would you use?

Arthur: A term to describe my religious views?

Author: Yes. Or, if someone you just met for the first time asked you what your religion was, what would you tell them?

Arthur: Christian.

Author: Is it important to you that Freedom is a Pentecostal church?

Arthur: No.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Arthur: Well, we're attending a Pentecostal church, so yes.

Author: You believe that attending Freedom makes you a Pentecostal?

Arthur: My denominational views are—I'm a nondenominational kind of person in that sense. I believe that what's important is the teaching, rather than the umbrella that you are under. So, yes—if someone asked me the question, I would tell them that I'm a Pentecostal because I attend a Pentecostal church, but not so much regarding belief and practice.

Alice, a twenty-nine year old member of Freedom in Christ since 2000 that attended Lutheran and Mennonite Brethren churches as a child, also preferred a generic religious self-descriptor, but, like Arthur, expressed some vague sense of Pentecostal identity.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious views?

*[long pause]*

Author: If someone you just met for the first time asked you what your religion was, what would you tell them?

Alice: Well, I would say that I am a Christian and that I go to a Pentecostal church. I don't feel restricted to denominations, personally. To me it's more where I fit in and where the church meets the needs that I have, and if I fit into what is going on at the church at the time. That's kind of how I look at it.

Author: What led you—and keeps you coming back—to this church?

Alice: Friends. I met someone from this church at work. She said, 'Hey, you should come out to our young adults group.' So I came out with her. The associate pastor said, 'You should come check out a Sunday service,' because I was still kind of between churches. So I thought, 'Well, OK, I'll come check it out.' So I came and enjoyed it, then I just decided that I liked it here and I gave it a couple of months. People were very welcoming, and I thought, 'OK, I fit in here, it's a good fit for me, and here I am.'

Author: Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church.

Alice: No.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Alice: I would think now I do, because I've been going to a Pentecostal church and now that I understand, well, sort of understand, what it means to be part of a Pentecostal church. But, like I said, to me, when I was growing up, denominations were never something that was like, 'You have to be Lutheran, or you have to be this.' I just kind of always went wherever I felt that I fit in.

Author: So what do you think it means to be a Pentecostal?

Alice: I guess I don't necessarily know what it means.

It is interesting that both Arthur and Alice described their religious affiliation simply as Christian and indicated that it was not important to them that Freedom in Christ was a Pentecostal church, but, at the same time, they considered themselves to be Pentecostals. It is clear from their responses, however, that this latent form of denominational identity had absolutely nothing to do with a sense of belonging to the Pentecostal tradition, as later on in the interviews it became apparent to me that they knew little or nothing about Pentecostalism.

Arthur and Alice represented a segment of the participants that I spoke with, most of whom were raised in non-Pentecostal traditions and who chose to join a Pentecostal church as adults out of personal preference. To many of these participants, the fact that the church that they attended was Pentecostal was incidental. Arthur, for instance, initially chose to attend Immanuel Pentecostal Church as a compromise between his and his wife's religious traditions and chose to attend Freedom because of, "the availability of programs for our children." Alice decided to initially attend Freedom in Christ because a friend invited her. She later made the decision to regularly attend the church because she felt that she "fit in" and that the church, in her words, met "the needs that I have." These comments demonstrate a much stronger influence from the values of therapeutic, expressive individualism than they do any real sense of denominational identification.

This segment of the participants I interviewed and observed were simply attending a church where they felt welcome, were successful in making friends, and that offered the programs that best met their needs. These same participants, however, were deeply committed members of their congregations and were not opposed to telling people that they attended a Pentecostal church, or by extension, that they were Pentecostal, as a result of their attendance. However, it would be a mistake to confuse this latent form of denominational identification as an indication of their commitment to the Pentecostal tradition. Rather, these participants indicated that they considered themselves to be Pentecostal as a means of demonstrating their sense of belonging and commitment to their specific congregations, not out of a sense of denominational belonging or identity. In other words, they felt that if their churches are Pentecostal and if they were contributing and committed members of their congregations, than, *ipso facto*, they must also be Pentecostal.

Also under the umbrella of latent denominational identifiers are those participants raised in the Pentecostal tradition but who, like Arthur and Alice, identified their religious affiliation using a generic evangelical or Christian term. While they also maintained a latent sense of denominational identity, members of this group understood the doctrines, rituals, and stereotypes that they were clearly distancing themselves from by adopting a more generic religious self-descriptor. Rather than a means of demonstrating congregational commitment, these participants expressed a certain degree of denominational identification because many of them continued to maintain core Pentecostal theological and ritual commitments. While these individuals refused to identify their religious affiliation as “Pentecostal” there were elements of the tradition that they either still practiced, or at least continued to feel a sense of affinity towards, and so eventually acquiesced to a latent form of Pentecostal identity.

Edward, for instance, was a thirty-eight year old office administrator who spent most of his life attending Pentecostal churches and has attended Elevation since 2001. While he preferred not to describe his religious affiliation as Pentecostal, he did consider himself to be a Pentecostal and associated this sense of identity with traditional Pentecostal theology and ritual.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious beliefs?

Edward: My Facebook profile says ‘conservative-ish Christian.’

Author: What would you say to someone from your workplace, for instance, who asked you what religion you practiced?

Edward: I would say Christian without hesitation. But Christian is a broad term in many senses. OK, you’re Christian, but are you Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist? They’re all Christians, right? It’s funny because I identify with the Pentecostal church and doctrine, but if I was at the office today, for example, and somebody asked me what my religion was, I’m not really sure how I would answer, because although I personally don’t have a problem with most of the stuff that goes on in a Pentecostal church, there is a huge perception in our culture that Pentecostals are a bunch of Holy Rollin’, freaky, speaking in tongues, dancing around the church, type of people. And that is not something that I want to be identified with. I don’t have a problem being identified as having a passionate faith, whether or not people would think that of me, who knows—I don’t have a problem with many forms of worship and that type of thing. Like with any church, there are extremes, right. There are Pentecostal churches that are dry and dead and kind of boring. There are others that are just crazy, yelling and jumping around and that kind of stuff, and I don’t like either. So, if someone asked me what church I went to I would say, ‘Elevation,’ which would mean absolutely nothing to them. And if they asked, ‘What kind of religion or denomination is that?’ I would tell them that it was Pentecostal.

And I might follow that up with some kind of light-hearted joke, 'But not like the rollin' around in the aisles kind of Pentecostal' or something. You know what I mean?

Author: Yes.

Edward: It's interesting how people get an image of what anything is, whether it is, you know, what is a Catholic? A Catholic is someone who stands there with their arms folded and kneels five times and hums some Latin songs that they don't know, right? That's not the case in a lot of Catholic churches. A lot of my friends are Catholic, and that's totally not them. That's just the stereotype. My view, anyways, is that Pentecostals are labeled as kind of the freaky, Charismatic, weirdoes. And in movies—I haven't seen this movie, but I've heard about it—*Jesus Camp*.

Author: Oh, yeah. I have seen that.

Edward: Have you?

Author: Yes.

Edward: Well, I haven't seen it, so I don't know all about it, but I've seen trailers and excerpts on newscasts. Is that a Pentecostal camp?

Author: Yes. The pastor featured in the film is a Pentecostal, but I do not know which denomination that they are associated with or if they are an independent church.

Edward: Even as a Pentecostal that type of thing bugs me when I see that. I'm Pentecostal, but I'm not that. There are all kinds of other denominations that probably have the same problem with stereotyping. It's just that, it's stereotyping, whether it's true or not.

[*long pause*]

So, I'm Christian. [*laughter*]

Author: After all that you're just a Christian.

Edward: [*laughter*]

Author: Is it important to you that Elevation is a Pentecostal church?

Edward: My short answer is, yes. Probably because for the better part of my intellectual life that is what I've been a part of. That's what I've been taught, so to speak. I subscribe to the doctrines and beliefs of the Pentecostal movement. Again, not the extreme stuff. Some of the things that people do, like speaking in tongues, are big Pentecostal things, right? I don't disagree with it. I don't think it's a bad thing. As a matter of fact, I think it is true or valuable. However, if people are just, like, flapping off all the time and it just gets out of hand, then that bothers me. But, yeah, I subscribe basically to the Pentecostal view and teaching. So in that sense, yeah, it's important to me that Elevation is a Pentecostal church.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Edward: I would consider myself a Pentecostal, I guess. I mean I consider myself a citizen of the world, I guess, do you know what I mean? *[laughter]* To me that question is almost like, 'What are you versus everyone else?' I am not saying that is how you asked it, but that is now I interpret it. It would be the same as saying that if someone were a Catholic that everything about them is Catholic and everything not Catholic is not for them. That is not the type of Pentecostal I am.

Author: Would you consider referring to yourself as Pentecostal, never mind all of the other implications?

Edward: Yes. That being said, one of the things that I've really learned, especially at Elevation and through our discussions and personal development at Elevation, is that even though I would identify myself as a Pentecostal, it's not for me to say that because I'm Pentecostal I disagree with every other denomination. Its just that, you know what, this denomination is the one that I have the least problems with. *[laughter]*

Shane who was twenty-seven years old and had been attending Elmira Pentecostal Assembly for two-and-a-half years, is another example of someone who spent most of his life attending Pentecostal churches, but who espoused a latent rather than a traditional form of denominational identity.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious views?

Shane: I would use the term Christian because it describes a lot more than just a denomination. Obviously, we are associated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada here and I have been a part of that

denomination for my entire life. That's what I have been raised in and that's what I know. But at the same time, there are other denominations and other people that, really, we share the same beliefs and the same systems with. The Christian faith has some fairly strict guidelines and understandings, and a big one is that we realize that Christ died for our sins and rose again, and that we have salvation in him through that. There are some things like that that really are not negotiable in our faith. There are some other things that I think Scripture leaves us to discover for ourselves. A lot of those can be deep theological arguments or debates that people go through. But I think it's finding a place where you are comfortable and finding a place where you are at home. For me, I've grown up in the Pentecostal church and what the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada says to be true is stuff that, through life experiences and different things, I have not been left with too many doubts about whether it is true or not.

Author: Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church?

Shane: I would say it is. I think more for me in a personal sense because I've been raised Pentecostal. I have, however, attended a church from another denomination at one point, and that's not to say that one church is right and another is wrong. Rather, it's just something that I'm familiar with. I guess it is important to me that I understand what happens. No matter whether you are attending a contemporary or a classical—more traditional—Pentecostal church you kind of know what to expect. So I think it's definitely a comfort level for me to some extent. That's why it matters to me. It's not the name associated with it or tagged on to it, but more so due to familiarity I think.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Shane: Yes.

Finally, Harold from Freedom in Christ also fit into this second tier of latent denominational identifiers.

Author: What term would you use to label your religious views?

Harold: What are my choices?

Author: Whatever you want.

[*very long pause*]



Harold: I would say—and this is going to sound strange and you may have not had anyone answer it this way—grace-centered. The older I get, the more I describe myself as grace-centered. When I was younger it was this and this. And there are still some things that are black and white. There are no issues or concerns about that. But more and more—I'm not perfect at it—I'm just trying to err on the side of—if you can say that—on the grace-centered thing. Offer people the same kind of grace I would want offered to me if I was in their situation or whatever the case is.

Author: Is it important to you that Freedom is a Pentecostal church?

Harold: Specifically there, no.

Author: But say you were to go to another church, would that be something that you would look for?

Harold: It would be something that we would look for up front, yes. There's no question about it. I'm not going to say that it would be the determining factor, because, in all honesty, there are non-denominational churches out there that I find that are more 'Pentecostal' than some Pentecostal churches are.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be Pentecostal?

Harold: I do.

Edward, Shane, and Harold typified a second major grouping within the latent denominational identifier category. Unlike the first group who indicated that they considered themselves to be Pentecostal as a means of identifying with their congregations, these individuals were committed to at least some traditional elements of Pentecostalism that served to anchor their religious identities. These individuals were at the same time different from traditional denominational identifiers who exhibited no hesitation when describing their affiliation with Pentecostalism. Here we see a sort of second-order form of Pentecostal identification that would not show up in regular conversations with their neighbors and coworkers or perhaps even in a census questionnaire, but does emerge after some probing and sustained reflection on their religious worldviews.

Edward, like many of the participants that I interviewed, was clearly leery of the negative stereotyping that Pentecostals often receive in both popular culture and in society at large. This significantly contributed to his hesitancy to openly self-identify as a Pentecostal. Both Edward and Shane very carefully bracketed their religious identities stressing commitment to a more ecumenical understanding of Christianity as opposed to the sectarian understanding of Pentecostalism common to their childhood experiences. While participants like Edward, Shane, and Harold exercised caution in explicitly identifying themselves as Pentecostals due to a sense of embarrassment regarding how

others often perceive the tradition, some elements of Pentecostal doctrine and practice remained important to them. A latent sense of denominational identity helped them to sustain this aspect of their religious identity and experience.

The degree of loyalty that Edward, Shane, and Harold expressed towards the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, however, remains unclear. Edward, for instance, explained that, ultimately, he attended a Pentecostal church not because he completely agrees with everything within the Pentecostal tradition, but because, “this denomination is the one that I have the least problems with.” Similarly, Shane explained that attending a Pentecostal church had most to do with the fact that it is the tradition that he was “raised in” where he is “comfortable” and feels “at home.” Likewise, Harold mentioned that he would have absolutely no problem attending a church that belonged to a denomination other than the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as long as it possessed the characteristics that are most important to him and his family.

This suggests, then, that participants like Edward, Shane, and Harold who were raised in the Pentecostal tradition and self-identify using generic religious labels, much like the previous group of latent denominational identifiers, may continue to participate within a Pentecostal congregation only as long as they continue to feel welcome and their needs are met. If they were to move or leave their present congregation due to a conflict and were unable to find a Pentecostal church that also happened to meet the above criteria, then they would likely begin experimenting with churches belonging to other denominations that better met their needs.

### **5.3 NONDENOMINATIONAL IDENTIFIERS**

The final category of religious identity that I observed among the participants at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation is comprised of those individuals that I call “nondenominational identifiers.” Like latent denominational identifiers, when asked the question, “What term would you use to describe your religious views?” this third group of participants also provided either a generically evangelical or generically Christian response. Unlike both traditional denominational and latent denominational identifiers, however, when asked the question, “Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?” nondenominational identifiers universally answered with a negative response. Nondenominational identifiers are the single largest group accounting for twenty-two, or 52 percent, of the forty-two participants that I interviewed.

Nondenominational identifiers were comprised of two roughly equal groups. First are those participants who did not mind that people knew that they attended a Pentecostal church, and for whom being a part of an organized denomination provided them with a sense of confidence in the doctrinal soundness of their congregations. These individuals did not openly identify as Pentecostal and did not personally consider themselves to be Pentecostal, but were relaxed about others labeling them that way or using the term Pentecostal simply to describe the church that they attended, as opposed to their own religious identity or personal religious beliefs. Second were a segment of nondenominational identifiers who very consciously avoided reference to the term Pentecostal altogether. Some of these individuals, much like Edward, had a heightened sense of the negative connotations often associated with the term Pentecostal and so avoided using the term sometimes

even to identify their churches. Others simply felt that there was nothing about their religious identities or experiences that could be accurately described by the term Pentecostal.

Elsie was a twenty-nine year old homemaker who grew up in a conservative Pentecostal church in Listowel, Ontario and attended Elmira Pentecostal Assembly. While she had no problem telling people that she attended a Pentecostal church, she had serious reservations about labeling herself as a Pentecostal.

Author: What term would you use to define your religious beliefs?

Elsie: Born-again Christian.

Author: Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church?

Elsie: I would say, yes, I guess. Because that is what led us to first attend this church. So, yeah, I guess it would be important to us.

Author: That is what led you to check it out?

Elsie: Yeah, for sure. It's not like it had to be Pentecostal or we would not go. It's not like that. But that was what led us there because we both grew up in a Pentecostal church and we are both familiar with it.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Elsie: Like, as a label?

Author: If someone asked you if you were a Pentecostal, would you say 'yes'? Are you comfortable using that term?

Elsie: I go to the Pentecostal church, but I don't know if I would say, 'I am Pentecostal.' I'm a born-again Christian. That's how I would label myself, but not as a Pentecostal.

Jane, a forty-four year old accountant who has attended Freedom in Christ since 2002, echoed Elsie's convictions.

Author: What term would you use, Jane, to describe your religious beliefs? Or, in other words, if someone were to ask you, maybe from your workplace, someone that you didn't know that well, what your religion was, what would you tell them?

Jane: Evangelical.

Author: You would use that term?

Jane: Evangelical? Yeah. That's probably what I would say.

Author: Is it important to you that Freedom in Christ is a Pentecostal church?

Jane: Well, I don't know that it is. I think if I left here and found a church that offered the same values. Like, we used to attend Wilmot Missionary Church, and if you walked into Wilmot Missionary today—if it had the same feel as it did when we were going there—it's probably way more Pentecostal than Freedom is. So, if that's what you're asking, probably not. I don't think that I'm—I don't want to say that I'm Pentecostal. I didn't even understand what those things were when I was starting going to church, so no.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Jane: If somebody asks me what church I go to, I don't have a problem saying that I go to Freedom Pentecostal church. But I don't know that I need to be labeled that way; I hate labels. So, I don't think that I want to be labeled a Pentecostal; I don't even know what that means. So, for me, it's OK that there are lots of churches that have the same values and beliefs but are not Pentecostal. So, I don't even understand, you know, why we have to label it Pentecostal.

Author: So the label is not an important part of your identity?

Jane: No.

Derek was a member of Embassy and Elevation since their inception. He was raised in the Pentecostal tradition and even graduated from a denominational Bible college, but also hesitated to identify with Pentecostalism.

Author: Is it important to you that Elevation is a Pentecostal church?

Derek: No. *[laughter]* Though I am not opposed to it. I don't want to say that I am opposed to it, but it is not important to me.

Author: It's not on the top of your list of priorities.

Derek: Yeah.

Author: Would you describe yourself as a Pentecostal?

Derek: I would not, but I wouldn't be opposed to being called that.  
[laughter]

Author: You wouldn't self-identity that way?

Derek: No I wouldn't, no I wouldn't.

Finally, Henry who was thirty-two years old and had been attending Freedom in Christ since 2004, also explained that for him, the only important aspect of denominational belonging was the sense of doctrinal assurance that it provides.

Author: What term would you use to label your religious views?  
What would you say to someone who asked you what your religion was?

Henry: I would tell them that I am a Christian.

Author: Is it important to you that Freedom is a Pentecostal Church?

Henry: It is in the sense that it's important that biblical truths are being preached and taught. I mean if it were some kind of a Satan-worshipping cult, we certainly wouldn't attend. But the actual denomination itself was not a deciding factor on our joining the church.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Henry: I honestly don't know what it would even take to consider oneself a Pentecostal. [laughter]

There was a segment of the nondenominational identifier group like Elsie, Jane, Derek, and Henry who were not opposed to the fact that people knew that they attended a Pentecostal church, and, like Derek, did not mind if other people labeled or called them Pentecostals. At the same time, however, they were very clear about the fact that they did not believe that the term accurately described their religious affiliation. Also, they did not personally identify or consider themselves to be Pentecostal even if others might cast them in that light. For many of these participants, as we see in Henry's response, the knowledge that their church was part of a larger organization was important to them only in so far as (they believed) it guaranteed their congregation's commitment to Protestant Christian

orthodoxy. For these participants, however, the fact that their church was affiliated with a Pentecostal denomination was inconsequential to their religious identities.

Existing on the more extreme end of the nondenominational identifier group was Trevor, a thirty-six year old college professor attending Freedom in Christ, who not only avoided the use of the term Pentecostal, but also that of evangelical in order to describe his religious commitments.

Author: If you had to pick a specific term to label your religious views, what would you use?

Trevor: Yeah, I don't know. I wrote on your sheet nondenominational Christian, because that is how I used to identify. You know four years ago when I got married, on my wedding license I wrote Lutheran. But I haven't attended a Lutheran church in years except when I go to visit my family. So—[laughter]

Author: A lot of people find themselves in a similar situation.

Trevor: Yeah. So I mean—I know it's a trend now too—that people call themselves nondenominational Christians and there are nondenominational Bible colleges and all that kind of stuff. You know, my wife, on her wedding license wrote Christian. She started Catholic and then her family went Baptist and then they went Pentecostal and then when we moved here we were Baptist again before coming to Freedom. So we're not going to necessarily give ourselves a name. So, OK, I'm a nondenominational Christian, I guess. That's what I mean by it. I still have Lutheran tendencies. I still have some hang-ups. Like I had both of my kids baptized by my brother who is a Lutheran minister. But not just for family reasons, it just seemed really important to me. I guess I have the attitude, I would rather have it and not need it than need it and not have it.

Author: Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church?

Trevor: You know what, no. No. It is not important that it is Pentecostal. In fact, sometimes when I tell people I go to a Pentecostal church I'm concerned about their reaction and how they are going to label me. I guess I'm evangelical, but I don't like to call myself evangelical because when you identify as evangelical there are sometimes a whole lot of things besides your faith that people assume. They assume that politically you are very conservative. In some ways I am and in some ways I'm not. Suddenly you are categorized. And maybe it's my own bias. Maybe not everyone does think of me that way, but my impression is that if I tell you, 'Hey, I'm evangelical' that encompasses a lot more.

[pause]

Author: That they are assuming things about you that are not necessarily true?

Trevor: Yeah, yeah. And I guess the word evangelical does mean that. I mean a Lutheran doesn't call himself evangelical. So what does evangelical mean? Well often there are political beliefs, you're socially conservative. What are some of the other characteristics of evangelical? Some of these, I guess, do describe me. Like I'm family oriented and everything like that.

[pause]

Author: In the United States, for instance, the term evangelical often carries the connotation of being radical or extreme.

Trevor: Yeah. You're almost certainly Republican, and you're trying to covert everybody. So, I guess I wouldn't label myself an evangelical. Certainly I would label myself as Christian. I guess I still have a very open mind to some other things, like Orthodoxy has some appeal to me. Even Catholicism, as I've looked into it more, I am realizing that the negative things I previously thought about it were merely what I thought Catholicism was, and not exactly what it is. I still don't think of myself as Pentecostal, I guess, because I still have a lot of those Lutheran influences, and I still have some hang-ups about speaking in tongues and stuff like that. I believe its true, it's just not something that I've embraced. But I really enjoy going to the Pentecostal church. Mostly, it's the sense of Christian community I get from it.

Sidney and Elizabeth, a couple that I interviewed together who have attended Elevation for a year, also avoided the labels Pentecostal and evangelical, and even were hesitant to use the term Christian to describe their religious affiliation.

Author: What term would both of you use to describe your religious views? If someone were to ask you what your religion was, what would you tell them?

Elizabeth: I don't know. That's a hard one. Usually I would just say Christian, I think. Yeah, I just love Jesus.

Sidney: I think that's it for me too. I don't even like to just say Christian, because there is a lot of religious trappings with that. When I try to describe my faith or spiritual experience I don't want it

to include the religious trappings. The people we bought this house from were flipping it. They were Christians and our neighbor two doors down is not. The people we bought from made the comment to him, 'Oh, a good young Christian family is moving in.' And my heart sank when our neighbor said that to me because I thought, I've just got all this baggage just added on to me that I would have rather not had.

Author: Is it important to you that Elevation is a Pentecostal church?

Sidney: No.

Elizabeth: No, it's not.

Author: Do either of you consider yourselves to be Pentecostal?

Sidney: I don't.

Elizabeth: No, I don't consider myself to be a Pentecostal.

Author: It is very interesting that many people attending the congregations that I am studying are not even aware that they are attending a Pentecostal church.

Elizabeth: I didn't know that I attended a Pentecostal church until I was completing your survey. When reading the questions I was like, 'I don't know. What is this? I don't know what that is?' Then I found out that Elevation was a Pentecostal church.

Martha, a twenty-five year old member of Elevation who has attended both the Embassy and Elevation since 2002, was also hesitant to describe herself as a Christian.

Author: What term would you use to describe your religious identity?

Martha: Currently?

Author: Yes.

Martha: I would say that I'm a Christian, but don't associate with any particular denomination. Depending on whom I'm having a conversation with I would be hesitant to say that I'm a Christian. I feel that my beliefs really line up with a Christian identity, but



because of negative connotations that some people associate with Christianity, I sometimes wouldn't label myself that way.

Author: Is it important to you that Elevation is a Pentecostal church?

Martha: No, it's not important to me that it's a Pentecostal church. In fact, when I first learned that it was a Pentecostal church I was sort of surprised.

Author: Oh, really?

Martha: I always knew it had that affiliation but it didn't seem strongly apparent to me in the way that the services were run and through Brandon's speaking. And I was just going off of my experiences of attending other Pentecostal churches and some friends and stuff.

Author: Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?

Martha: No. [*laughter*]

The responses of Elsie, Jane, Derek, Henry, Trevor, Sidney, Elizabeth, and Martha represented the dominant mode of religious identity at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation. The fact that the majority of the members of these congregations did not feel any commitment to not only traditional, but even latent or extremely vague forms of Pentecostal identification, represents a very significant transformation of religious identity within the Canadian Pentecostal tradition. It is also interesting to note that a number of the nondenominational identifiers that I spoke with (like some latent denominational identifiers such as Edward) very explicitly told me that they were uncomfortable using the term Pentecostal (and sometimes even the terms evangelical and Christian) to describe their religious affiliation. These individuals did not want, in fact, were embarrassed, to be associated with popular negative stereotypes of Pentecostals.

Tracy from Freedom in Christ, for instance, told me: "If I was standing in the school yard talking to one of the other kindergarten moms waiting for our kids to go to school like I was today, I probably wouldn't tell her that I was Pentecostal. I would tell her that I was a Christian and that I went to a Pentecostal church. That's probably how I would define that to someone who had no idea of what Pentecostal is. I would love for someone to come and experience what Pentecostalism is—this definition and expression of it—rather than what people may or may not understand about Pentecostals or what they think they've seen on TV about evangelicals or whatever."

The use of a generic evangelical or Christian label to identify one's religious affiliation was clearly being used by many of the participants as a means of distancing themselves from what they perceived to be embarrassing and inaccurate representations of Pentecostals within popular culture and broader society in general. It was also interesting to note that this uncomfortableness with labels extended for

some individuals to the terms evangelical and even Christian. This points to the recent trend within some segments of conservative Protestantism, which I briefly discussed in the Introduction, to avoid referring to their religious tradition as a religion at all, but, rather, simply as a “faith” or some other neutral term and suggests some similarities between these Christians and the SBNR.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate that a significant proportion of the members at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation maintained generically evangelical, rather than traditionally Pentecostal, modes of religious identity. Only six participants explicitly identified as Pentecostal when asked to describe their religion. Another fourteen participants expressed some degree of latent Pentecostal identity, and a further twenty-two participants neither used the term Pentecostal to describe their religion nor considered themselves to be Pentecostal in any way other than to identify the church that they attended. What these numbers reveal is that if these forty-two participants provided similar responses (and I have no reason to suspect that they would not) to question number twenty-two—the religion question—on the Canadian census form, that only the first 14 percent of the interview participants that I spoke with would be recorded as “Pentecostal.” The remaining 86 percent of the interview participants would have been labeled in the generic “Christian” category.

The fact that so few of the people I interviewed described themselves as Pentecostal—even if in an admittedly small case study—raises the question of whether or not this phenomenon exists on a wider scale within other congregations affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. If so, this would definitively demonstrate that the number of individuals attending Canadian Pentecostal churches did not decrease at the same rate as an uninformed examination of the 2001 Canadian Census data may otherwise suggest. I am not suggesting that commitment to traditional forms of Pentecostal identity and experience have totally evaporated within Canadian Pentecostal congregations. I observed quite clearly that at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation a little less than half of participants continued to express a form of either traditional or latent Pentecostal identity. That a majority of participants do not express any commitment to Pentecostal identity, as well as the fact that a significant number of participants intentionally avoided being labeled as Pentecostals, nonetheless, suggests a significant transformation of religious identity within these three congregations.

## **CHAPTER 6— SPIRIT BAPTISM AND SPEAKING IN TONGUES**

So far I have shown that the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation have adopted generically evangelical rather than traditionally Pentecostal forms of religious identity. Another crucial component of my hypothesis is that it is not only religious identity, but also religious experience (belief and practice), that have been transformed within these three congregations. It is not only the way that members religiously self-identity, but also what they believe and the way that they practice their faith that show evidence of this transformation. In this chapter I will demonstrate how the members of the three churches have changed their beliefs and practices surrounding the experiences of Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues—Pentecostalism’s two most distinctive characteristics. While Spirit baptism and glossolalia, as Margaret Poloma and John Green write, “have become less common” (2010, 47–48) in many North American Pentecostal churches, they have not simply been jettisoned as a Neibuhrian understanding of religious development might suggest. Rather, the leaders and members of these three congregations have reinterpreted or reframed these two historic doctrines in order to better reflect the largely therapeutic understanding of both the person of God and the nature of religion commonly found within the generically evangelical subculture in which these congregations participate (Ellingson 2007, 88).

More specifically, in this chapter I will show how: (1) the lack of awareness that several interview participants demonstrated regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit, (2) the majority of interview participants who did not maintain the traditional Pentecostal belief that Spirit baptism occurs subsequent to conversion, (3) the fact that none of the interview participants supported the official denominational position that speaking in tongues is the unique evidence of Spirit baptism, and (4) the reality that the fewer than half of the interview participants who continued to value the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a unique spiritual experience have reinterpreted its traditional role of providing power for evangelism to offering largely therapeutic and physic benefits to individual members, each reveal that the traditional Canadian Pentecostal positions on Spirit baptism and glossolalia are neither a priority in the preaching and teaching at the three congregations, or a deeply held conviction by most members.

### **6.1 IGNORANCE AND CONFUSION REGARDING THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Of the forty-two people that I interviewed, twenty-six (62 percent) indicated that they believed the baptism of the Holy Spirit was an important spiritual experience. This was almost 20 percent lower than the 81 percent of respondents who answered similarly on the congregational survey. The reason for this disparity is, I believe, not an actual difference of opinion between survey and interview participants, but, rather, the fact that during the interviews I had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, which allowed me to get a better sense of participants’ opinions regarding this experience. This additional probing revealed that a significant number of participants who initially indicated that they believed the baptism of the Holy Spirit was an important spiritual experience did not actually think this way, but simply answered affirmatively because they either had no idea what the term

referred to and thought that they ought to think that it was important, or because they confused it with water baptism. The number of interview participants who were either ignorant or confused regarding the doctrine and practice of Spirit baptism clearly reveals that this historic Pentecostal experience is not a priority in the preaching or teaching at the three congregations, not to mention a significant advantage that qualitative methods have over quantitative methods.

During my interview with Henry from Freedom in Christ, it became clear that he had very little understanding of what the baptism of the Holy Spirit was except perhaps that it had some connection with the gifts of the Spirit.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Henry: Now, you might need to elaborate a bit on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Do you mean like receiving spiritual gifts?

Author: Within traditional Pentecostalism there is this idea that sometime after conversion the believer undergoes a spiritual experience called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is usually accompanied by speaking in tongues.

Henry: Then I am going to answer that with a no ... a lot of that stuff sounds a little bit legalistic, if you will. Like you are not really a Christian if you don't receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You know what? I really think we need to get away from all that legalistic stuff because that's what needs to differentiate Christians per se with a 'religion.' Our main focus is to bring more people to Christ. Being legalistic and saying you're not this or that because you haven't experienced this does not bode well for achieving this objective, in my opinion. So from that standpoint we should get away from all that kind of legalism, if you will.

Author: Have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Henry: I have never spoken in tongues. I believe I've been accepted into Christ's family of believers but haven't received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be honest, it's not really all that important to me so I've never really considered whether I have or have not. I know that I am saved.

The same was also true of Elizabeth from Elevation.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Elizabeth: See, on the survey, I answered ‘yes’ and then I found out what that actually means.

Author: What did you think it meant?

Elizabeth: I just assumed that meant that the Spirit came and lived inside of you. I didn’t realize it meant that you developed the other stuff, like the gifts of the Spirit.

I found the responses of those individuals who confused the baptism of the Holy Spirit with water baptism to be particularly interesting. Such responses were clear evidence of the paucity of teaching regarding Spirit baptism at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation. One individual who responded this way was Albert from Elevation, a twenty-year-old student at the University of Waterloo.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Albert: Yes.

Author: You do? Could you tell me a bit more about that?

Albert: It’s a tough one. I don’t exactly know the specific reason why, but it does say in the Bible that when they mention the steps of conversion, baptism is always one of them. Not to say that, like, if someone on their deathbed accepts Jesus and they didn’t get baptized, they would go to Hell.

Author: I’m talking about Spirit baptism, not water baptism.

Albert: Ahh. OK.

Author: In traditional Pentecostalism, there is this idea that after conversion and water baptism there is another spiritual experience where the believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit like found in the book of Acts.

Albert: Oh, OK, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Author: This experience is usually ‘evidenced’ or accompanied by speaking in tongues.

Albert: Oh, then, no. I thought you were talking about water baptism.

While Jeremy from Elevation indicated that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not important to him, like Albert, he confused the experience with water baptism, and specifically, with adult baptism practiced outside of the Reformed tradition in which he was raised.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Jeremy: No. Because I come from a background where we do infant baptism, so when people are converted we have a thing called 'Profession of Faith' where they basically do a class type thing where they go over the doctrines of the Church and all that. And then they get up in front of the church and confess or profess their faith and then they become full members of the church and are allowed to participate in communion. So it's basically kind of the same thing, I think, as adult baptism, but without the actual baptism.

Author: What I am talking about is actually different. There are obviously infant baptism and adult baptism, but then Pentecostals also have this thing called, baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is not water baptism. It is an experience after conversion. So you are converted and baptized, or even baptized as a child and confirmed, and then, within traditional Pentecostalism, you have a subsequent kind of emotional experience that Pentecostals call, 'baptism of the Holy Spirit.' And, it's usually 'evidenced' by this other thing called 'speaking in tongues,' which you have probably heard about at least on television or something.

Jeremy: Yes. So, baptism of the Holy Spirit doesn't actually refer to baptism with water?

Author: That's right. Within traditional Pentecostalism you would experience conversion, water baptism, and then baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Jeremy: OK.

The responses of those interview participants who initially indicated that they believed the baptism of the Holy Spirit was an important spiritual experience, but who either had no idea what the baptism of the Holy Spirit was, or confused the experience with water baptism, illustrate the paucity of teaching on Spirit baptism within the three congregations.

**Table 4. Highlights from the congregational surveys on Spirit baptism and glossolalia<sup>14</sup>**

	FIC	EPA	ELE
Percentage who either completely or generally agreed that Spirit baptism was an important experience	84.4	93.1	72.6
Percentage who either completely or generally agreed that glossolalia is the evidence of Spirit baptism	64.5	72.4	12.9
Percentage who reported never having spoken a message in tongues in a public church service	81.8	88.9	90.5
Percentage who reported praying for someone to receive Spirit baptism once a year or more	34	55.5	19.6
Percentage who indicated that they have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit	77.3	85.2	38.1

## 6.2 THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE QUESTION OF SUBSEQUENCE

If we take a closer look at participants' responses we also see that only seventeen participants (40 percent) explicitly indicated that they believed the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred after conversion—the traditional Pentecostal position—a level of distinction not possible to confirm with the responses to the survey instrument. This means that more than a third of the twenty-six interview participants who affirmed the importance of Spirit baptism viewed this experience as synonymous with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. Additionally, it should be noted that the interview participants who indicated that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not important to them—sixteen individuals—also equated Spirit baptism with the reception of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion. What this means is that 60 percent of participants equated Spirit baptism with the experience of conversion.

Receiving the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion, of course, is not the traditional Canadian Pentecostal understanding of Spirit baptism. In question 263 of his catechism Purdie asks, "Is the Infilling of the Holy Spirit definite and distinct from the New Birth?" He replies, "Yes. To be regenerated or born again by the Holy Spirit and have a measure of His presence is one thing; to be FILLED with the same Spirit is something additional" (1951, 45, emphasis original). Similarly the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* states: "This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the experience of the new birth" (1994, 5). Clearly, traditional Canadian Pentecostals believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a distinct spiritual experience that occurs subsequent to conversion.

Several interview participants such as Mavis—a 54 year-old mother of two from Freedom in Christ who has attended Pentecostal congregations since childhood—clearly disagreed with this traditional view of subsequence.

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<sup>14</sup> It is important to keep in mind when reading these results that the majority of the interview participants conflated Spirit baptism with conversion. It is likely that this was also the case among most survey respondents. As a result, it would likely be inaccurate to correlate these levels of commitment to Spirit baptism with the traditional Pentecostal view of this experience.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Mavis: It depends what you mean by receiving the Holy Spirit?

Author: Why don't you tell me what you think it means?

Mavis: My own understanding, today, is that when you become a Christian the Holy Spirit dwells within you. Whereas speaking in tongues, which is what used to be thought of as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is a different thing.

Arthur also from Freedom in Christ echoed Mavis's sentiments.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Arthur: No. I believe it's important that we receive the Holy Spirit in our lives. That's incredibly important. My first response to your question is that the traditional view of Spirit baptism—speaking in tongues, yada, yada, yada—I don't think is necessary. I think the Spirit comes into you right off the bat and I think that sometimes you may experience him in a greater way, but for some people it's very visible and for others it is not.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Arthur: No.

Author: Have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Arthur: Have I ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? I would say, yes. Have I ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the traditional Pentecostal view? I would say, no.

Author: So not with speaking in tongues.

Arthur: Right.

This opinion was by no means unique to the members of Freedom in Christ. Derek from Elevation concurred with Mavis and Arthur.



Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Derek: I believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens when you are converted.

Author: So you would say 'no' to that?

Derek: Yes. I do not think it is a second experience.

Martha from Elevation also provided a very typical response to this question.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?

Martha: Would someone who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit have to speak in tongues?

Author: Some people believe you do and some people believe you don't.

Martha: OK. I guess I'm not familiar enough with what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is. I definitely believe that when someone has invited God into their life that the Holy Spirit is now with you and guiding you, and whatever gifts that involves for you—but I don't believe that everyone would necessarily have the same gifts of the Spirit and has to speak in tongues and that sort of thing.

While the single greatest proportion of those individuals who affirmed the traditional Pentecostal view of Spirit baptism as occurring after conversion were found at Elmira Pentecostal Assembly (nine), there were still several participants from the Elmira church, such as Elsie, who did not affirm the concept of subsequence.

Author: Do you think that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of Christian life?

Elsie: It's a gift. People can be a Christian without having it. I wouldn't say it's an important thing. I would say that the most important thing is being a Christian; a born again Christian. So I would say no, I guess.

What the personal interviews revealed is that most of the people that I spoke with did not support the traditional Pentecostal view that Spirit baptism occurs sometime after conversion in a usually dramatic and public fashion. Instead, the majority of participants indicated that they believed the

baptism of the Holy Spirit is synonymous with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is believed to take place at the time of conversion. This marks a dramatic reinterpretation of both the doctrine and the practice of Spirit baptism within Canadian Pentecostalism.

### **6.3 SPEAKING IN TONGUES AS THE EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

In addition to the proportion of those interview participants who did not know what the baptism of the Holy Spirit was, confused Spirit baptism with water baptism, and did not believe that the experience happened after conversion, were a much greater number of participants who did not believe that speaking in tongues was the unique evidence of this experience. These two religious beliefs and practices—particularly as they relate to one another in a kind of procedural, commonsense formulation (e.g., tongues= Spirit baptism=power to witness)—are the two most defining characteristics of traditional Pentecostalism, and have historically been used by Pentecostals to differentiate themselves from other evangelicals.

Even while bearing in mind the immense importance of both salvation and divine healing among traditional Pentecostals, Spirit baptism accompanied with speaking in tongues is the *sine qua non* of traditional Pentecostal identity and experience. As Grant Wacker explains of first generation Pentecostals: “In principal salvation should have come first and sanctification second, but in practice Holy Ghost baptism, signified by speaking in tongues, took priority” (2001b, 40). Likewise Gary McGee writes, “More than any other factor, including their stalwart belief in faith healing, speaking in tongues distinguished Pentecostals from their radical evangelical parents” (2010, 90).

The importance of glossolalia as the evidentiary assurance of Spirit baptism for traditional Canadian Pentecostals is also confirmed in the writings of Purdie and the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths*. In *What We Believe*, for instance, Purdie wrote: “The question is often asked, ‘What is the evidence that one is filled with the Holy Spirit?’ The Biblical evidence that one is filled with the Spirit is that he speaks supernaturally in a tongue he has never learned (Acts 2:4)” (1954, 22). Likewise the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* unequivocally states: “The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance” (1994, 5). Few interview participants at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation, however, agreed with this traditional Pentecostal position.

None of the individuals that I interviewed affirmed the belief that speaking in tongues is the *only* evidence of Spirit baptism—the official view promulgated by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Instead, participants fell into one of either two rather broad categories. First, those who understood glossolalia as one of many evidences of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or, second, those who did not believe glossolalia to be an evidence of this experience at all. Harold from Freedom in Christ was an example of someone from this first category.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Harold: Yes, I do. I think there are other evidences, however. I just look at the everyday logic of the, you know, whole power to witness

thing and tongues and all that kind of stuff, and when I read the Bible and I read the sequence it does make sense to me. And yet at the same time, some of the most incredible people I know—sharing their faith, the lives they live—would come from, for instance, a Baptist denomination where they don't believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but they are way better witnesses and have more powerful lives than people who have been in Pentecostal churches and may speak in tongues, but I wouldn't give you two cents for the life they live. But the younger generation looks at that and thinks, 'OK. You say this, but shouldn't that change this over here?' I do believe in tongues being the initial evidence. It's not the only evidence, but some people would argue with me on that.

Emily, also from Freedom in Christ, closely mirrored Harold's response.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Emily: Usually. [*laughter*] Is that a good answer? I was always taught that speaking in tongues was the evidence. It makes sense that it is, because how do you know if the experience is authentic if there isn't some certain evidence. And yet, I've seen people who seem to be very full of the Holy Spirit that don't speak in tongues. So, that's why I say, 'usually.'

Although Colin from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly initially responded negatively to this question, it became clear that he did not mean that speaking in tongues is not an evidence of Spirit baptism, but, rather, that it is not the only evidence of Spirit baptism.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Colin: No, I don't. No. I don't think so, just because I know people who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and they don't speak in tongues. I've heard that's because, you know, they're not taught that speaking in tongues is the evidence. And, you know what, maybe that is true. But I don't see why God wouldn't fill them with speaking in tongues whether they knew about it or not. But I don't believe that you need to be speaking in tongues to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I know for myself, I have the gift of speaking in tongues, however, I was filled with the Holy Spirit before I received that gift and spoken in tongues. So I don't think it's necessarily a sign that you have been filled.

These three participants represented a further division within the first category of respondents who believed that tongues is only one of the evidences of Spirit baptism. First were those like Harold,

Emily, and Colin who appeared to support this belief because they were aware of individuals who they believed fulfilled the characteristics of Spirit baptism but who have not spoken in tongues. Second were a number of participants who supported the idea of multiple evidences because they more explicitly believed that other gifts of the Spirit can serve as evidence of Spirit baptism. James from Elevation, for instance, had previously given this question a considerable amount of thought before he provided me with a particularly articulate response.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

*[long pause]*

James: No. Allow me to qualify that one. I always had a problem with that Pentecostal distinctive. If it was 'a' instead of 'the'—if it was an indefinite article, I would be fine with it. But since it is a definite article and it's usually interpreted as 'the only' initial evidence, then that's where I have a problem with that. That's why I said 'no.'

Similarly Mike from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly made an explicit connection between the mention of numerous gifts of the Spirit in the New Testament and Spirit baptism.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Mike: Not necessarily.

Author: So, do you think there could be other evidences?

Mike: Yes. The Bible mentions various gifts, so any of those gifts that come along and you start to see that you have them or they are given to you, I would think that's probably also part of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, Alice from Freedom in Christ recognized that there could be different evidences for different individuals:

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Alice: I think it is one of the evidences, but I don't think it is the initial one. I think it is different for everybody. Everybody will have a different type of experience. Me, personally, I spoke in tongues, but other people might not necessarily do that.

There were also a number of participants who simply did not think that speaking in tongues played any role whatsoever in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Most of these respondents, like Trevor from Freedom in Christ, also believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not subsequent, but, rather, synonymous with conversion.

Trevor: One of the Pentecostal teachings is that speaking in tongues is evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I don't know if I agree with that interpretation. I've talked to my brother who is a Lutheran minister about it, and he says, 'Yeah, people speak in tongues, but its something that might be overemphasized.' But my brother says that we believe it happens, and, obviously the Bible says that it happens, but I've never seen it happen in a Lutheran church. At the Pentecostal church in Sudbury my family and I attended, it seemed to be happening less and less and less. It seemed to be a little more generically evangelical. And a couple of times our pastor would be in the middle of speaking or we'd be singing and somebody in the middle of the song would start speaking in tongues. He would actually chastise them and say, 'We are worshipping corporately now, and you are speaking out.' And I thought, that was kind of interesting. You're not being moved the way you think you are.

Author: Do you think that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an important experience?

Trevor: I guess I don't believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit manifesting itself through speaking in tongues or something like that. I know that's a pretty core Pentecostal belief.

Derek from Elevation provided a somewhat more complicated response. Unlike Trevor, Derek told me that he had and continued to speak in tongues, and that he viewed this as a highly rewarding spiritual experience. That being said, he did not think that speaking in tongues is an evidence of Spirit baptism, but that one receives a full measure of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Derek: No, though I have no problem with speaking in tongues.

Author: But you wouldn't identify it as the evidence?

Derek: No.

Author: Have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Derek: I am a Christian, which I would argue is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Have I spoken in tongues, I gather is part of that? Yes, I have, though I don't regard that as an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I regard that as a gift.

And, finally, Thomas from Freedom in Christ provided a rather unusual illustration for explaining his idea that speaking in tongues is not an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Rather, he viewed it as a spiritual experience that may help to increase the degree to which the Holy Spirit operates in the life of the believer in more of a quantitative rather than qualitative way.

Author: Do you think that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Thomas: No.

Author: Could you tell me some more about what you think about that?

Thomas: I haven't really educated myself on this and I know, as a Pentecostal, I should. But, I do believe that as soon as I become a Christian that the Holy Spirit is inside of me. Do I have to speak in tongues for the Holy Spirit to be inside of me? No. I think just being a Christian will mean that you have the Holy Spirit in you. Now, does speaking in tongues help you? From what I read, it does. I look at it like a weight trainer. If he eats healthy, he can achieve his results. And a natural way of doing it faster, and it's not illegal, is taking creatine. You're still going to get there. My basic understanding of Pentecostalism is that it's like taking creatine as a supplement for lifting weights. You'll get there faster. But at the end of the day, the guy who took creatine and the guy who didn't are both the same people. They are both equal in the eyes of God, but the guy who took the creatine—or spoke in tongues—might experience spiritual growth a little faster. I guess that's my best way of explaining it.

These responses clearly demonstrate that the individuals I spoke with did not support the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada's official position that speaking in tongues serves as the unique evidence of Spirit baptism. Many of these individuals did not have a problem with the idea that speaking in tongues is one possible evidence of Spirit baptism, but did not support the idea that it is the *only* such evidence. Others, especially those who viewed conversion and Spirit baptism as synonymous spiritual experiences, did not believe that speaking in tongues was an evidence of Spirit baptism at all. Some, like Trevor from Freedom in Christ, viewed tongues as something that might happen, but largely as a spiritual excess and disruption in public church services. Others like Derek from Elevation and Thomas from Freedom in Christ viewed tongues as a beneficial gift that might

contribute to one's spiritual development, but also believed that glossolalia's evidentiary connection with Spirit baptism was a mistake.

It is important to note that while traditional sources such as Purdie and the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* indicate that glossolalia is the chief evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that empowerment for service is this experience's primary aim, both sources explicitly mention additional evidences or purposes of Spirit baptism. Purdie, for instance, clearly indicated that the evidences of Spirit baptism are: (1) glossolalia, (2) power for witnessing, (3) a greater passion for souls, (4) a greater reverence for the Word of God and zeal to study it, (5) a greater love toward all Christian people and to help others, and (6) a deeper prayer life (1951, 44; 1954, 22–23).

This being said, Purdie took special care in both his catechism and in *What We Believe* to distinguish glossolalia as the first and primary evidence of Spirit baptism by listing it as the first evidence, devoting more space to its discussion, and grouping all of the additional evidences together into a single paragraph, denoting their secondary importance after tongues speech. Additionally, Purdie was more specific regarding the purpose of Spirit baptism, which he singularly identifies as power to witness. However, it is also possible that he may not have made a definite distinction between the evidences and purposes of Spirit baptism as many of the evidences that he mentions are clearly practical in orientation.

Conversely, the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* is emphatic about there only being a single evidence of Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, while it lists three possible purposes of this experience: (1) knowing Christ in a more intimate way, (2) receiving power to witness, and (3) to grow spiritually (1994, 4–5). If one accepts both Purdie's writings and the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* as authoritative sources within Canadian Pentecostalism, then one is left with a matrix of both orthodox Pentecostal evidences and purposes of the baptism of the Spirit that exceed, although remain secondary to, speaking in tongues. The recognition of the multiplicity of both evidences and purposes of Spirit baptism in the traditional sources, however, does not minimize the very real shift in opinion concerning these experiences that exists between the individuals that I interviewed and what we find in these historical sources.

#### **6.4 THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

What is perhaps even more interesting than participants' opinions regarding the relationship between speaking in tongues and Spirit baptism, are their thoughts regarding what they think the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is. As previously mentioned, the recent research of Allan Anderson (2007) and Gary McGee (2010) convincingly demonstrate that the single most important priority for early Pentecostals around the world was the role that Spirit baptism played in providing power for the evangelization of the world. As Anderson explains: "The theological link between Spirit baptism and missions has always been made in the Pentecostal movement. It is very important to understand the significance of this, because just as Spirit baptism is Pentecostalism's central, most distinctive doctrine, so mission is Pentecostalism's central, most important activity" (2007, 65). Put more simply Anderson writes, "the power of the Spirit in Pentecostal thinking is always linked to the command to preach the gospel to all nations" (2007, 212).

This is again confirmed in the Canadian Pentecostal tradition by Purdie who asked in question 255 of his catechism, “What is the purpose of the Infilling of the Holy Spirit?” to which he replied, “It means that God gives us additional power and liberty for service enabling us to freely and efficiently witness for Christ—Acts 1:8” (1951, 44). Similarly the *Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths* states: “The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience in which the believer yields control of himself to the Holy Spirit. Through this he comes to know Christ in a more intimate way, and receives power to witness and grow spiritually” (1994, 4).

Only fourteen interview participants (exactly a third) indicated that they believed the purpose of Spirit baptism was to receive power to witness. Many of these same individuals also understood empowerment to be only one of several other possible purposes of Spirit baptism. James from Elevation, for instance, affirmed the traditional Pentecostal understanding of the purpose of Spirit baptism as empowerment. He also listed several other purposes of Spirit baptism.

Author: What do you think the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is?

James: The difficulty in answering that question is that I don't think of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a one-time thing. I believe that we are meant to live the Christian life continually being filled, to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. So the presence of God's Holy Spirit in our lives, to me, is supposed to be, you know, as I understand it, an absolutely vital and central aspect of Christian living. So, the question is, ‘What is the purpose?’ To me that question means, ‘What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives?’ The purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives are many. The Holy Spirit is the seal that we belong to God. The Holy Spirit is our guide. The Holy Spirit empowers us. The Holy Spirit convicts us. The Holy Spirit works in me spiritually and is vitally at work in my spiritual formation. To me it's one of the most important aspects of being a Christian and to live without that you are living a decidedly less exciting, less interesting, less vital Christian experience than you were meant to be.

Tracy from Freedom in Christ also affirmed the traditional purpose of Spirit baptism as receiving power to witness, but like James, thought that there are additional purposes, namely the provision of a unique prayer language with God.

Author: What do you think the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is?

Tracy: Well, I mean, Scripture tells us, of course, this was given to us so that we would have power to witness and I would agree with that in real life. I think that there is a deeper place of courage to be able to share what I need to share when I feel I need to share it. Also, another purpose that has been very real in my life has been having a



prayer language. Being able to pray things that I don't understand, but knowing that I'm doing a better job communicating with God through speaking in tongues than on my own with my own words. That kind of intimate prayer language thing has been a huge benefit, but also having an extra boost, I guess, that's such a stupid way to say that, but a power to be able to know what to say and to know that I can call on that. That's a part of my life now that I can call on to witness and to speak about Christ in the world and wherever I need to and wherever I'm being called to do that.

While there were a number of interview participants who held this type of hybrid understanding of the purposes of Spirit baptism that wedded the traditional power to witness with a wide range of other purposes, the majority of participants, like Derek from Elevation, primarily emphasized the personal benefits of Spirit baptism.

Author: What do you think the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is?

Derek: The purpose of the baptism is a seal to receive the Spirit when you become a Christian, to both seal yourself for eternity and to have the counselor, or convictor, or someone to come along with you in life to have the Spirit in you as first fruits of the promise and as the beginning of your sanctification, or purification, or just becoming a better person, if you want to just look at it that way. So I would rephrase that question as saying, 'What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit being in our lives, or Christ living in our heart?' The purpose is to counsel, convict, and to be a comfort.

Colin from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly explained the purpose of Spirit baptism in extremely individualistic terms. While Derek understood the role of Spirit baptism to be the reception of a moral and spiritual guide, Colin perceived Spirit baptism (which he clearly did not understand as a singular event) as a way for God to directly communicate with him or to manifest his reality in a powerful way.

Author: What do you think the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is?

Colin: I would say, for myself anyway, I can't speak for everybody, and I know everybody's experience with the baptism is different, for myself whenever I am usually baptized by the Holy Spirit it's during a time of devotion and I think it's just more or less God coming to, you know, speak a word or give revelation or more or less just say, 'Hey, I'm showing up in a big real way.' So I think it's those three main purposes basically. Whether it's God giving revelation, just showing up in a big way, or just saying, 'Hey, I'm an awesome God and this is who I am.' So, yeah, it can be a variety of purposes.

A number of other participants also interpreted the baptism of the Holy Spirit in primarily individualistic terms, but like Arthur from Freedom in Christ, were more ambiguous about exactly what the purpose of the experience was or even when it occurred.

Author: When would you say this experienced happened?

Arthur: As for a date, I couldn't give you an exact date. As for a time period, I would say I became more attuned to the Spirit's moving in the latter years of high school.

Author: How would you define the nature of that experience?

Arthur: I couldn't even define it for you, exactly what it was. I just know that my Christian walk significantly changed towards the mid to end of high school. You know, that's when I got into it a little more than just, 'this is what I believe.'

Alice from Freedom in Christ similarly described her Spirit baptism as occurring at an imprecise time in her life when she decided to focus more sincerely on her faith, and could not completely articulate what this experience entailed.

Author: What do you think the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is?

Alice: I guess for me, it was kind of the turning point in my life where I kind of laid it all out and said, 'OK, I'm going to do this. For the first time, I gave up a job to pursue school and study and stuff like that.' So it was kind of in that whole period where I was, I don't want to say 'super religious,' but we have ups and downs. We have peaks. So it was one of those periods where I was very gung ho and very, OK, this is what I'm going to do. God is moving in my life. All these things are happening. So, it's kind of, I don't know, a whole lot of stuff was going on and it just sort of happened. I didn't really understand it at the time. I had to ask a lot of questions afterwards. I don't necessarily know if all those questions were answered.

Other participants echoed James, Tracy, Derek, Colin, Arthur, and Alice's convictions that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is, in the words of Edward from Elevation, "a very personal thing." Gwen from Freedom in Christ, for instance, described that the purpose of Spirit baptism is, "Just to have a more personal relationship with God. I think it makes your relationship and dependence on him much deeper than, perhaps, someone who isn't seeking those things." Similarly Lucy from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly told me that the purpose of Spirit baptism is so that, "you know that God is there and that he is always with you. If you have the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you would have that." Finally, Mike, also from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, described Spirit baptism as "a direct

connection with the Spirit in a different mindset. It's a direct connection; hardwired versus wireless, maybe."

While the specific purposes that the baptism of the Holy Spirit fulfilled varied from individual to individual, the vast majority of these participants emphasized the individual emotional, relational, and spiritual benefits that this experience had for them personally, rather than the corporate role that the experience played in providing power and boldness for evangelism and foreign missions that might strengthen the Church overall. The influence of seeker spirituality and therapeutic, expressive individualism is apparent in the responses of the members from the three congregations regarding the purpose of Spirit baptism.

Evidence of the changing conception of the purpose of Spirit baptism was not confined to the individual responses of interview participants. During the course of my fieldwork I observed, most commonly, the complete absence of discussion related to Spirit baptism, and, less frequently, the leadership of the three congregations directly reinterpret the experience of Spirit baptism through their public teaching and preaching ministries. A series of mid-week Bible studies led by Del Wells and Tracy Dunham in the fall of 2009 at Freedom in Christ illustrated some of the ways that the religious leadership at the three churches attempted to reframe the experience of Spirit baptism for their members and potential members.

Over his thirty years of pastoral ministry, Dell Wells has developed four of what he calls, "Life Transformation Courses." The four courses are titled, "First Steps," "Life in the Spirit," "Learning to Serve," and "Learning to Lead." Wells has also developed a private company called, Life Transformations Unlimited which he uses as a means of advertising and distributing his courses in addition to marketing himself as a workshop, seminar, and retreat leader (Life Transformations Unlimited 2005). In the fall of 2009 Wells offered his course, "Life in the Spirit" to the members of Freedom in Christ. These mid-week courses are also often attended by individuals who are interested in the church, but who have not yet become committed members of the congregation. The objective of the course, according to the introduction found in the course booklet, was to assist Christians to discover how the Holy Spirit, "enables you to live a life that is pleasing to God" and to "teach us and assist us in living our new life to the full" (Wells 2009, 1).

Each Wednesday evening from 6:30–8:00 PM thirty to forty people would gather in the sanctuary at Freedom in Christ where they would first listen to a short fifteen to twenty minute teaching delivered by Wells or his daughter and assistant pastor, Tracy Dunham. This short teaching—intended to orient participants to the general theme of the weekly lesson—was followed by groups of six to eight people gathered around circular tables discussing a series of questions that Wells had arranged in order to encourage discussion relating to the lesson. The small-group discussion component of the lesson lasted about fifty minutes, and the evening was concluded with a few short remarks and a prayer given by either Wells or Dunham. As I attended these weekly lessons, and later skimmed through the course booklet written by Wells, I assumed that this course was simply intended to reinforce the traditional denominational views on Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues. As my participation in the course continued, however, it became clear that both Wells and Dunham had a very different agenda in mind.

In the first lesson titled, “Controlled by the Spirit,” Wells introduced the idea that a life that is controlled by the Spirit is characterized by life, peace, freedom, and hope. It is, however, in the second lesson, “Led by the Spirit” that Wells more explicitly unpacked a number of the “Benefits of following the Holy Spirit’s leading” (Wells 2009, 5). In addition to freeing the believer from fear, Wells explains that a life controlled by the Spirit, “Enables You to Cry ‘Abba, Father,’” and means that the Holy Spirit “testifies with your spirit that you are God’s child” (Wells 2009, 5–6). He elaborates: “*Abba* is a very personal word that a Hebrew child would use to speak to his own father.<sup>15</sup> Jesus, God’s Son, used this same word in addressing the Heavenly Father in the garden of Gethsemane just before His crucifixion (Mark 14:36). *Abba* is a word that reveals trust in someone else’s care” (Wells 2009, 6, emphasis original). Wells included the following questions in order to help stimulate discussion during the group component of the lesson: “Why is it important that the Holy Spirit helps you to grow in your relationship with Father God? ... At what times might you want to cry out ‘Abba, Father’? ... What benefit is it to you that the Holy Spirit confirms in your spirit that God has fully adopted you as His own child?” (Wells 2009, 6).

In the next lesson, “Helped by the Spirit,” Wells continued to develop the benevolent fatherly image of the person of the Holy Spirit. The introduction to this lesson in the course booklet explains:

Perhaps you have been so overwhelmed with an issue or situation in your life that you were almost spinning in circles. You wondered what you should do next. Maybe you thought about praying for what you were facing but you were so confused that you were unsure of how to pray. Be encouraged. There is support available in these difficult circumstances of life for those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit living in you is ready and willing to help you in your most trying and difficult days. You prepare yourself to receive this assistance by making the conscious decision to live under the Holy Spirit’s control ... and by seeking the Holy Spirit for His direction for that which is ahead of you. (Wells 2009, 8)

Here Wells emphasizes being “overwhelmed” and “confused,” and the role that the Holy Spirit plays in providing “support” and “assistance” in order to help one cope with life’s difficulties. Some of the discussion questions for this lesson included: “Why do you need the Holy Spirit to help you in your weakness? ... How Will the Holy Spirit’s help encourage you in your prayer life? ... How intensely does the Holy Spirit pray through you? ... What does this tell you about His interest in you?” (Wells 2009, 9).

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<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note the way that many boomer evangelical pastors frequently and inaccurately use the Aramaic term “*Abba*” in order to provide biblical support for their therapeutic understanding of the human-divine relationship. The late Canadian evangelical theologian, Stanley Grenz, for instance, explained: “Preachers are fond of asserting that *Abba* is equivalent to the English designation ‘Daddy.’ In fact, however, *Abba* does not carry overtones of a small child addressing a parent that are evoked by the English ‘Daddy’” (2005, 16). Rather, James Barr explains that the word *Abba* “was more a solemn, responsible, adult address to a Father” (1988, 46).

Each of these lessons promotes an understanding of the person of the Holy Spirit as someone who is ultimately concerned with the immanent, relational task of helping individuals navigate the difficult aspects of their lives. God is not described as some who often kills people for disobeying his commandments such as Uzzah who was struck dead because he mistakenly touched the ark of the covenant,<sup>16</sup> the forty-two small children who were tore to pieces by bears for making fun of the prophet Elisha's baldness,<sup>17</sup> or Ananias and Sapphira who were killed by God for lying to the apostles.<sup>18</sup> Rather, God—through the person of the Holy Spirit—is presented as a benevolent fatherly figure who exists largely to love, help, and encourage individuals. This image of God is a common feature in generically evangelical and seeker churches such as Freedom in Christ. Kimon Howland Sargeant explains, “The most common way that seeker churches portray God is as father. God is our ‘heavenly father who sees what is done in secret’ and will ‘reward you.’ God is not an angry father, eager to judge and condemn. Instead, God is an understanding and compassionate father” (2000, 83).

The Bible does, of course, present God as a peaceful, loving, benevolent father. My point is not to claim that Wells's portrayal of the Holy Spirit is his own creation with no basis in the Christian tradition. Rather, I am simply aiming to point out that his presentation of the person and character of the Holy Spirit is a selective one, and casts the Holy Spirit as a largely innocuous figure that lacks the same sense of awe, power, energy, otherness, and exhilaration—Rudolf Otto's *mysterium tremendum*—reminiscent of the experience of early Pentecostals (Otto 1958, 12–40). As Sargeant again explains, “the vast majority of seeker messages stress God's immanence, those aspects of God's character that are culturally appealing, over and above those aspects of God's character that inspire fear and are more culturally problematic” (2000, 86; see also Desjardin 1997; Ellingson 2007, 120).

The transformation of the God-image from awesome to largely pedestrian is confirmed by a long-time member from Freedom in Christ.

It used to be that the gifts of the Spirit were what would attract people and draw them to the church, draw them to Christ. Today it seems that it is very much the opposite. Now we downplay the gifts of the Spirit. So what do I think? I think sometimes we underestimate the Spirit, but it's a whole lot more comfortable to do what we are doing right now ... I think that—within most people—there is a longing for a sense of assurance that there is something beyond ourselves. Sometimes a supernatural manifestation is what a person needs in order to believe. My husband walked into a Pentecostal church as a university student and heard somebody speak in tongues and was totally wowed and sat there crying not knowing why he was crying. I don't always walk into our church and have a sense of the Holy Spirit—it just doesn't feel holy. And I think that is what I miss more than anything. Because it's just church—people are talking, people are socializing. Sometimes it would be nice to walk in and just, I don't know, get a sense that God is there.

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<sup>16</sup> 2 Samuel 6.3–7.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Kings 2.23–24.

<sup>18</sup> Acts 5.1–11.

The implications of the concept of the person and role of the Holy Spirit developed by Wells in the first half of the eight-week Bible study had interesting consequences when our class reached lesson five titled, “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Over the course of this Bible study, a number of the participants had openly expressed their concerns that they did not support the traditional Pentecostal teaching that an individual had to be baptized in the Holy Spirit or speak in tongues in order to be a fully functioning Christian. As I have already pointed out, this was the majority opinion among the people that I interviewed within all three of the congregations. In an attempt to address this concern of a significant number of the participants, Wells allowed his daughter to facilitate the class that focused on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Dunham opened this lesson by stating that, “Our traditional teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not helpful for the average Canadian.” She also suggested that this might be remedied if we “changed our thinking of divine encounters.” Dunham then argued that there exist two major categories of divine encounters: (1) “regular spiritual disciplines” such as Bible reading and prayer, and (2) “extraordinary spiritual encounters” such as conversion, water baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit, and “refillings” of the Holy Spirit. She continued by explaining that, “the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a wonderful encounter with God, but it is not the only divine encounter,” and that “God gives this gift according to his sovereign will.” At one point in the teaching, Wells chimed in to stress that, “the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an important experience, but it is not the only experience.” Dunham concluded the lesson by telling those gathered that, “As a young minister in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, I have felt for a long time that our distinctive doctrine is dying, and I am so happy that we can view this experience in this way.”

Dunham and Wells effectively reframed the experience of Spirit baptism from its traditional place as the most distinctive and sought-after spiritual experience in the life of a Pentecostal to “simply something worth pursuing”—a point which both Wells and Dunham repeated several times over the course of the evening. Through this lesson Dunham and Wells referred to Spirit baptism much like one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that God may or may not decide to give someone. As I have already demonstrated, however, traditional Canadian Pentecostals viewed Spirit baptism and its associated evidence of tongues speech as a distinct and normative event in the life of the believer that every Pentecostal is expected to receive. In response to a number of members who openly did not support the traditional view of Spirit baptism, and perhaps reflecting their already changed positions on the topic, Wells and Dunham reinterpreted the doctrine according to the concept of God already displayed in the earlier weeks of the course, as a peaceful, loving, benevolent father who desires only to help and encourage, rather than demand and convict, his children.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

My goal in this chapter was not to argue that the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation have totally abandoned traditional Pentecostal positions surrounding the experiences of Spirit baptism and glossolalia (although many certainly have done this). The churches that I studied have clearly chosen to emphasize certain elements of their traditional teachings while minimizing others in so far as they support their largely therapeutic understanding of both the person of God and their individual relationships with God. The responses of interview participants clearly

show that most individuals that I spoke with believed that the primary role of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues were no longer to provide power for evangelism and the evidence of the authenticity of this experience. Rather, most participants explained that the purpose of Spirit baptism was to provide a deepening relationship with God and that the chief benefit of speaking in tongues is its provision of a private channel of communication between the believer and God. Comfort appears to have replaced power as the most urgent need among the members of the three congregations.

Unlike a Canadian Pentecostal from one or two generations earlier who Philip Rieff might have called the “religious man” who was “born to be saved,” the contemporary Canadian Pentecostal who Rieff might again have called the “psychological man” is “born to be pleased” (Rieff 1966, 24–25). The majority of the individuals that I interviewed indicated that it was not the dissemination of the salvation message—the driving force of the early Pentecostal movement (Anderson 2007; McGee 2010)—but the fulfillment of felt needs, that was used as the rubric for evaluating and understanding the value of Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues. Sensing this fundamental religious transition from the desire for salvation to the desire for self-fulfillment, many pastors, Rieff explains, “become, avowedly, therapists, administering a therapeutic institution – under the justificatory mandate that Jesus himself was the first therapeutic” (1966, 251). Rieff believed that this attitude results in a Church that is, “committed, both culturally as well as economically, to the gospel of self-fulfillment” (1966, 252).

To simply describe Del Wells, Hansley Armoogan, or Brandon Malo as “therapists, administering a therapeutic institution” who are committed “to the gospel of self-fulfillment” would be completely unfair. The changes that have been made to the beliefs and practices surrounding Spirit baptism and glossolalia within the three congregations have taken place over several decades, and have occurred through dialog with other ministers and members within their own congregations who share similar beliefs about Spirit baptism and glossolalia. That being said, both the opinions of individual members and the paucity of traditional teaching on the part of their leaders relating to these traditional Pentecostal beliefs, reveal that these historic commitments have been quite dramatically reinterpreted in order to better reflect the values of seeker spirituality, and, in particular, therapeutic, expressive individualism. Both the pastors and the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation were much more interested in what these experiences had to offer them personally, than what role they might play in world-wide evangelism.

## **CHAPTER 7— HEALING, MIRACLES, AND OTHER SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA**

In this chapter I detail participants' encounters with divine healing, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena such as angels, demons, and the practice of exorcism. Given the trajectory of the previous two chapters which explained some of the ways that the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation have changed their religious identities and experiences from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical forms, it would be reasonable to assume that this pattern of homogenization would continue in relation to traditional Pentecostal beliefs and practices relating to supernatural phenomena. This, however, was not the case. To my surprise, the personal interviews, the surveys, and my observations all revealed that commitment to beliefs and practices surrounding supernatural phenomena remained very high among members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation.

For instance, in addition to the 97 percent of survey respondents who indicated that they believed in the reality of divine physical healing, 65 percent indicated that they pray for someone's else's divine healing in a public church service at least once a year or more, 40.5 percent claimed that they have actually witnessed someone's divine healing, 34 percent claimed they have experienced healing in their own bodies, 33 percent indicated that they receive prayer for healing in a public church service at least once a year or more, 17 percent believe they have been used as an instrument of divine healing in someone else's body, 97 percent believed that angels, demons, and Satan are real beings, and 21 percent said that they have witnessed the casting out of a demon.

It would, again, be entirely reasonable to view the fact that commitment to these beliefs and practices remained as high as they did among the members of the three congregations as a possible source of counterevidence against my claim that the Canadian Pentecostals that I studied were experiencing a transformation of religious identity and experience from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical categories. In this chapter, however, I will provide evidence that demonstrates that the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation that I interviewed, surveyed, and observed did not maintain their commitment to these beliefs and practices due to any real devotion to, or even understanding of, traditional Pentecostalism.

Rather, I argue that unlike Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues, traditional Pentecostal belief and practice regarding divine healing, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena, have remained largely intact among the individuals that I studied because the idea that God wishes to heal, protect, and deliver, already fits nicely into the therapeutic understanding of religion common within the generic evangelical subculture. The Pentecostals that I interviewed did not change their beliefs and practices regarding Spirit baptism and glossolalia because they became "less religious," but, rather, because these more traditional forms of belief and practice did not reflect the emerging ethos of seeker spirituality and therapeutic, expressive individualism. Beliefs and practices relating to healing,



miracles, and other supernatural phenomena, however, were retained because they could easily be incorporated into the generically evangelical framework.<sup>19</sup>

## 7.1 DIVINE HEALING

During my fieldwork I encountered no shortage of opinions from the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation regarding divine healing. While the majority of the individuals that I spoke with demonstrated strong commitments to belief in divine healing, a few, such as Amy from Freedom in Christ, struggled with the concept.

Author: Have you ever personally experienced divine healing?

[*long pause*]

Amy: No.

Author: That was a long pause.

Amy: Well, divine healing, you know—have I ever been healed from something or recovered from something? Have I ever been ill and recovered after praying about it? Yes. Have I been cured of cancer? No. So, it's kind of a funny question, because I believe that God heals people in a lot of ways. I believe he heals through doctors; I believe he heals through medicine; I believe that he can heal divinely.

Author: Do you ever pray for divine healing for you or anyone else?

Amy: You know, again, you've got to take the word 'divine' out of there for me. I do believe that he heals people through medicine and I believe he can also completely reverse physics.

Author: Let me put this another way, then, do you ever pray for anyone's healing?

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<sup>19</sup> The members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation engaged in what Stephen Ellingson calls "selective isomorphism" (2007, 107–143). This process entailed incorporating only those traditional Pentecostal beliefs and practices that, in Ellingson's words, "dovetailed with their own understanding of what is essential and what is nonessential" (109), which, in the particular case of these three congregations, appeared to be centered around how well these beliefs and practices corresponded with the values of seeker spirituality and therapeutic, expressive individualism.

Amy: Yeah, I do. But I don't beat them up about it. And I don't think that just because I ask God for divine healing for myself or someone else that he's obligated to do it. I don't know—I have real issues with that from personal experience. So I struggle with putting the 'divine' in front of healing. I really do because this is one thing that I think Pentecostals abuse and hurt people with because I've personally been hurt with the whole divine healing thing. We attended Kennedy Road Tabernacle in Brampton before we went to Immanuel Pentecostal Church. We were a young, married couple and already had one daughter at the time, but we had another baby who was born with Spina bifida and died a few days after birth. It was devastating, but the way the church prayed and talked about it—'If we just have enough faith then she will be healed'—made it much worse. So, it's the guilt and the expectation that if you don't have enough faith you've somehow caused this illness by your lack of faith.

Author: Your problem was with the church putting the pressure on the individual, placing healing within the realm of human potentiality, rather than with God.

Amy: Exactly. They put this pressure on us when healing is not in the realm of human potential to begin with. And thinking that we can somehow cause God to move by our faith or cause him not to move by our lack of faith, and, therefore, being guilty of not receiving a healing. Living with a family with several severe illnesses I have a hard time with that. I struggle with that.

Amy is a clear example of someone who was a member of a congregation that held to some version of the "health and wealth gospel" or the "prosperity gospel." Proponents of this theology are sometimes referred to as being a part of the "word of faith movement" because they believe that if Christians only exhibit enough faith, God will supernaturally bless them with perfect health and abundant financial rewards (Harrison 2005). At the same time, supporters of word of faith often chastise the ill or poor for not demonstrating the prerequisite faith that is believed to be necessary in order to move God to heal their illnesses or restore their finances. While I did not detect any support for word of faith theology among the leadership at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation, these beliefs are not uncommon within many Canadian Pentecostal churches. As the example given by Amy aptly demonstrates, these theologies can have a negative impact on the personal and emotional lives of individuals whose life trajectories do not conform to the expectations of the advocates of these theologies.

While two or three individuals that I spoke with had some reservations about divine healing, the vast majority of participants recounted numerous instances where either they or people they knew had been the recipients of divine healing. There was a vast range among the types of illnesses that participants believed they or others they knew were healed from. These included minor concerns such

as common colds and sprained ankles, to more serious conditions such as neuromuscular diseases and other chronic illnesses, all the way to life threatening illnesses, the most common being cancer.

Shane from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly recounted witnessing some teenagers being healed from some rather minor injuries at a youth convention. “I guess the biggest thing that I’ve witnessed first hand were people being healed in a service of different things. Even just at junior high school convention this year there were four or five junior highs who were healed. They had everything from sprained ankles to one kid’s knee. He wasn’t able to walk because he had fallen and hit his knee cap, and they were picking him up and putting him in the car and putting him to bed. After being healed, he was running around on the platform.”

Similarly, Tracy from Freedom in Christ recounted some rather vague experiences of divine healing in which she believed that God helped her to gradually recover from minor illnesses much quicker than she would have under normal circumstances.

Author: Have you ever personally experienced divine healing?

Tracy: Yes, I believe that I have been healed over time. I’ve never had an experience where I was healed instantly of something. But I absolutely believe that God works in process as well. So, there have been times when things should have taken much longer to heal from that have been much shorter and those kinds of things, because I know that I was being prayed for. So, I believe in divine healing that way. Never like an instant Benny Hinn<sup>20</sup> sort of a moment, getting up out of a wheelchair. But I do believe I’ve been divinely healed, yeah.

Others such as Ruth from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly described a few instances of divine healing from some more serious illnesses such as her husband’s chronic back pain.

Barry, my husband, was healed. When he was sixteen, he had a back injury. He worked on a farm and fell off of a beam. I didn’t know him then. He was flat on his back and I guess people must have prayed for him because he came out of that. He could have been paralyzed. I just know that when we got married he’d be on the farm working and he would come home and his back would hurt after haying. He would lie on the floor and I used to rub his back and say, ‘It sure would be nice if you could get healed.’ That was whenever haying season was, probably in June.

So in July, I believe, we were having tent meetings in our church. For three weeks they had different speakers and we went every single night. I don’t know which week it was, whether it was the first or the second, but Bill Prankard,<sup>21</sup> who had a healing ministry, was

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<sup>20</sup> The popular Charismatic faith healer and televangelist.

<sup>21</sup> The popular Canadian Pentecostal faith healer.

there. I had never heard of him. Barry's aunt and uncle were there and so we sat with them. It started to just sprinkle rain a wee bit after we sat down and then Barry felt his back starting to hurt. He didn't say anything to me, but he used to say that any time it would rain his back would hurt. I think that was a sign to remind him that his back hurt.

So Bill Prankard was preaching, really going into it, and God was really moving and healing people while he was preaching. While this was going on Barry was healed sitting beside me and I didn't even know it. When the service was getting near the end, God was telling Bill Prankard that he had healed people and he was saying, 'In this section over here I've healed people of a back problem, I've healed them of a knee problem.' You name it, whatever it was, I don't remember. Then he went into this section and he said that God told him that he wanted those people to stand up to confirm their healing. Then he got to our section and he said, 'God is telling me that he has healed somebody of a back problem.' Nobody stood up and I'm thinking, 'Oh, it would be nice.' But Barry didn't get up and I didn't say anything. He said it three times then he said, 'Well, I'm really being prompted that someone has been healed of a back problem and I want you to stand to your feet.' Then Barry stood up. I asked him why he didn't do it before and he said, 'I wanted to make sure that it was me.' Nobody else stood up but he said, 'When that rain started my back hurt and then all of a sudden I felt a warmth go from my head to my feet and the pain went away.' So he knew something was going on and that he was healed. He has never complained about his back since that day.

The story of Ruth's husband is rather typical of those participants who told me about experiences where they or someone they knew was healed through the work of a traveling or itinerant faith healer in a public setting. These events typically begin with a long period of time devoted to praise and worship music, which sets the mood for the occasion. This is followed by a rather rousing sermon preached by the faith healer, often with the aim of presenting the theological basis for divine healing. These services usually conclude with the faith healer calling out various illnesses that he or she believes that God is in the process of healing people from. It is also common for faith healers to ask individuals seeking healing to approach the altar of the church or front of the venue in order to be anointed with oil and prayed over by the healer and other individuals.

Trevor from Freedom in Christ described a much less quintessentially Pentecostal experience of divine healing. He placed much less emphasis on healing as a distinct event, and, echoing the explanation of Tracy, put much more emphasis on the idea of healing as a process.

Author: Do you believe in divine healing?

Trevor: Yeah, I think so. I actually have Crohn's Disease and I've had people pray for me a number of times. I really believe that things have happened. I've had people lay hands on me and pray for me and that was one thing that I found really exciting in the Pentecostal church was we, you know, get around and pray. I still struggle with that because it's a real level of intimacy with people you don't know very well. But I believe it's been really good.

It's hard to do. I still have to kind of convince myself to do it because it feels so intimate to me. It's not something that I take really casually, but that's the one thing I really like about the Pentecostal church. I think it's really important. They don't do that in the Lutheran church. My brother studied at a Lutheran seminary for years. He and the other guys at the seminary never got together to pray very often. My brother said he was kind of disappointed with that. He kind of thought that they would.

Author: Do you think that receiving prayer for your disease has had an affect?

Trevor: Yeah, I do.

Author: Can you explain?

Trevor: Not really. I had people pray for me and I'd say, 'Hey, you know, I went for some tests and they couldn't find anything. I'm feeling really good. I mean, it probably won't last forever and everything.' Sometimes God giving me Crohn's Disease was kind of a gift in a lot of ways. It kind of focused me on other important things besides what I was doing at the time in my career and all that other kind of stuff. When your health is affected you are forced to focus on what is really important in your life. God really refocused me through that. I also believe God doesn't necessarily heal you. Sometimes the way he heals you is to lead you to doctors and medications and stuff. Well I got on a great medication about four years ago and I feel like a million bucks now. I had a test two weeks ago and there are no signs of Crohn's. It's Remicade. Its pretty amazing stuff. It's been around for ten years but it's only the last few years that they started to give it out. I take it every eight weeks as an infusion. I take it for two or three hours and it works great. God leads you to people who can help you out, I think.

While Trevor clearly believed in the reality of divine healing and that he has even personally experienced divine healing himself, he was also careful to explain that he does not believe that God will always heal someone. Trevor, like the majority of participants that I interviewed, believed that

God sometimes works through modern medicine and medical professionals, and that these medical interventions are a part of, rather than contrary to, God's plan for divine healing.

On the more extreme end of the spectrum were those who described the healing of life-threatening illnesses such as Harold from Freedom in Christ who recounts a particularly memorable experience while working on a Christian humanitarian aid project in Central Asia.

Author: Have you ever known anyone else who has ever experienced divine healing?

Harold: OK. I'm in Kyrgyzstan a couple of years ago and we went into this home and there was this young girl lying there who looked like death warmed over. I said to Sergei, our translator, 'What's her problem?' He said, 'Oh, she's really sick. She's been sick for a couple of days.' We were there to see her grandmother who was in the next room. I think her grandmother was on her deathbed. So we sang a song, and I'm not kidding you, I think I could count on my hand the times in my life where I had felt the presence of God like that. I looked over at another member of the team. He was already on his knees, kneeling at the bed of this lady that was laying there and I said, 'Do you feel that?' He said that he felt the same way.

I didn't think anything of it. We sang another song, we brought them some groceries, prayed with the lady, and left. I didn't even notice the young girl wasn't in her bed when I went by. We went outside and were standing by the van and I said to Sergei, 'Who is that girl trying to climb the fence over there?' And he said, 'That's the girl who was laying in bed.' I said, 'Come on, you're jerking my chain. There is no possible way that is the same girl that is climbing that fence over there.' So I asked, 'What happened?' He said, 'We were singing and praying for her and she got right up out of bed.' And I said, 'You're kidding. She was death warmed over. There was no way she should have got up and then to be climbing a fence!' Literally, Sergei had said she got out of bed, went to the little sink there and combed her hair—it didn't look like the same girl. I was shook.

Similarly, Jane remembered when she was used as an agent of divine healing in a Sunday morning service at Freedom in Christ.

Author: Have you ever witnessed anyone experience divine healing?

Jane: Yeah. I'm going to go way back to when I started to attend Freedom. This was actually not even something that I knew about until much later. There was a young girl at the altar and I was sitting in my pew. I didn't know very many people; in fact I don't even

think I knew the young girl's name. They called people up for prayer and they were at the altar praying and everything, and I was sitting in my chair just watching and singing with my hands raised. And the Lord specifically spoke to me to go over and pray for that girl. You know, I did this reluctantly. I was not reluctant because I was being disobedient, but I actually don't like the spectacle and don't like eyes on me unless I'm doing a presentation. I went over to pray for her and I touched her and she fell on the floor. I bent down to pray with her and I immediately started to feel horrible pains in my stomach. I was like, 'Oh, goodness.' I couldn't understand it, but I held her down on the ground with my hands just over her stomach. I was holding my hand over her stomach and praying in the Spirit,<sup>22</sup> praying and crying, and I didn't know what I was praying and I didn't understand any of it. Well, I learned months later from her mom that she had stomach cancer and that she was healed that day. That does something for you as a person that God uses. But also for me to be able to share that with others so that their faith can be built up. God does answer prayer and he does stuff when you don't even know what he's doing.

Not all of the experiences of divine healing that participants told me about referred to the healing of a physical condition or illness. Several individuals told me of experiences where they believed that God healed them of emotional or psychological illnesses. This further reflected the idea of God as someone who is not only concerned with the physical, but also the psychological or therapeutic, wellness of human beings, which was expressed by an experience recounted to me by Colin from Elimira Pentecostal Assembly.

I used to have anxiety and panic attacks. It probably started when I was about fourteen or fifteen, I would say. For the longest time I prayed for healing from it and nothing would happen. By the time I was about twenty-five or maybe twenty-six, I was still praying for healing, but more out of habit and desperation than anything else. And then, finally, I came across the passage in the book of James where it says to go to your elders and they will anoint you with oil and their prayers and faith will heal you.<sup>23</sup> I read that and all of a sudden I felt God saying, 'Now is your time to go get anointed with oil and to be prayed over.' And, to be honest, I got a little ticked off at God and thought, 'Why now and not twelve or thirteen years earlier when I could have used the healing back then?' God showed

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<sup>22</sup> "Praying in the Spirit" refers to quiet praying in tongues, which is believed to be a higher and often more effective form of prayer than simply praying in one's own language.

<sup>23</sup> "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5.13-16).

me the story where the woman who was subject to bleeding for twelve years, how she prayed to God for healing, but it wasn't until twelve years later that she was actually healed.<sup>24</sup> And God was just saying, 'It's just my timing.' He never said why I had to wait, but it was just his timing and maybe there was a learning process there, who knows, right? So I went and I got anointed with oil and was healed from my panic and anxiety attacks.

The participants that I spoke with accepted the reality of divine healing more than any other traditional Pentecostal experience. Even individuals like Amy who had negative encounters with the word of faith movement's interpretation of divine healing continued to believe that it was completely possible for God to heal people. Amy's somewhat restrained commitment to divine healing, however, proved to be an exception to the rule of overwhelming support for divine healing. Also, divine healing is the only traditional element of Pentecostal belief and practice that was ever given any special degree of emphasis during the public services that I attended at the three congregations. Even though divine healing was clearly given the most priority by clergy and laity alike, it was certainly not the only element of traditional Pentecostal belief and practice maintained by the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation.

## **7.2 MIRACLES**

In the spring of 2009 I designed both the interview questionnaire (see Appendix A) and the congregational survey (see Appendix B) that I later used to conduct the personal interviews and to survey the members of the three congregations. I wanted to submit my research ethics application to the Office of Research Ethics in plenty of time in order to begin research at the beginning of the fall term in September. In the midst of this preparation, and without much thought, I included a question at the end of the section relating to religious practice in my interview questionnaire that read, "Have you ever experienced any other kind of miracle?"

I was well aware that miracles played an incredibly important role within the religious culture of early Pentecostalism. As Gary B. McGee appropriately writes: "If liberals celebrated the spirit of the age—happily shorn of all superstition, Pentecostals believed the age of the Spirit (the advancing kingdom of God) had come, complete with miracles" (2010, 203). Knowing the historical importance of miracles within early Pentecostalism full well, I still did not expect this question to yield very much usable information, particularly given the barrage of questions about supernatural practices such as healing, Spirit baptism, and glossolalia that preceded it. Nonetheless, as fall approached and I carefully reexamined my interview questionnaire, I thought that it might be a good idea to retain this question in order to give participants the opportunity to mention any other spiritual experiences or supernatural phenomena that they had experienced which my other questions might not have uncovered. As it turns out, this was a very good decision. Participants responded to this question by telling me about all kinds of supernatural experiences that I would never have otherwise anticipated. I was clearly wrong to have assumed that this question about miracles might prove to be superfluous.

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<sup>24</sup> Mark 5.25–34.



**Table 5. Highlights from the congregational surveys on healing, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena**

	FIC	EPA	ELE
Percentage who either completely or generally agreed that Jesus made provision for divine physical healing	97.8	100	95.1
Percentage who either completely or generally agreed that angels, demons, and Satan are real beings	100	100	93.6
Percentage who pray for spiritual deliverance once a year or more in a church service	65.1	51.9	41.9
Percentage who receive prayer for divine healing once a year or more in a church service	43.2	48	19.4
Percentage who pray for someone else to receive divine healing once a year or more in a church service	74.3	73.1	55.7
Percentage who reported having experienced divine healing in their own body	50	63	9.5
Percentage who reported having been used as an instrument for divine healing in someone else's body	25.6	14.8	12.7
Percentage who reported having witnessed someone else's divine healing	50	48.1	30.6
Percentage who reported that they have heard what they consider to be authentic accounts of divine healing	88.6	100	77.8
Percentage who reported that they have witnessed the casting out of a demon	27.9	25.9	14.3

Harold from Freedom in Christ, for instance, told me about a miracle that he was a part of while visiting Uzbekistan that is reminiscent of the biblical miracles of the meal and the oil<sup>25</sup> and the feeding of the multitude.<sup>26</sup> Participants often viewed experiences of divine healing and other supernatural events through the lens of biblical literature. These biblical narratives appeared to give participants a framework through which to understand and retell a great deal of their religious experiences.

Author: Have you ever witnessed something that you believe was a miracle?

Harold: Yeah. I was part of it, although I didn't actually witness it happen. It was during a mission trip to Uzbekistan. We had taken a bunch of medication over to an orphanage in Uzbekistan and we had two or three nurses who were doing examinations on all of the kids. I remember one night one of the nurses saying to me, 'I don't know what we are going to do, but a lot of the kids that we are seeing require this one medication and I don't think that we have enough. It's going to run out. We've only got enough to treat another three or four kids and we've got to see another sixty kids yet.' I remember saying to her, 'Don't worry about it, just do whatever you can do and

<sup>25</sup> 1 Kings 17.8–16.

<sup>26</sup> 2 Kings 4.42–44; Matt 14.13–21; Mark 6.31–44; Luke 9.10–17; John 6.5–15.

that's all we can do.' It was about 10:30 or 11:00 AM the next day and I was working on a project outside when she came running across the yard and grabbed me by both shoulders and said, 'You'll never believe what has happened. That medication that I was telling you about, it's multiplying in the cupboard.'

I said, 'Oh, OK.' She shook me and said, 'No. You're not listening to me. That medication should have been gone an hour ago and every time I go back to the cupboard and take one, I'm looking around and I know we have no more left. I'm asking people if they've found more medication and they say that they haven't. It's multiplying in the cupboard.' I'll never forget that day as long as I live. It was crazy. We had enough medication to treat every one of those kids. To this very day she has no idea where that medication came from. She said, 'I was the one responsible for packing the medication, and I asked if someone else had brought more with them. No one knew what I was talking about.' She said that they started the day with four or five packages, and she would go and get them and it took her three or four trips to realize, 'Hold on a second, I keep taking one and when I go back there are still four or five there.' She told me later that she just got to the point where she admitted that this is going to sound crazy, but she began to expect that it would be there, and didn't even think about it anymore. Just, here's another kid and she grabbed more of it.

Edward from Elevation recounted an equally dramatic experience that took place while he was on a family vacation as a child.

Author: Have you ever witnessed something that you believe was a miracle?

Edward: When I was younger, my family and I camped at Algonquin Park a lot. So, long story short, one day we were hiking and we were on a cliff that was probably fifty, sixty feet of straight, sheer rock. I walked over to the edge, turned around, and accidentally fell off the cliff. I fell off up to about my chest. It was a sheer drop and I didn't fall to the bottom. I stood on something and there was nothing there. I'm freaking out and my parents are losing it because I had just fallen off a cliff. I was probably about nine or ten when this happened and I honestly believe—to me there is no other explanation—that this was a supernatural intervention. Somehow, whatever it was, whether it was an angel holding my feet up or whatever—I don't know how to explain it—something happened. I should have died; I should have fallen off the cliff and hit the rocks at the bottom and died. I stood on something on the side of this cliff and my parents pulled me up and they were like, 'That was just crazy. What just happened? How did you not fall? You should have been gone.'

The falling off the cliff thing, that was really pretty intense. My mom used to remind me of that event all the time, mostly after I had done something bad: ‘You have no idea the power of your mother’s and your grandmother’s prayers. It’s protecting you when you don’t even know it.’ So, maybe it is. In that particular instance with me, who knows? I believe stuff like that can happen.

The most common types of miracles that participants told me about were specifically related to divine protection, particularly while driving or traveling in foreign countries. Gordon from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, for instance, remembered a harrowing near accident on a rural road while traveling with his family.

One time I was traveling with my family and my older brother was at home. He later told us that he felt very impressed upon his heart to pray for our safety while we were driving. While we were driving we approached an intersection with stoplights, and we were going through the intersection on a green light, and, all of a sudden, there was a vehicle that went right through the red light coming from the opposite direction. It was incredible that we didn’t get hit because, I mean, if we had of been there just a split second sooner we would have been totally T-boned, and it would not have been good. We believe it was a miracle. When we got home to tell my brother he said, ‘Oh man, I was just praying like crazy for you guys at that time.’ And that was the exact time when it happened.

Gordon’s story shows a striking resemblance with an experience that James from Elevation had while traveling on the highway with a group of friends.

Author: Have you ever witnessed something that you believe was a miracle?

James: There have been times when I have had close calls that I believe were a miraculous save. I was in an accident on Highway 401 where another friend was driving and it looked like we should have been wiped out, but instead we were saved. We were driving at night on a very busy highway and there were two cars in front of us. This guy fell asleep and drifted and hit the concrete median. Sparks flying, just flying off of his car, and then he overcompensated and turned right into another guy, hit him, and that guy started spinning 360 degrees. We were coming straight at them doing something like a 130 or 140 kilometers per hour. I just saw the two cars coming, one spinning and the other one coming at us. My one friend was driving, I was in the passenger seat, and I had a friend in the back who just leapt forward and grabbed the dashboard and said, ‘Jesus!’ and we just barely made it through these two cars. I don’t know how we did it. So to me, that was a hand of God kind of thing. And, amazingly, the guy who started the whole thing took off and the other guy ended

up stopped, facing traffic on the 401. So he's in this lane and did several turns and ended up in a 180 looking backwards. And, again, amazingly, no one hit him. The oncoming traffic all managed to sort of part the waters and slow down and stop, allowing him to turn around, get off the road, and get going. So, it could have been bad.

Not unlike the experiences described by Gordon and James, Tracy from Freedom in Christ told me about a time when she was on a missions trip in Central Asia where she believed that God intervened in order to protect the members of her group. Tracy's story is representative of a number of participants who recounted similar experiences where they felt that they were miraculously protected while traveling, often on an international missions trip.

Author: Have you ever witnessed something that you believe was a miracle?

Tracy: Yes. There is a time that comes to mind right away when we were on a missions trip and we were stopped by the police for no reason, as happens often in a lot of countries. We were about to be in a lot of trouble. All of the North Americans were being kicked out of the country, and there was a lot of stuff going on. All of a sudden, someone appeared out of nowhere and started talking with the cop and gave him something, we don't know what happened, and then, all of a sudden, he was gone. So, I believe that I saw an angel that day. He came and dealt with whatever the situation was. Our bus driver, our interpreters, nobody knew what was going on except that there was someone talking to the man and then he was gone and everything was fine.

These stories represent just a sampling of the different types of miraculous events that participants from Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation told me that they had experienced. The most common type of miracle was divine protection from some kind of accident, most often related to driving and other forms of travel. Others, however, included supernatural provision, most often in the area of finances, and dreams that were thought to contain direct revelations from God. Though not as common as experiences of divine healing, participants reported numerous miraculous events, which formed an important aspect of both the individual and corporate spirituality of each of the three congregations.

### **7.3 ANGELS, DEMONS, AND EXORCISM**

The existence and activity of supernatural beings such as angels and demons, and particularly experiences such as demon possession and exorcism, were one of the most fascinating topics that I discussed with interview participants. From a personal perspective these conversations were stimulating because of the conviction with which the participants recounted their experiences, replete with tears, trembling, and obvious physical distress, more than once requiring that interviews be

discontinued. After one particularly vivid description of a participant's encounter with a demonic being, this self-described, sober-minded researcher lost more than a few nights of sleep.

More than simply titillating, these discussions were also fascinating from a sociological point of view because there is arguably no other belief or practice that I observed that better refutes the prediction purported by Peter Berger and other scholars that religion in modern societies such as Canada would become predominantly demythologized and mystically sterile (1967, 146). What I find even more interesting about this topic is that the people that I spoke with who earnestly told me about their beliefs and experiences relating to supernatural phenomena were not the indigent dregs that earlier sociologists had commonly associated with such beliefs (Anderson 1979; Glock 1964). Rather, they were mostly public school teachers and principals, firefighters and police officers, nurses and physicians, journalists and social workers, engineers and scientists, accountants and lawyers, university professors and senior managers. The majority of the participants that I interviewed were middle and upper-middle class Canadians who want for little in the way of material possessions or social status, severely challenging theories of deprivation previously used to explain Pentecostals' commitments to such beliefs.

As might be expected, the accounts given by many of the participants who indicated that they believed in some kind of supernatural beings were either vague, uncertain, or second hand (Bramadat 2000, 106). Mavis from Freedom in Christ, for instance, did not want to dismiss the possibility that she had witnessed such an occurrence, but her recollection of what occurred remained extremely vague.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Mavis: Not that you could put your finger on it and say that was a demon for sure. I've witnessed occasions where that's what was said to have been going on, I suppose. With the yelling and all that stuff.

Tracy also from Freedom in Christ likewise provided a rather vague account of her experiences with the supernatural.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Tracy: I don't know. There was a time that I was with a leader when supposedly that was happening and I wouldn't deny it, but nor would I confirm it, because I probably wasn't mature enough in my own faith to be able to know the difference. I was much younger. I wasn't discerning one way or the other, but that was supposed to be what was happening and I was there and there was something crazy going on. I just don't know exactly what was happening, so I would say I don't know. I believe in it. I just don't know if I've ever witnessed it.

There were also other participants like James from Elevation who described with a great amount of detail experiences that they believed may have involved supernatural beings, but who were ultimately uncertain of the veracity of these events.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

James: Yes, I have.

Author: How many times?

James: Directly, only once. I know someone who worked for Teen Challenge<sup>27</sup> and they had lots of really screwed up people there and he had lots of stories about that, but those are not first hand experiences. So the one time I did see it happen was actually very early in my Christian experience when I was still a Catholic Charismatic.

Author: In a church setting?

James: It was in a church setting, but it wasn't a pastor who performed the exorcism. It was just some guy. And to this day, looking back I think, 'Was that what was going on there?' I don't know. Is that what really happened there? I don't know. But it seemed to me that that was what happened. Somebody was upset and agitated and couldn't compose themselves, couldn't stand up, couldn't stop crying, couldn't stop shrieking. We were all only Christians for six months and thought, 'What do we do now?' There was nobody of authority or leadership there, and then some guy came over and said, 'In the name of Jesus, I command you to leave.' And then [*snap of the fingers*] she sobered up right away and sat up. So, who knows? That would be the one time that I saw something that looked like it was the casting out of a demon.

Author: Would you say that it is possible for a demon to possess someone?

James: I think, yeah, that demons can possess people and that they can be cast out. I think it's probably fairly rare, and I also think that casting out is more rare than it should be [*laughter*], but I do think

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<sup>27</sup> Teen Challenge is a Christian organization first developed by David Wilkerson, author of the popular Christian book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, which aims to rehabilitate young adults suffering from drug and alcohol addiction.

those are real. Those are very rare things and most of my knowledge of them is third hand, but I do believe that those things are real, yeah.

Edward from Elevation echoed both James's degree of detail and doubt.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Edward: I believe I did one time. But I'm very skeptical about stuff like that. Like, I believe it; I believe it can happen; I believe it does happen; I believe there is lots of supernatural stuff going on that I have no understanding of; I believe it is reality. It was an experience in youth group, I believe. Some guy was just going like Hollywood possessed on the floor. It was scary. Really, there was a very uneasy feeling and there were a couple of pastors and just some other people that you would consider strong in their faith and that type of thing. Again, it wasn't a big, flashy, like, Benny Hinn, 'Demon out,' type of thing. They prayed for him. They spoke directly to the 'entity' that was supposedly possessing this guy. It was both scary and pretty powerful at the same time. Like, I said, I'm a skeptic about a lot of that stuff and I could probably be skeptical about even that particular situation, but I believe it was real. It was freaky. It was like a Hollywood movie. The guy was having a seizure and he was freaking out and he was talking in these funky voices. It was really weird—really weird. I was kind of looking around for the cameras or something. I didn't know the guy who was possessed very well, but I knew him, and it wasn't like this guy is putting on a show. It was pretty powerful.

In addition to those participants whose recollections of supernatural activity were either vague or uncertain, there were a number of people who attested to the veracity of demon possession and the practice of exorcism as a result of second hand accounts told to them by people who they trusted. Interestingly, many of these secondhand accounts originate from foreign mission trips where I was commonly told that demonic and other supernatural encounters were common. Gwen from Freedom in Christ, for instance, remembered a story told to her by a companion while on a mission trip to Haiti.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Gwen: No. But when I was in Haiti someone that I was travelling with did. I don't know if I would want to see that, but I found the story quite interesting. But no, I've never witnessed it personally.

Mike from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly shared a similar experience.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Mike: No, but I just missed it, apparently. I was in Africa three weeks ago and we walked into a classroom there and apparently an exorcism had happened just minutes before.

Not all of the individuals who I spoke with were as uncertain or hesitant as the previous participants regarding the question of supernatural experiences. The reports of others, such as Hansley from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, contained no ambiguity whatsoever regarding the veracity of what was seen.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Hansley: Yes.

Author: How many times?

Hansley: Six to eight. The first time was in Bible College with a student, actually. We gathered together and around. One or two of these times were while on the mission field working with other Christian leaders who were there. Actually, the rest would have been in northern Ontario. There were a group of young ladies who were connected—their parents were connected with the church that I pastored—and they had become involved in some dark things. There was a particularly poignant experience that involved different manifestations and different personalities coming from the individuals who were possessed. This was one of those definite growth areas in my life where I was the only evangelical Christian leader in a probably 30 kilometer range. Aside from the Roman Catholics, who may have practiced exorcism—I've never seen the movie—but whatever they do there, I was the go-to person for this group of people.

Similarly Kelly from Elevation expressed no sign of doubt regarding her experiences with the supernatural.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Kelly: Yes, I have, a couple of times. Maybe five times. One was at a youth retreat, someone who had been involved heavily with drugs and alcohol. That was probably the most real experience because he was very strong. One time—actually it's interesting—at The Embassy we prayed for somebody after our service once in a similar situation. And then a few times probably at altar calls at Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly.



The vast majority of those participants who claimed that they had witnessed the manifestations of supernatural beings indicated that these events occurred within a public church setting. There were a much smaller number of participants who claimed that they had more personal encounters with supernatural beings, either in their own homes or even through what they described as personal demonic possession. Some participants asked me not to share their stories about demon possession. However, the following two accounts that I was given permission to include are representative of these more intense encounters with supernatural beings that participants shared with me. Toby from Elevation, for instance, believes that he has had a continual struggle with personal demonic possession.

Author: Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?

Toby: I would say that deliverance has been a huge theme in my life. I would say that my entire spiritual life has been a series of deliverances. When I was sixteen I remember I always suffered from a strange anxiety; I would call it a binding anxiety. In my childhood I knew that I was never capable of doing my best because I would suffer from premature anxiety. Like—I will give you an example. I would go to a wrestling match and I wouldn't have eaten for three days prior to that wrestling match. And I knew that if I had been able to eat and think properly before that match I would have done very well. But by the time it got around for me to go into that particular match, after not eating for three days due to this extreme anxiety, I would not be able to perform my best. The same with public speaking, ironically, as now people laugh to hear that I would be scared to speak in public, but I would get up in front of people and my knees would shake violently. The first time I ever sang publicly my lower body shook more than Elvis on cocaine. I held it together. I remember I was at Cold Water Music Festival, and I won that year, but I remember choking out the words because my lower body was convulsing like a Quaker. I was in complete horror because I was a teenager. It was very embarrassing and I was having a mini seizure of some sort while singing up on stage and I couldn't control it. The more I tried to grip down on it, the more I wiggled and moved.

I remember when I was sixteen, one of my sort of defining moments in taking personal initiative with my faith, I'll call it a confirming moment. When I was in worship one time, all of a sudden, I remember this anxiety that I had in my gut that I had just considered was part of life, it just fell off or flew away like you'd scare a bunch of bats out of a cave—it left. And all I know is that I remember saying, 'Whatever got rid of that, I'm sticking close to.' If I had to say that there was a single characteristic that defined my entire spiritual walk, it was deliverance.

Author: So do you think that was a demonic presence?

Toby: I think that, yeah, there was definitely something spiritual there and it wasn't good. It was nasty and ugly. Yeah, I think that probably was demonic. I think there was something nesting in me, some kind of parasitic spiritual thing just trying to make itself comfortable. After that event avenues of my life opened up that were closed to me before, where I was prohibited. Suddenly I was able to speak publicly and I started leading worship in a band up in front of people. Now I am a musician and I have played in front of lots of people and have no fear of public spaces. But back then it was impossible for me to do that.

I often times find that the people who like my music are the odd balls. Very rarely does the Church latch on to a particular piece of music that I've played, but I get people coming up to me saying, 'I listened to your song and something left me.' So I have had a couple of cases when I have been playing music and actually had deliverances specifically occur as a result of the music. That is something that I tend to be very aware of, almost to the point of wondering sometimes about exorcisms. I wonder about deliverance ministries, and I wonder what my relationship is with that, but its not something that you talk about a lot because it is kind of creepy, let's face it. I do know that it's a huge factor in my spiritual walk and I usually think of things in my life in terms of a scrap. Where a lot of people think of Jesus as their lover or these kinds of weird things, I think that if we are going to move anywhere it is going to be the result of a scrap and it is going to be some kind of violent encounter.

Ruth from Elmira Pentecostal Assembly also told me about an experience when she believes her home was visited by both demons and an angel.

I believe that a couple of times God sent me an angel in disguise. The first time that I will tell you about happened when my son was about nine years old. I was putting him to bed on a Sunday evening, and he was asking me all about heaven, God, and angels. I'm not sure why he was asking, all that I could think of was that maybe the subject came up in Sunday school. As I was talking about this, all of a sudden, he looked frightened. He leaned back away from me and his eyes got very large. I immediately knew something was wrong. I then asked him, 'What is the matter?' At that moment he started to cry and said to me, 'Mom, you looked different.' He gave me a hug and I said, 'What do you mean, I looked different?' He said, 'You were scary. I then asked more questions about how I looked. He said, 'You had horns on your head, fiery eyes, huge pointed ears, and warts on your face.' He also told me that the whole time he was looking at this scary face, my voice still sounded like my own—I sounded like Mom, but I sure did not look like Mom. My normal face appeared back to him right when I asked him what was wrong.

I knew that I needed to cast the demons and Satan out of the room right then, because I was fully aware now who was attacking. At this point, I could sense that these demons were holding hands and encircling around us, and I felt trapped. I immediately started to rebuke Satan to leave at once, in the name of Jesus. It took a little while, but not too long before this heavy feeling left the room. I knew that they were gone, however, I was bothered as to why this image was on me. I thought I was doomed to Hell. My son did not want to stay in his bed, so I let him stay up with us for a while. He would not sleep in his bed. He wanted to be in our bed, in the middle. Meanwhile, he thought that I had not got rid of what he had just seen, so I had to rebuke them again. I never felt them at this point, but to reassure him that they were gone, I tried to rebuke them again.

Everything was fine after that, but the next morning, just after my children left for school, I heard the aluminum door open and close. I went to check and I saw a person standing at my door—a side profile with something in this person's arm. I looked at this person, but this person did not look at me. I will call this person a 'her' because she had short, curly, golden hair, and a white round hat and a red coat. I was impressed to watch her leave. As soon as I saw her, she proceeded to leave to the left down my sidewalk. I watched to see if she was leaving down the laneway, but she did not. I waited, no one went down the driveway. I was curious, so I went to look out the window at the carport. No one was there. I had to know where she went, so I went outside. Now, this was in February. There was a light snow covering everything. I followed the tracks of the lady, down the sidewalk, across the driveway and over about two feet onto the snow covered grass. I noticed another set of footprints on top of the first set of footprints. They were directly on top. I could see the heel marks and toe marks pointing out toward the garden and the set of footprints pointing back toward my house. There were no more prints coming back to the house and there were no more footprints anywhere else. My children's footprints left the house near the door and went down across the grass. I could see those, but I could not figure out why this lady's prints did not go anywhere. They were too far from any other prints, which were way over on the right side of the driveway and these prints were over on the left of the driveway at the house.

I pondered over this for some time. I tried shoveling the light fallen snow off the driveway, but to my amazement, only the snow left, not the footprints. While I was still trying to figure this out and still thinking about the evening before, I thought, well this must be an angelic visit, because I felt terrible about it and I knew that God had sent me a messenger. I knew God was with me and that I had done

nothing wrong. This was for me, but it was connected with events from the night before. Meanwhile, a lady from across the street came over while she was on her way to a Bible study. I said, ‘Come here, look at these footprints. Can you tell me where they go to?’ She looked down at me with a big smile and said to me, ‘It must be an Angel.’ I said, ‘Really? That is what I am thinking.’ Of course, I had to fill in all the details. This person was not a normal human being, because no one could just puff away into the air and disappear. I believe that the point of these events was to send a message to my son, to let him see the other side—evil—in order to keep him out of trouble. And I can assure you that he has not had any of the troubles that people get into. I’m thankful to God for that.

Whether or not these participants actually experienced or witnessed the supernatural encounters that they so earnestly recounted to me is irrelevant for the purposes of this chapter. What is relevant, as sociologist Christian Smith explains, is that “*they* believe these things to be true and real” (1998, 176, emphasis original).

## **7.4 CONCLUSION**

The argument that I have attempted to make in this chapter is simple. The Pentecostals that I interviewed, surveyed, and observed have not abandoned all of the traditional elements of their faith. Rather, they have selectively retained a few important traditional Pentecostal emphases, so long as they conform to the values of seeker religion and therapeutic, expressive individualism. When we examine the material presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 as a whole, we can see how the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation chose to either reframe or maintain the traditional components of their faith due to, in large part, the degree to which these traditional elements either conflicted with or supported generic evangelicalism’s implicit commitments towards the values of seeker religion and therapeutic, expressive individualism.

This fact was perhaps most obviously displayed in relation to participants’ beliefs and practices surrounding Spirit baptism and tongues speech. As I demonstrated in Chapter 6, most of the participants who expressed a commitment to these experiences preferred to emphasize their therapeutic and individual—emotional, relational, and spiritual—benefits, rather than the corporate role that these experiences traditionally played in providing power for evangelism and foreign missions. Similarly, I believe that support for divine healing, miracles, and other supernatural phenomena were as high as they were at Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation because these beliefs and practices are particularly easy to align with the values of therapeutic, expressive individualism. In other words, these traditional Pentecostal commitments survived the sterilization of traditionally Pentecostal religious culture during the process of homogenization involved in the migration towards generically evangelical norms within these congregations because they were not antithetical to generic evangelicalism’s underlying emphases.

## **CHAPTER 8— SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The overarching objective of this study has been to answer just one central question that has perplexed me from the time that I took my first undergraduate course on the study of religion in Canada:<sup>28</sup> “What accounts for the dramatic decline in Canadian Pentecostal religious affiliation recorded by Census Canada between 1991 and 2001?” The realization that there existed no empirical evidence to support the idea that this decrease in affiliation was the result of a real decline in Canadian Pentecostal church attendance, led me to develop the central hypothesis of this study: Canadian Pentecostals are undergoing a transformation of religious identity and experience from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical categories.

I thought that, perhaps, just as many people were attending Canadian Pentecostal churches in 2001 as they were in 1991, but that a number of them no longer thought of themselves as Pentecostals, and, as a result, this term appeared less on the census. I wondered if it was possible if the same movement towards religious homogenization observed within other denominations in both Canada and the United States has also found its way into Canadian Pentecostal churches, resulting in a significant number of adherents who prefer to describe their religious commitments using less denominationally specific terms. If this was indeed the case, I also wondered how this development may have affected not only Canadian Pentecostal identity, but also belief and practice. My hypothesis was aided by my many years of observation within Canadian Pentecostal congregations as both a practitioner and a minister. I had significant anecdotal evidence that such a shift was taking place within Canadian Pentecostalism, but needed empirical evidence to support this intuition.

I am confident that the primary research presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 provides adequate empirical evidence to support my claim that the members of Freedom in Christ, Elmira Pentecostal Assembly, and Elevation have transformed their religious self-identities, beliefs, and practices from traditionally Pentecostal to generically evangelical forms. I am less confident, however, about two additional questions: first, whether or not what I observed in these three congregations exists on a broader scale across the vast spectrum of Canadian Pentecostalism, and, second, just what exactly the precise underlying motivations are that caused the members of these congregations to revise their religious identities, beliefs, and practices in the ways that they did. I strongly suspect that similar changes are taking place in Pentecostal congregations all across Canada, and that these changes are motivated, at least partly, by the pervasive adoption of a generically evangelical subculture, which acts as a carrier for the values inherent in seeker spirituality and therapeutic, expressive individualism. Without further confirmatory research, however, my theorizing on these final two questions can only ever remain suggestive and tentative.

The ubiquity of generically evangelical forms of identity, belief, and practice in other Canadian Pentecostal congregations is perhaps intimated by the leadership of the current General

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<sup>28</sup> These questions were first raised in a class that I took while an undergraduate student at the University of Waterloo, which was taught by David Seljak who also happens to be the supervisor of this doctoral project.

Superintendent of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, David Wells. In addition to being the national leader of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, at the time of this writing, Wells is also the current Chair of the Board of Directors for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). His leadership within the EFC appears to be more than coincidental, given that his writings and public communication reveal a clear commitment to bringing the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada more in line with mainstream Canadian evangelicalism.

Shortly after being elected as the new General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada on 6 May 2008, Wells distributed a pamphlet to the credential holders of the denomination in December 2008 titled, *What I See*. This pamphlet outlines, in Wells' words, the "vision, mission and values that the Lord is putting in my heart for our Fellowship" (2008, Preface). In the opening pages of the pamphlet, Wells explains that a major component of his vision, mission, and values is to see the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada transition from a "denomination," which he understands to be dominated by "bureaucracy" and "maintaining constitutions and programs," to an "undenomination," or, rather, a "postdenominational" organization that is "relational and missional" (2008, 1–2). Wells refers to this new organization as a "*relationally based mission family*" (2008, Preface, emphasis original), by which he means a group of churches that are not bound together so much by their shared Pentecostal history or theology, as by a spirit of mutual cooperation and commitment to church growth. Throughout this pamphlet Wells unfolds a vision for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as an organization that is not very distinctly "Pentecostal" at all, but, rather, as a "family" that is part of a larger Canadian "evangelical movement" with which it is united by a shared set of beliefs and values (2008, 67–68).

In June of 2009, Wells organized a Theological Study Commission in order to address the issue of the changing nature of religious identity within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The commission was comprised of four pastors, two New Testament scholars, and David Wells. I was first made aware of the commission through a conversation I had with Brandon Malo, the senior pastor of Elevation who just happened to be one of the four pastors that Wells asked to be a part of the national commission. The Theological Study Commission produced a number of discussion papers as well as another pamphlet distributed to the credential holders of the denomination in December 2010 titled, *Authentically Pentecostal: Here's What We See – A Conversation* (Wells and Johnson 2010).<sup>29</sup> Because the commission did not include or consult individuals trained in social research methodology, the members of the commission mainly chose to focus their attention on biblical and historical questions. Additionally, the lack of proper research protocols meant that the few pieces of data that the commission collected that might have been potentially useful for trying to ascertain the source of the recent identity crisis within the denomination were in the end unreliable and impossible to validate.

What the Theological Study Commission did accomplish, however, was to provide some insight into the way that Wells and some of the other members of the commission understood Pentecostal identity. On the surface, these documents appear to reassert the denomination's commitment to the four-fold gospel. Wells, for instance, concludes *Authentically Pentecostal* by stating, "I am happy to be a Pentecostal serving the Lord Jesus—my Saviour, my Baptizer, my Healer, and my Coming

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<sup>29</sup> For the resulting discussion papers see, <http://mpseminary.com/papers/>.

King” (Wells 2010c, 94). What is interesting about the documents produced by the Theological Study Commission, however, is that they contain a considerable degree of ambiguity surrounding what commitment to these historical Pentecostal emphases might actually look like. A traditional Pentecostal who read these documents could easily see a reaffirmation of the traditional understanding of these values, while a Pentecostal practitioner influenced by generic evangelicalism would be free to see in these documents a license to broaden their interpretation of these historical commitments.

The work of the Theological Study Commission appears to allow Canadian Pentecostals the freedom to develop the kind of congregations and religious contents that would be the most effective for meeting the denomination’s overarching goals of mutual cooperation and commitment to church growth, rather than perpetuating historical Pentecostal forms of commitment. For instance, Wells writes in the introduction to *Authentically Pentecostal*, “I am at peace that we are not a franchise anymore. As I travel nationally and internationally, it is clear to me that we do not have a fixed, ‘bounded set’ identity” (Wells 2010d, 7). In an interview in July 2010 on the popular Canadian evangelical television show *100 Huntley Street*, Wells similarly explained, “We can’t do the franchise thing ... the majority of Canadians probably aren’t going to connect with that” (Wells 2010a). Also, in an email sent to me in July of 2010, Wells explained that he believed, “identity shifts need to be made to be effective in mission” (2010b).

According to Wells, then, Pentecostal identity plays second place to whatever is needed in order to bring the tradition more in step with the broader Canadian evangelical movement as well as contribute to the goal of facilitating church growth. If the Pentecostal tradition contains elements that will aid congregations to achieve these objectives, then these may certainly be retained. If the tradition, however, contains elements that hinder congregations in these efforts, then these must be either removed, or more likely, sufficiently sanitized. While David Wells certainly does not speak for all Canadian Pentecostal pastors, and certainly not all Canadian Pentecostal practitioners, if his opinions about the future of the denomination are any indication of the direction in which it is headed, then the movement towards generic evangelicalism that I observed in just three of the denomination’s churches might become an increasingly more common phenomenon.

It is my hope that other scholars pick up these important questions where I have left off. I am very aware that the present study—limited to just three racially homogenous congregations, located only thirty minutes apart, and belonging to the same denomination—has barely scratched the surface of the work that needs to be done in order to come to more concrete conclusions regarding the changing nature of Canadian Pentecostal identity and experience. I can think of at least three important areas where further empirical research is needed.

First, additional qualitative studies within specific congregations belonging to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in other regions of Canada (and even other parts of Ontario) need to be conducted in order to determine if the trends that I uncovered exist on a broader national (as well as provincial) scale. We are well aware that there exists a significant regional variation in religious attendance in Canada (Clark 1998, 2000, 2003; Clark and Schellenberg 2006), and so it is quite possible that there exist other regional differences that might geographically limit my conclusions.

Second, further studies need to be conducted within congregations that belong to other Canadian Pentecostal denominations such as the United Pentecostal Church, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Apostolic Church of Pentecost, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the Independent Assemblies of God—Canada, the Italian Pentecostal Church of Canada, the Church of God of Prophecy in Canada, The Foursquare Gospel Church of Canada, The Apostolic Church in Canada, The Open Bible Standard Church of Canada, The Elim Fellowship of Evangelical Churches and Ministers, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church in Canada. While the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada represents the majority of all Pentecostals in Canada, and, as a result, is a significant bellwether of religious change within the spectrum of Canadian Pentecostalism, this does not mean that very different trends could not exist in other Canadian Pentecostal denominations.

Third, much could be learned about the nature of Canadian Pentecostal religious identity and experience by conducting a large-scale, national survey of Canadian Pentecostals who belong to a variety of denominations. Such a project would require a tremendous amount of preparation, scholarly collaboration, and funding. However, combined with targeted qualitative congregational studies, it would provide the best possible source of data in order to confirm, modify, or reject the hypothesis developed in this study.



## Appendix A— Personal Interview Questionnaire

### **I. Religious Identity**

1. Tell me a little bit about your religious background as a child and young adult? [Or] If someone you just met for the first time asked you what your religion was, what would you tell them?
2. What term would you use in order to label your own religious views?
3. How long have you attended/been a pastor of this congregation?
4. What church did you attend/pastor before coming to this congregation? To which denomination did it belong?
5. What led you to join this particular congregation?
6. Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church? Why or why not?
7. Do you consider yourself to be a Pentecostal?
8. What does being a Pentecostal mean to you?
9. What would you say most distinguishes Pentecostal churches from other types of churches?
10. Do you think that Pentecostal churches should downplay the use of gifts of the Spirit in order to reach non-Christians?
11. Is important to you if this church grows? Why or why not?
12. Is expanding the church building important to you? [Or in the case of Elevation] Is acquiring a permanent church building important to you? Why or why not?
13. What do you believe churches have to do in order to grow?
14. What do you think that most churches are doing wrong?
15. What are the marks of a successful church?
16. What do you perceive to be the greatest threat to Christianity today?
17. What do you perceive to be the greatest threat to this congregation?
18. Do you think that churches need to try different approaches in order to reach non-Christians?
19. What are some of the approaches that this church has tried in order to reach non-Christians? Which of these approaches have worked, and not worked?
20. What are the primary objectives of this church?

### **II. Religious Belief**

21. If a non-Christian asked you what the central teachings of Christianity were, what would you tell them?

22. Do you believe that the only way to gain salvation is through belief in Jesus Christ?
23. Do you believe in Hell? Who do you think will go to Hell?
24. Do you believe that angels, demons, and Satan are real beings?
25. Do you believe that Jesus was born of a virgin?
26. Do you believe that Jesus physically rose from the dead?
27. Do you believe that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life?
28. Do you believe that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
29. Do you believe that sanctification/holiness is an important part of the Christian life?
30. Do you believe that God can heal people?
31. Do you believe that God can speak through people using the gift of prophecy?
32. Do you believe that it is the responsibility of every Christian to tithe to their local church?
33. Do you believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to share their faith?
34. Do you believe in a literal rapture?
35. Do you believe in the millennium, or the 1,000-year reign of Christ?
36. Which of the following sentences best describes your view about the Bible?
  - A. It represents the best human effort to record God's truth, but is not inspired by God.
  - B. It is the Word of God, though it may contain some minor scientific or historical errors.
  - C. It is the Word of God and has no errors, but not everything should be taken literally.
  - D. It is the Word of God and has no errors, and should be taken literally, word for word.
37. Which of the following sentences best describes your view of creation?
  - A. The Bible's account of the origin of the world is intended to be symbolic and not literal.
  - B. The world was created by God in six days, but each day was much longer than twenty-four hours.
  - C. The world was created by God in six twenty-four hour days.

### **III. Religious Practice**

38. Have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? What was it like? Where? When?
39. What do you think the purpose of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is?
40. Have you ever spoken in tongues? What was it like? Where? When?
41. Do you continue to speak in tongues? How often? Where? When?

42. Have you ever interpreted a message in tongues? How often? Where? When?
43. What do you think the purpose of speaking in tongues is?
44. Have you ever spoken a prophetic word? How often? Where? When?
45. Have you ever been slain in the Spirit? How often? Where? When?
46. Have you ever experienced a physical manifestation of the Spirit? How often? Where? When?
47. Have you ever danced in the Spirit? How often? Where? When?
48. Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon? How often? Where? When?
49. Have you ever received a personal revelation/word of knowledge from someone? How often? Where? When?
50. Have you ever received a revelation directly from God? How often? Where? When?
51. Have you ever received a definite answer to a specific prayer? How often? Where? When?
52. Have you ever experienced supernatural financial provision? How often? Where? When?
53. Have you ever personally experienced divine healing? How often? Where? When?
54. Do you ever pray for divine healing for you or friends or family? How often? Where? When?
55. Have you ever known anyone who has experienced divine healing?
56. Have you ever witnessed any (other) kind of miracle(s)?

#### **IV. Social Values**

57. Do you think that it is important for Christians to be separate from the world?
58. I am going to read a list of seven behaviors, and I want you to tell me if you believe if it is OK for Christians to do these things by simply saying “yes” or “no.”
  - A. Have sex before marriage?
  - B. Go to the movie theater?
  - C. Drink alcohol?
  - D. Smoke?
  - E. Dance socially?
  - F. Gamble, including the lottery?
  - G. Play cards?
59. Do you think that women should be permitted to be pastors? Why?
60. Do you think that women should be permitted to serve on the board of this congregation? Why?

61. Do you think that people who have been divorced and remarried should be permitted to serve as pastors? Why?
62. Do you think that people who have been divorced and remarried should be permitted to serve in a leadership position in the local church? Why?
63. Do you think that marriage should be defined as a union between one man and one woman without exception?
64. Do you think that homosexuality is a sin?
65. Do you think that it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion? Why? In what instances?
66. Do you think that Christians should run for political office?
67. Do you think that the government is responsible to institute laws that uphold biblical values?
68. Do you think that taking a life is ever justifiable?
69. Do you think that Christians should work to make society more fair and equitable for everyone?
70. Do you think that there should be strict rules to protect the environment even if they cost jobs or raise prices?
71. Do you think that it is good for Christian teenagers to be exposed to a variety of religious beliefs?
72. To what extent you would like to see your congregation cooperate with other religious groups? What kinds of groups would you approve this congregation cooperate with?

**V. Questions for Leadership**

73. Do you know if this church belongs to any church, parachurch, or ministerial organizations besides the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada?
74. Are you a member of any church, parachurch, or ministerial organization besides the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada?
75. Do you know where the Christian education department of your church gets its curriculum?
76. What do you think the role of the Western Ontario District Office should be?
77. What do you expect from the District Office?
78. What services have you used from the District Office?
79. What do you think the role of the National Office should be?
80. What do you expect from the National Office?
81. What services have you used from the National Office?
82. I am going to read you a list of ministry objectives, and I would like for you to indicate whether you completely agree, generally agree, generally disagree, or completely disagree,

whether or not the District and National Offices have done a good job of meeting these ministry objectives.

- A. Providing resources for spiritual revitalization
- B. Expanding overseas mission efforts and ministries
- C. Attracting and keeping members in the denomination
- D. Attracting ethnic minority members in particular
- E. Maintaining high quality clergy in the local churches
- F. Keeping unity of purpose within the denomination
- G. Creating a financially stable national church
- H. Developing an identity as a global church presence
- I. Attracting ethnic minority clergy
- J. Strengthening the health of local churches
- K. Getting judicatories to share resources with one another
- L. Maintaining a denominational identity in local churches

- 83. Do you think that it is important for Pentecostal pastors to be trained in a Pentecostal school?
- 84. Does this church financially support Master's College and Seminary? Did it at one time?
- 85. Do you think that it was wise for the college to move from Peterborough to Toronto?
- 86. Do you read any of the denominational magazines (Testimony, Enrich, Connections)?
- 87. Have you ever held any kind of denominational office or responsibilities? When? For how long?
- 88. Approximately how many people in this church attend Bible college or seminary? What school do they attend? Did you encourage them to go to any specific school?
- 89. How often do you attend District Conference? Do you find it beneficial?
- 90. How often do you attend National Conference? Do you find it beneficial?
- 91. Do you ever attend any kind of other ministry or parachurch conferences?

## **Appendix B— Congregational Survey**

### **I. Religious Identity**

1. Which of the following congregations do you most frequently attend?
  - A. Elevation
  - B. Elmira Pentecostal Assembly
  - C. Freedom in Christ
  
2. How many years have you attended this congregation?
  - A. Less than 1
  - B. 2
  - C. 3
  - D. 4
  - E. 5
  - F. 6
  - G. 7
  - H. 8
  - I. 9
  - J. 10
  - K. 11–15
  - L. 16–20
  - M. 21–25
  - N. 26–30
  - O. 31 or more
  
3. What was the most important factor influencing your decision to initially attend this congregation?
  - A. I have attended this church since childhood (respondents who chose this answer were automatically redirected to question six)
  - B. I decided to visit this church on my own
  - C. I was invited by someone from this church
  - D. This church was recommended to me by someone not from this church

- E. I attended a community event held by this church
  - F. I heard about this church by viewing the church website
  - G. I heard about Elevation through the Embassy
  - H. I attended New Hope before it merged with Elevation
  - I. I or a family member was hired as a pastor of this church
  - J. Other (please explain below)
4. What type of church did you attend most frequently before attending this congregation?
- A. Adventist
  - B. Anglican
  - C. Baptist
  - D. Brethren in Christ
  - E. Charismatic Church
  - F. Christian and Missionary Alliance
  - G. Christian Reformed
  - H. Evangelical Missionary
  - I. Independent Non-denominational
  - J. Lutheran
  - K. Mennonite
  - L. Methodist
  - M. Orthodox
  - N. Pentecostal
  - O. Presbyterian
  - P. Roman Catholic
  - Q. Salvation Army
  - R. United Church of Canada
  - S. I was a member of a non-Christian tradition
  - T. I did not attend church before coming to this congregation
  - U. Other
5. What kind of church did you attend most frequently as a child?
- A. Adventist

- B. Anglican
  - C. Baptist
  - D. Brethren in Christ
  - E. Charismatic Church
  - F. Christian and Missionary Alliance
  - G. Christian Reformed
  - H. Evangelical Missionary
  - I. Independent Non-denominational
  - J. Lutheran
  - K. Mennonite
  - L. Methodist
  - M. Orthodox
  - N. Pentecostal
  - O. Presbyterian
  - P. Roman Catholic
  - Q. Salvation Army
  - R. United Church of Canada
  - S. I was a member of a non-Christian tradition
  - T. I did not attend church before coming to this congregation
  - U. Other
6. How important were following items in influencing your decision to attend this congregation more frequently? (Very Important, Important, Unimportant, Very Unimportant)
- A. The convenience of the church's location
  - B. The church's denomination
  - C. The church's doctrinal positions
  - D. The preaching
  - E. The teaching
  - F. The music/worship
  - G. The children's programs
  - H. I liked the pastors
  - I. The people at this church



- J. Marriage to an attendee
  - K. The family-like atmosphere
  - L. This church was growing
  - M. The vision of the church
7. Is it important to you that this is a Pentecostal church?
    - A. Yes
    - B. No
  8. Please indicate how important the following objectives are to you. (Very Important, Important, Unimportant, Very Unimportant)
    - A. Increasing the number of Sunday morning attenders
    - B. Expanding the facilities used to carry out the ministries of the church
    - C. FOR ELEVATION MEMBERS ONLY: purchasing a church building
  9. Suppose you were to move and needed to find a new church, which of the following four items best describes how you would select which church to attend?
    - A. I would ONLY look for a Pentecostal church
    - B. I would start by looking for a Pentecostal church, but I would consider churches of other denominations
    - C. I would start by looking for churches that were ONLY Evangelical, and attend the one that best fit my beliefs and needs
    - D. I would consider a wide variety of Christian churches with little concern for denomination
  10. Please indicate if you completely agree, generally agree, generally disagree, or completely disagree that the following terms actually describe your religious views.
    - A. Born Again
    - B. Charismatic
    - C. Christian
    - D. Evangelical
    - E. Fundamentalist
    - F. Mainline
    - G. Mennonite
    - H. Pentecostal
    - I. Protestant

## **II. Religious Belief**

Following are a series of questions concerning your opinions on religious belief. Please indicate whether you completely agree, generally agree, generally disagree, or completely disagree with the following statements.

11. Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion is an important part of the Christian life.
  - A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
12. Speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
  - A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
13. Jesus made provision for divine physical healing.
  - A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
14. God directly speaks through some people using the gift of prophecy.
  - A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
15. The only way to gain salvation and eternal life is through belief in Jesus Christ.
  - A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
16. Those who do not confess their faith in Jesus will spend an eternity in a literal Hell.

- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
17. Angels, demons, and Satan are real beings.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
18. It is the responsibility of all believers to share their faith.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
19. Jesus was born of a virgin.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
20. Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, but on the third day rose from the dead.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
21. There will be a literal rapture followed by a 1,000-year reign of Christ.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
22. Which of the following best describes your view of the Bible.

- A. It represents the best human effort to record God's truth, but is not inspired by God.
  - B. It is the Word of God, though it may contain some minor scientific or historical errors.
  - C. It is the Word of God and has no errors, but not everything should be taken literally.
  - D. It is the Word of God and has no errors, and should be taken literally, word for word.
23. Which of the following statements best describes your view of creation?
- A. The Bible's account of the origin of the world is intended to be symbolic and not literal.
  - B. The world was created by God in six days, but each day was much longer than twenty-four hours.
  - C. The world was created by God in six twenty-four hour days.

### **III. Religious Practice**

24. In a typical month, how often do you participate in the following church activities? (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more)
- A. Sunday morning service
  - B. Sunday evening service
  - C. Sunday school
  - D. Mid-week church event
25. How often do you perform the following practices in public church services? (More than once a week, About once a week, Two or three times a month, About once a month, A few times a year, Once a year, Every few years, Once, Never)
- A. Speak a message in tongues
  - B. Pray or sing in tongues
  - C. Interpret a message in tongues
  - D. Speak a prophetic word
  - E. Am slain in the spirit
  - F. Experience a physical manifestation (laughter, shaking)
  - G. Give a testimony (salvation, healing)
  - H. Pray for spiritual deliverance
  - I. Pray for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for yourself or someone else
  - J. Raise yours hands in worship
  - K. Receive prayer for divine healing
  - L. Pray for someone else to receive divine healing
26. Approximately what percentage of your annual income do you give to this congregation?

- A. 0–1%
  - B. 2–5%
  - C. 6–9%
  - D. 10%
  - E. More than 10%
27. Approximately what percentage of your annual income do you give to other Christian organizations?
- A. 0–1%
  - B. 2–5%
  - C. 6–9%
  - D. 10%
  - E. More than 10%
28. Have you ever experienced divine healing in your own body?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
  - C. I am not sure
29. Have you ever been used as an instrument of divine healing in someone else's body?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
  - C. I am not sure
30. Have you ever witnessed someone receive divine healing?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
  - C. I am not sure
31. Have you ever heard accounts of what you consider to be authentic experiences of divine healing?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
  - C. I am not sure
32. Have you ever witnessed the casting out of a demon?
- A. Yes

- B. No
- C. I am not sure

33. Have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I am not sure

#### **IV. Social Values**

Following are a series of questions concerning your opinions on social values. Please indicate whether you completely agree, generally agree, generally disagree, or completely disagree with the following statements.

34. Christians should remain separate from the world.

- A. Completely Agree
- B. Generally Agree
- C. Generally Disagree
- D. Completely Disagree

35. It is good for Christian teenagers to be exposed to a variety of religious beliefs.

- A. Completely Agree
- B. Generally Agree
- C. Generally Disagree
- D. Completely Disagree

36. Strict rules to protect the environment are necessary even if they cost jobs or raise prices.

- A. Completely Agree
- B. Generally Agree
- C. Generally Disagree
- D. Completely Disagree

37. Women should be permitted to be pastors.

- A. Completely Agree
- B. Generally Agree
- C. Generally Disagree
- D. Completely Disagree

38. Women should be permitted to serve on the church board of this congregation.

- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
39. Persons who have been divorced and remarried should be permitted to serve as pastors.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
40. Persons who have been divorced and remarried should be permitted to serve in a leadership position in the local church.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
41. Marriage should be defined as a union between one man and one woman without exception.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
42. The government should insure that homosexuals are treated the same as heterosexuals in employment, housing, and privacy.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
43. Christians should work to make society more fair and equitable for everyone.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree

44. It should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion.
- A. Completely Agree
  - B. Generally Agree
  - C. Generally Disagree
  - D. Completely Disagree
45. Please indicate if you completely agree, generally agree, generally disagree, or completely disagree if it is OK for Christians to do the following things.
- A. Have sex before marriage
  - B. View R-rated movies in a theater
  - C. Drink alcohol
  - D. Smoke
  - E. Dance socially
  - F. Gamble
  - G. Divorce and remarry
  - H. Participate in homosexual activity
  - I. View PG-rated movies in a theater
  - J. Not claim all of one's income on an income tax return
  - K. Buy or look at pornography
  - L. Work in a bar
  - M. Hit a spouse
  - N. Buy a very expensive car

**V. Demographic Information**

Finally, here are just a few short questions regarding your demographic information.

46. How old are you?
- A. Under 20
  - B. 21–25
  - C. 26–30
  - D. 31–35
  - E. 36–40
  - F. 41–45
  - G. 46–50



- H. 51–55
  - I. 56–60
  - J. 61–65
  - K. 66 or more
47. What is your gender?
- A. Male
  - B. Female
48. What is your race/ethnicity?
- A. White
  - B. Black
  - C. Asian
  - D. Hispanic
  - E. Aboriginal
  - F. Middle Eastern
  - G. Other
49. What is your marital status?
- A. New married
  - B. Married, never divorced
  - C. Divorced and remarried
  - D. Divorced
  - E. Separated
  - F. Widowed
50. If married does your spouse attend this congregation?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
51. What was your approximate annual household income before taxes in 2009?
- A. Less than \$20,000
  - B. \$20,000–\$24,999
  - C. \$25,000–\$29,999
  - D. \$30,000–\$34,999

- E. \$35,000–\$39,999
- F. \$40,000–\$44,999
- G. \$45,000–\$49,999
- H. \$50,000–\$54,999
- I. \$55,000–\$59,999
- J. \$60,000–\$64,999
- K. \$65,000–\$69,999
- L. \$70,000–\$74,999
- M. \$75,000–\$79,999
- N. \$80,000–\$84,999
- O. \$85,000–\$89,999
- P. \$90,000–\$94,999
- Q. \$95,000–\$99,999
- R. Over \$100,000

52. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

- A. Less than High School diploma
- B. High School diploma or GED
- C. Some college, trade, or vocational school
- D. College diploma
- E. Some university
- F. Undergraduate degree (includes MD, LLB)
- G. Some graduate work
- H. Master's degree
- I. Doctoral degree

53. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- A. Employed Full-Time
- B. Employed Part-Time
- C. Laid Off, Looking for Work
- D. Unemployed
- E. Keeping House

- F. A Student
  - G. Retired
54. Which category best describes your occupation?
- A. Professional
  - B. Managerial
  - C. Self-employed
  - D. Business Owner
  - E. Public Servant (teacher, police officer, firefighter, postal worker, etc.)
  - F. Sales
  - G. Clerical
  - H. Skilled Worker
  - I. Semi-Skilled Worker
  - J. Service Worker
  - K. Student
  - L. Unskilled Laborer
55. Do you own your own home?
- A. Yes
  - B. No
56. Where do you live?
- A. Ayr
  - B. Breslau
  - C. Cambridge
  - D. Conestogo
  - E. Elmira
  - F. Kitchener
  - G. New Hamburg
  - H. St. Jacobs
  - I. Waterloo
  - J. Other town in the Region of Waterloo
  - K. Rural area in the Region of Waterloo

L. Outside the Region of Waterloo

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