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A table of contents for *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* can be found here:

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# Canadian Pentecostal Diversity: Incorporating the Many Voices

Michael Wilkinson

## Introduction

Amos Yong in his book *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* offers a theological appraisal of the worldwide Pentecostal movement with diversity as the orienting framework.<sup>1</sup> In the book he focuses on the many ways in which Pentecostal diversity is captured in a globalized world. While the “Spirit poured out on all flesh” metaphor captures something of the movement’s universal quality, it is also particularized historically, culturally, theologically, and sociologically. One does not have to rewrite history or resort to reconstructions especially when it concerns the cultural diversity of early Pentecostalism. The reality is, early Pentecostalism was culturally diverse. The challenge is to incorporate the many voices of Pentecostalism, especially those missing from the story. The Azusa Street Revival, led by African American William Seymour emphasized the diversity of the revival when he argued that the Spirit had certainly fallen on “all flesh.” The “all flesh” reference comes from the oft-quoted Acts 2 passage where Peter preaches that in the last days God’s

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<sup>1</sup> Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005.

Spirit would fall on all people. And yet, Pentecostals have had difficulty living out this “all flesh” view, especially North Americans as it relates to understanding the movement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Most certainly progress has occurred in the areas of race relations in the United States. Pentecostal scholars have addressed gender issues from a range of perspectives. However, “people of color” and women still feel marginalization if not alienation from the denominations where they minister.<sup>2</sup>

Not only was Pentecostalism diverse in North America, but so too was the movement globally. India, for example, offers an excellent case of the Spirit falling on “all flesh” during the early twentieth century where the people of India experienced a Pentecostal outpouring through the ministry of Pandita Ramabai. Ramabai recognized the importance of this revival for developing Indian Christianity, a much larger if not significant vision than simply embracing the Pentecostal message from elsewhere. Pentecostal diversity is clearly a characteristic of this global movement and paying attention to the local stories reveals many voices.

In Canada the diverse quality of the Pentecostal movement is largely understudied if not misunderstood. Very little is known about those voices that do not represent the English-speaking Pentecostals. However, this is not simply a problem among Pentecostals. Canadian so-

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<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of social issues and Pentecostalism in North America see Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker, eds. *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

cial history largely reflects the dominant voices. In the 1960s the Canadian government set out to study the bicultural and bilingual quality of Canadian society. The study was published in seven volumes as the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.<sup>3</sup> It was not without controversy, however.<sup>4</sup> While the government intended to enshrine French and English cultures as equal partners and equal founding peoples, reaction from a significant number of Canadians who were neither French nor English was swift. In volume four, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, it became clear that many other Europeans, especially, Northern, Eastern, and Southern Europeans, wanted to be recognized equally as builders of Canada. Trudeau's vision of a bilingual and bicultural country soon became a vision of a plural and multicultural country. Canada was to be recognized as a multicultural commonwealth of many nationalities within the framework of its two founding peoples. However, "first nations" people are not mentioned, leading to current debates about the role of aboriginal peoples in Canadian society.

One would think that the multicultural nature of Canadian society would be reflected in the study of religion. Yet, those groups with a French or English culture

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<sup>3</sup> See Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, especially *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups*, Volume IV (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> See Leo Driedger, *Multi-Ethnic Canada: Identities & Inequalities* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 106-08; Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliot, *Unequal Relations: An Introduction to Race and Ethnic Dynamics in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 2003), 291.

shaped the dominant stories. Religion in Canada was often interpreted through the framework of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec or the United Church and Anglican Church in English-speaking Canada. Relatively little research examined the ethnic and cultural diversity of Christianity in Canada.<sup>5</sup> This is especially true of Canadian Pentecostalism. Furthermore, the Canadian Pentecostal story was, and continues to be, largely shaped by the American story.<sup>6</sup>

In this article I intend to re-contextualize the Canadian story.<sup>7</sup> My point is not to discredit the contribu-

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<sup>5</sup> This point is made most recently by Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, eds., *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> I am not simply suggesting the Canadian story is a separate one from the American. The story is far more related to the historical developments of North America than what is typically discussed, especially from the literature on Pentecostalism in the United States. The Canadian story needs to be told so that it can be incorporated into a North American version and then comparatively with other regions.

<sup>7</sup> My perspective is shaped by the following: Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Peter Beyer, "Defining Religion in Cross-National Perspective: Identity and Difference in Official Conceptions," in *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between the Sacred and Secular*, Arthur Greil and David G. Bromley, eds. (New York, NY: Elsevier, 2003), 163-88; and David Daniels, "'Everybody Bids You Welcome.' A Multicultural Approach to North American Pentecostalism," in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen, eds., (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 222-52. Also see Michael Wilkinson, "What is 'Global' about Global Pentecostalism?" *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 17 (2008): 1-13.

tions of American holiness religion. Rather, my intention is to point to several ways in which the voices of “other” pan-European groups have largely gone unheard, especially the German, Scandinavian, and Italian, as well as aboriginal, black, and new immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. An important and neglected aspect of Pentecostalism in Canada is its cultural diversity.<sup>8</sup> In conclusion, I will suggest some reasons why Canadian Pentecostalism has not incorporated the voices of these groups into its history and provide a research agenda for Canadian Pentecostal studies.

### **Multicultural Social Theory**

During the 1990s, debates about multiculturalism and polyethnicity intensified so that scholars began to question conceptually and empirically the nature of multiculturalism.<sup>9</sup> For example, Kivisto argued that scholars needed to revisit the early idea of assimilation because it was incorrectly understood.<sup>10</sup> More specifically, he argued that as-

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion on religious diversity in Canada see Lori Beaman and Peter Beyer, eds. *Religion and Diversity in Canada* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2008). Also, see the Religion and Diversity Project site <http://www.religionanddiversity.ca/> for details on a major collaborative research project of which the author is a member.

<sup>9</sup> Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London, UK: Sage, 1992), 59; Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, third edition (New York, NY: Guildford Press, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Peter Kivisto, *Incorporating Diversity: Rethinking Assimilation in a Multicultural Age* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

similation was not antithetical to multiculturalism and had much in common with the idea precisely because both ideas referred to the interaction of social groups. Kivisto conceptualized assimilation in such a way that it incorporated multiculturalism and transnationalism; assimilation, as historically defined, referred to the ways in which people groups interacted leading to integration or pluralism.

Cornell and Hartmann described multiculturalism quite differently arguing that it represented the efforts among social groups to maintain some sense of difference.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the effort to maintain some sense of cultural identity represented a shift among early sociologists as they attempted to explain conflict between groups and celebration of identity within groups. Multiculturalism also described the *insistence* among social groups to recognize differences, which according to the authors, was especially controversial in the late twentieth century, not only in the United States but also throughout the world. Multiculturalism explained the ways in which social groups were wrestling with questions of identity in different ways including the mixing of identities and attempts to consolidate and create boundaries to protect identities.

In both cases, these authors argued that careful theoretical work needed to be applied to our understanding of cultural interaction as scholars refined a theory of multiculturalism. Fenton, on the other hand, states em-

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identities in a Changing World*, second edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2007).

phatically, that no theory of ethnicity or multiculturalism was possible.<sup>12</sup> Only a theory of modernity can be explicated which included how modern societies were structured. A theory of “social context” best explained the relationship between social groups. The implication of Fenton’s work focused our attention on the way in which modern societies constructed multiculturalism in several ways including: colonial relations, majority-minority relations, and state policy that politicized and mobilized minority groups for action. The value of Fenton’s work was his emphasis on understanding social context for the various ways in which people constructed identities in relation to modern state development.

Multiculturalism in Canada, however, has a number of meanings.<sup>13</sup> Descriptively, multiculturalism recognizes the existence of ethnically diverse groups. It also has a prescriptive meaning pointing to a set of ideals for promoting diversity. Politically it refers to government initiatives including policies about multiculturalism. Finally, multiculturalism has a practical component when it is described as a means by which cultural groups advance their own interests. In this way one has to pay attention to the way in which multiculturalism is referenced in context and especially the discourse of multiculturalism. The growing body of multicultural theories now focus on a range of variables including ethnicity, class, gender, and

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<sup>12</sup> Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity* (London, UK: Polity Press, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Augie Fleras and Jean Leonard Elliott, *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada*, second edition (Toronto, ON: Nelson Thomson, 2002).



sexuality. Surprisingly, very little attention is given to religion in the literature.

The exception is the recent work by Paul Bramadat and David Seljak where ethnicity, multiculturalism, and religion have become a major focus.<sup>14</sup> Bramadat and Seljak argue that a new story needs to be told about religion and ethnicity in Canada.<sup>15</sup> The authors highlight six themes that are important for understanding religious diversity. They include the elasticity and persistence of religious identity, the particular and universal quality of diversity, the re-emergence of religion in the public sphere, issues surrounding diaspora and transnationalism, diversity and community building, and the interaction between minority values and majority values. Each of these themes highlights important aspects that need to be examined for a multicultural perspective that incorporates religion as an important variable.

In *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* Bramadat and Seljak continue to explore these themes in the context of Christianity stating: “Surprisingly little has been written on the role of ethnicity in shaping Canada’s Christian churches, although our own experience tells us that it is significant.”<sup>16</sup> Bruce Guenther explores ethnicity and the multicultural nature of evangelical Protestant denominations in Canada. Specifically, he states: “What is missing

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Bramadat and David Seljak, eds., *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto, ON: Pearson Longman, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> “Toward a New Story about Religion and Ethnicity in Canada” in *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*, 222-34

<sup>16</sup> “Charting the New Terrain: Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada,” in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, 3.

from both positive and negative public perceptions of evangelical Protestants in Canada is any serious consideration of their cultural and ethnic diversity.”<sup>17</sup> Following an examination of Asian, Black, Francophone, and aboriginal evangelicals, Guenther discusses the contribution they are making to public life in Canada.

Charles Lemert shapes my view on multicultural social theory.<sup>18</sup> Lemert points out that multiculturalism is a highly controversial, confusing, and misused word in social theory that requires some specificity. Lemert traces the shift in the twentieth century when the idea of “multicultural” came to rest on two important principles: the universality of rights and the principle of justice. This shift highlights an aspect of multicultural theorizing, which must pay attention to issues beyond an increasingly diverse population demographically, and towards the values and policies of a society whereby power and authority is distributed. Tied up with his view is an understanding that identity, especially the politics of identity, is linked with notions of belonging in the multicultural society. Further, a multicultural perspective highlights issues of authenticity and raises questions about who are the “real” members of any society. Lemert’s conceptualizing of “multicultural” points to an important aspect worthy of attention: the need to recognize the voices of those who have made a contribution without recognition. As he

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<sup>17</sup> “Ethnicity and Evangelical Protestants in Canada,” in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*, 378.

<sup>18</sup> “Multiculturalism” in *Handbook of Social Theory*, George Ritzer & Barry Smart, eds., (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 297-307.

states: “Proponents of the politics of recognition assert that identity politics entail a real political struggle to overcome the effects of injuries inflicted by well structured social (as opposed to interpersonal) insults.”<sup>19</sup>

One consequence of defining multiculturalism in such a way is to include aspects of identity and recognition in a retelling of religious history that incorporates the voices of those at the margins. Scholars need to rethink religious history and ask which voices are missing, ignored, or misplaced. The purpose of this article is to incorporate the stories of those Pentecostals often ignored in their own history. The main characters in this case include the so-called “other” European Pentecostals, aboriginals, black Pentecostals, and new immigrants.

## **Revisiting the Canadian Story**

Canadian sources on Pentecostalism rely substantially on the works of Gloria Kulbeck, Gordon Atter, Thomas Miller, and Ronald Kydd.<sup>20</sup> Each of these authors reflect dif-

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<sup>19</sup> “Multiculturalism,” 306.

<sup>20</sup> Gloria Kulbeck, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958); Gordon Atter, *Rivers of Blessing* (Toronto: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1960); Atter, *The Third Force*, Third Edition (Caledonia, ON: ACTS Books, 1970); Thomas W. Miller, *Ripe for Revival: The Churches at the Crossroads of Renewal of Decline* (Burlington, ON: Welch, 1984); Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994); and Ronald A.N. Kydd, “Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee,

ferent aspects in the development of Canadian Pentecostalism for which there are several debates over the issue of leadership, American religious influences, the relationship of American Pentecostalism to other renewal events around the world, and the worldwide spread of Pentecostalism. Early accounts in many popular histories spoke about spontaneous outpourings of the Holy Spirit throughout the world. For example the Canadian Gordon Atter says “The present-day Pentecostal movement had its beginning in a series of religious revivals that broke out in many parts of the world, almost simultaneously in the beginning of the twentieth century.”<sup>21</sup> Gloria Kulbeck speaks of the Canadian revival as one source of evidence that a spontaneous move of God had occurred throughout the world. Thomas Miller, historian of Canadian Pentecostalism nuanced his view without reference to the spontaneity of revival, but he did highlight how these series of revivals belonged to a larger tradition of evangelical Protestant renewal. By the late twentieth century historians like Grant Wacker had critically evaluated the “sud-

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eds. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1988), 695-99; Kydd, 1997 “Canadian Pentecostalism and the Evangelical Impulse” in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Impulse*, G. A. Rawlyk, ed. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 289-300, 491-95; Kydd, “Canada” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard van der Maas Grand Rapids, eds. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 48-51; Kydd, “Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada” in *New International Dictionary*, 961-64.

<sup>21</sup> Atter, *Rivers of Blessing*, 5.

denly from Heaven” perspective.<sup>22</sup> The focus then shifted to detailed accounts, primarily American ones, on whether Parham or Seymour should be credited as the founder of Pentecostalism, the influence and significance of the Azusa revival, and the role of American missionaries in the global expansion of Pentecostalism. Ronald Kydd’s account of Canadian Pentecostalism reflects the historiographical issues of this period. But, I would add, they also create more questions than they answer.

For example, Kydd writes extensively on the influence of Azusa on Canadian Pentecostalism. He says “Pentecostalism as a religious tradition arose in the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century. Its primary emphases were the baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, evangelism, and eschatology. The movement *reached* Canada in 1906, becoming established first in Toronto at a mission operated by James and Ellen Hebden. In 1907 it took root in Winnipeg and in the same year made its way to the West Coast. Alice Wood carried the news of Pentecost to Swift Current, Saskatchewan, in 1908, and it broke on the east coast in 1911 through the efforts of Alice Garrigus” (*italics mine*).<sup>23</sup> Scholars are now critically evaluating this sequence of events and more specifically the role of the Hebden Mission as a separate and distinct Pentecostal ministry from Azusa.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> “Canadian Pentecostalism and the Evangelical Impulse,” 289.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Di Giacomo, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Canada: Its Origins, Development, and Distinct Culture” in *Canadian*

While Kydd focuses his attention on American contributions he also suggests that American Pentecostal immigrants were central to the development of Pentecostalism especially in the Canadian Prairies. He says: “When comparisons are made to respective populations, in the early decades of the century the Prairie Provinces had the largest proportion of Pentecostals. Not coincidentally these provinces also had the largest proportions of American immigrants.”<sup>25</sup> I believe these claims need to be challenged, not to negate the influence of American sources, but to show that Pentecostalism emerged among some Canadians without American influence.<sup>26</sup> This is not

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*Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation*, Michael Wilkinson, ed. (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), 15-38. Also see Adam Stewart, “A Canadian Azusa? The Implications of the Hebden Mission for Pentecostal Historiography” in *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement*, Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, eds. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 17-37.

<sup>25</sup> “Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,” 695.

<sup>26</sup> American immigrants shaped Canadian Pentecostalism, but so did the Germans, Ukrainians, Russians, Italians, and Scandinavians. William E. Mann’s account of evangelicalism in Alberta tells us that many groups from the United States were established in Alberta including the Pentecostals. But so were the Hutterites, Doukbors, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baptists, Nazarenes, Free Methodists, and Evangelical Free. There were also many groups with connections to revivals in Europe. Many German, Slavic, Russian, and Scandinavian Pentecostals entered Canada. Canada experienced massive immigration in the early twentieth century. What is not told in the story is that most of the immigrants were from Eastern Europe. Mann says “In the early depression years it (PAOC) opened up German-speaking churches in the south of Edmonton and also attracted numbers of Scandinavians

to suggest the “spontaneity thesis” is correct. There is evidence though that already in the late nineteenth century there was a global network among missionaries especially Methodist and holiness missionaries who prayed, preached, and encouraged revival as the new millennium approached. One of the most influential revivals is in India among the Methodist Mukti Mission where an account of Spirit Baptism including tongues is written by Minnie Abrams and published in 1905. Prior to this the director of the mission, Pandita Ramabai sent her daughter to Australia and New Zealand in 1903 to observe renewal meetings. The events were widely published in two major papers in India in 1906, the *Bombay Guardian* and the *Christian Patriot*. Seymour’s newsletter also reported on the event in 1906 as well as the *Chicago Daily News* in 1907. There is also evidence to suggest that Canadian Pentecostalism, especially at the Hebden Mission in Toronto develops without American influence.<sup>27</sup> Pentecostal scholars like Gary McGee and Allan Anderson are now questioning the central place thesis including ideas of diffusion for understanding the emergence of Pentecostalism.<sup>28</sup> As I have argued elsewhere, it is probably more ac-

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and Ukrainians.” See *Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955), 19-20.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Miller, “The Canadian Azusa: The Hebden Mission in Toronto,” *Pneuma* 8 (1986) 5-29; Stewart, “A Canadian Azusa?”

<sup>28</sup> Gary B. McGee, “‘Latter Rain’ Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth-Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues” *Church History* 68:3 (1999) 648-65; Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007). Edith Blumhofer,

curate to see the various stories of Pentecostalism converging and in interesting ways becoming “Azusa-ized” during this time.<sup>29</sup>

While providing very good work on the American Holiness contribution to Canadian Pentecostalism, the American origins stories neglect an important chapter in the story. No one dealt with the influences of Pentecostalism from outside of the United States, which tends to obfuscate the multicultural development of Canadian Pentecostalism. Very little attention is paid to the contributions of other Europeans, aboriginals, black Pentecostals, and the recent arrival of new immigrants since the 1970s from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

## The Contribution of the “Other” Groups

### *Other European Pentecostals*

An examination of the ethnic origin of Pentecostals in Canada shows that between 1931 and 1971 most Pentecostals were British in ethnic background followed by Other European, French, and other groups.<sup>30</sup> For example

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“Consuming Fire: Pandita Ramabai and the Global Pentecostal Impulse” in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, Ogbu U. Kalu and Alaine Low, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 207-37.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Wilkinson, “Canadian Pentecostalism: An Introduction” in *Canadian Pentecostalism*, Michael Wilkinson, ed., 3-12.

<sup>30</sup> Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which the respondents’ ancestors belong. Immigrant population refers to persons who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who is not a Canadian citizen by birth, but who



in 1931, 69% of Pentecostals claimed to have a British ethnic background, 2% French, and 28% Other European (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Percentage Distribution for Ethnic Origin of Pentecostals**

	1931	1941	1961	1971
British	69	67	65	67
French	2	3	4	3
Other European	28	28	26	24
Other	1	2	5	6
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Derived from Census Canada, 1931, 1941, 1961, 1971.

The Other European category mostly consisted of those with a German, Scandinavian, Dutch, and Italian ethnicity (see Table 2). The Scandinavian category includes people who are Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Icelandic. Finnish figures were not accounted for until later. For example, in 1971 there were 1,300 Pentecostals with a Finnish ethnic origin, which represented approximately 0.6% of the Pentecostal population. The largest Pentecostal denomination in Canada, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), responded to ethnic diversity in a pragmatic fashion, allowing for accommodation so long as there was no conflict doctrinally or organizationally. In the early part of the twentieth century, the PAOC re-

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has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by Canadian immigration authorities.

sponded to the migration of Pentecostals from other European countries by allowing them to organize as “Branch Conferences.” Branch Conferences were defined as “A unit in the General Conference organization equivalent to a District Conference in General Executive membership and relationship... A Branch is distinguished from a District Conference in that its territory of operation is not geographical, but is confined to ministry among certain races or language groups. Its geographical area of operation may therefore overlap or coincide with that of one or more District Conferences.”<sup>31</sup> Branch Conferences operated independently, like the District Conference, within the general framework of the PAOC. Some ethnic groups,

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Pentecostals as “Other European” Ethnic Groups**

	1931	1941	1961	1971
German	11	9	10	10
Scandinavian	7	6	5	4
Finnish	0.1	0.4	nd	0.6
Dutch	3	4	4	2.4
Italian	3	2	1.4	1.6
Ukrainian	0.4	2.1	2.3	2.5

Source: Derived from Census Canada, 1931, 1941, 1961, 1971.

like the Dutch, however, assimilated into the English-speaking congregations even though their numbers were

<sup>31</sup> Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, General Constitution, 1968: Article XI, PAOC Archives.

quite substantial compared to some groups like the Finnish Pentecostals who formed a Branch Conference.

**Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Ethnic Groups as Pentecostals**

	1931	1941	1961	1971
British	0.3	0.7	1.2	1.5
French	0.01	0.04	0.1	0.1
German	0.6	1.0	1.4	1.6
Scandinavian	0.8	1.5	1.7	2.0
Netherlands	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.2
Italian	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.4

Source: Derived from Census Canada, 1931, 1941, 1961, 1971.

By 1941 three of the four Branch Conferences in the PAOC had formed. This included the Slavic Conference (1931), the Finnish Conference (1939), the German Conference (1940) and later the French Conference (1949). Miller claims the Branch Conferences formed because of language differences.<sup>32</sup> While this appears to be an obvious reason, it is not fully accurate. While a common language may draw German-speaking Pentecostals together, there is also constitutionally, a level of autonomy for the Branch Conference. Branch Conferences maintained autonomy financially and organizationally. Branch Conferences established their own congregational plans, camps, mission programs, and in some cases leadership training. The other fact is that not all ethnic groups

<sup>32</sup> Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals*, 201.

desired to form a Branch Conference. Some like the Italian Pentecostals established a separate denomination, the Italian Pentecostal Church of Canada (recently renamed The Canadian Assemblies of God), yet with close ties to the PAOC.<sup>33</sup> More recently, the PAOC has changed its policy of Branch Conferences in favour of “Language Fellowships” in response to the post 1970s migration from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I will return to this point later.

German-speaking Pentecostals represent a very good case study for understanding the multicultural quality of Canadian Pentecostalism. The origin of German Pentecostalism in Canada has two important sources. One is the migration of German-speaking Pentecostals like Julius Schatkowski, August Kowlaski, and Oskar Jeske, who played important roles in establishing Pentecostalism in Canada.<sup>34</sup> Many German-speaking Pentecostals migrated to Canada and brought with them a form of Pentecostalism shaped by European events. Some also maintained important networks for prayer, renewal, and education. For example, in the area of education, some im-

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<sup>33</sup> See D. Ippolito, *Origin and History of the Italian Pentecostal Church of Canada* (Toronto, IPCC: 1986).

<sup>34</sup> See Arthur Drewitz, *History of the German Branch of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Kitchener, ON: German Branch, 1986); Horst Doberstein, ed. *Grace and Glory: The Story of the German Branch of the Pentecostals Assemblies of Canada* (Kitchener, ON: German Branch, 1990); Doberstein, *Alberta District: Our Heritage* (German Branch, 1992); Julius Schatkowski, *Rev. Julius Schatkowski: Autobiography, 1889-1974* (Alberta District, German Branch, nd).

portant German-speaking pastors were trained in Europe at the International Bible Institute in Danzig Poland like Wilhelm Kowalkski, Aflons Mittelstaedt, Reinhold Hildebrandt, Matthian Baumgartner, and Christian Green.<sup>35</sup> Each of these leaders established prominent Pentecostal ministries in Canada. Pentecostal origins in Canada must also take into consideration the impact of revival prayed for by German farmers on the Canadian Prairies. For example, in 1919 Rev. George Schneider, a German-speaking pastor from Edmonton, Alberta, began tent meetings where many German Christians were filled with the Spirit. As a result of these meetings, many were persecuted for their new experiences and left their churches to establish their own congregations, which then later joined the PAOC.<sup>36</sup>

Much of the Pentecostal ministry in Canada among German-speaking peoples developed independently. By 1934 there were ten congregations in Alberta. Feeling the need for closer ties with other Pentecostals, the Germans established their own organization, later joining the PAOC as an official Branch Conference in July 1940.

Following the World Wars, the Pentecostal movement in Canada continued to grow with the migration of German-speaking Pentecostals from Austria, West Germany, and Poland, experiencing phenomenal growth in the cities of Edmonton and Winnipeg. During the 1950s and 1960s the German Branch Conference expanded by planting new congregations in Ontario and British

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<sup>35</sup> Drewitz, 8.

<sup>36</sup> Drewitz, 2; Doberstein, *Grace and Glory*.

Columbia. Growth also allowed for organizational changes in the 1970s as the German Pentecostals hired full-time administrators for their new office in Kitchener, Ontario. By the 1980s, however, migration changes from European to non-European sources would also impact the German Pentecostals in Canada. Issues over youth, language, and music, however, were secondary to the changes in migration patterns, which had a direct impact on the rate of growth in their congregations.

The point I am making here is that a significant number of Pentecostals in Canada came from European origins for which we know very little about the particular ways in which their practice of Pentecostalism became rooted in Canada. We do know that European Pentecostalism is shaped by a number of events and theological developments globally, but we do not know very much about the cross-Atlantic connections. One resource that we do have is from the German Pentecostals. Detailed critical studies of the influence of European Pentecostalism in Canada are sorely needed to fill in the details of the story of Pentecostalism in Canada.

### *Aboriginal Pentecostals*

In July 2000, Matthew Coon Come was elected as Chief of Canada's Assembly of First Nations. What made Coon Come's election surprising to many people was not his ardent defence of native rights or his political views but his faith as a Pentecostal. Coon Come's faith was never

in doubt.<sup>37</sup> And yet, very little is known about native rights and religion in Canada, especially the role of Pentecostalism. In fact, in Canada, Pentecostalism among aboriginal peoples did not become significant until the 1950s. By 2001 it was reported that 19,000 or 3.4% of “Registered/Treaty Indians” identified themselves as Pentecostal (see Table 4). Another 35,000 Canadians with some aboriginal ancestry also claimed to be Pentecostal. While the number may not seem that large, the rate of Pentecostalism among “Registered/Treaty Indians” is nearly three times that of the rest of the population (1.2%).

**Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Aboriginals as Pentecostal, 1931-1991**

1931	1941	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
0.08	0.1	1.1	2.1	3.3	4.0	3.4

Source: Derived from Census Canada, 1931, 1941, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001.

Pentecostalism gained strength in native communities all across Canada including the northern regions. In the far north Inuit adopted a charismatic Anglicanism, while others joined the Four Square church. Some were part of independent Pentecostal congregations. The PAOC claimed over one hundred aboriginal congregations by the end of the 1980s. Despite these significant

<sup>37</sup> While living in Ottawa in the 1990s, I attended the same congregation as Matthew Coon Come and got to know personally his deep commitment to his faith.

numbers very little is known about Pentecostalism among aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Robert Burkinshaw conducted one important study on aboriginal Pentecostalism in British Columbia.<sup>38</sup> Burkinshaw argues that native Pentecostals played a prominent role in the development of Pentecostalism. Even more interesting is the evidence for the prominent role of aboriginal peoples themselves in the establishing of Pentecostalism in British Columbia, despite the organizational efforts of the PAOC. Notwithstanding Burkinshaw's thorough account, there is still very little known about the unique theological expressions in the development of aboriginal Pentecostalism. There is very little known about the social consequences of aboriginal Pentecostalism including its public influence.

One other important study was by Clint Westman, who conducted fourteen months of fieldwork among Cree Pentecostals in northern Alberta.<sup>39</sup> His research highlights the origins and development of Cree Pentecostalism from a minority group to its current status as a majority. Westman discusses the relationship between the Cree Pentecostals, the community, other evangelical Protestants, the broader network of Pentecostals, and the significance of Cree Pentecostalism socially and politically. He also points out the lack of scholarly work on aboriginal Pente-

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<sup>38</sup> Robert K. Burkinshaw, "Native Pentecostalism in British Columbia," in *Canadian Pentecostalism*, 142-70.

<sup>39</sup> "Understanding Cree Religious Discourse," PhD Dissertation (University of Alberta, 2008). Westman, "Pentecostalism among Canadian Aboriginal People: A Political Movement?" in *A Liberating Spirit*, 85-110.



costals arguing for ongoing research that examines the unique way in which Pentecostalism is contextualized among aboriginal peoples. Clearly, aboriginal Pentecostalism is a story yet to be told.

### *Black Pentecostalism*

Four strands shape our understanding of the Black Church in Canada and more specifically Black Pentecostalism. The first is the context of colonization and slavery among the early French and English. The second is the Black Loyalists who came to Canada following the Civil War and the abolitionist movement. The third is the expansion of Black Pentecostal churches from the United States into Canada. Finally, Black Pentecostalism is shaped by the migration of Pentecostals from the Caribbean islands and more recently, Africa.

The first known black resident of what is now Canada was Oliver Le Jeune who arrived in 1632 from Africa. Le Jeune was sold as a slave in New France, where he learned his catechism, was baptized by a Jesuit priest, and eventually died a free man. It was not until the late seventeenth century, however, that slavery had a legal foundation in New France following the same *Code Noir* used in the West Indies and the colony of Louisiana. The same code also applied to the aboriginal inhabitants of New France and by 1759 it was estimated that there were 3,604 slaves of whom 1,132 were blacks, most living in the Montreal area. Even with the large number of baptized

African slaves, no Roman Catholic Black church tradition emerged in New France.<sup>40</sup>

In 1763 the region came under rule of the British with the transfer of French holdings and guarantees to slave owners that their property would be protected. Re-organization of the colonies included the Quebec Act of 1774, which allowed for the application of both English criminal law and French civil law. The Act also restored the boundaries of Quebec to include territory to the Ohio River bringing under its administration the slaves in this region including Detroit. Unrest and war in the colonies saw numerous Loyalists, including Black Loyalists, move north to Nova Scotia with the promise of land to farm. It is during this time that the birth of the Black church emerges in the 1780s.

The development of the black church in Nova Scotia was not without controversy. Not all blacks were free. The black population included slaves and those who found freedom if they fought for the British. However, the preferential treatment of White Loyalists over Black Loyalists created further tension. Approximately 3,550 of the 30,000 Loyalists transported to Nova Scotia were black. One of the black preachers to arrive was David George who established the first black Baptist congregation. George organized congregations throughout the Maritimes. However, following the poor treatment of blacks including the denial of land or receiving poorer properties

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<sup>40</sup> Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 1-23.

than the whites, a movement began with the promise of freedom in Sierra Leone. In 1792, 1,196 of the Black Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia left for Sierra Leone including George. Of the blacks who stayed, many participated in Baptist, Methodist, and Anglican congregations along with the newer African Christian congregations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the British Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>41</sup>

Other migrations of African Americans occurred following the War of 1812 increasing the population in Nova Scotia and Upper Canada and included the formation of African Christian churches in areas like St. Catherines, Ontario and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The African Methodist Episcopal church in Yarmouth was established in 1877 and named after Bishop Disney of Nova Scotia. By the late 1930s the building was deteriorating and the congregation dwindling. In 1941 C. N. Smith became the pastor and served until 1971 during which time the congregation became affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The church was renamed the Rose of Sharon Assembly and later Sharon Gospel Assembly. The congregation then became independent in the 1960s. By the 1990s the building fell into disrepair and closed.<sup>42</sup>

Around the mid nineteenth century another group of African Americans began arriving in larger numbers

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<sup>41</sup> Winks, 24-60; Denise Gillard, "The Black Church in Canada" *McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry* 1998: 1(1) [www.mcmaster.ca/mjtm/1-5.htm](http://www.mcmaster.ca/mjtm/1-5.htm) accessed 04/05/2010.

<sup>42</sup> Joyce Ruck, Edward Matwawana, and Carolyn Smith, *Three Nova Scotian Black Churches*, (Dartmouth, NS: Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, 1990).

via the underground railway in Windsor and Chatham, where evangelical Protestants responded to assist with resettlement including housing, food, work projects, and church services. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Pentecostal movement in North America was emerging with important events in Cherokee County, North Carolina, Topeka, Kansas, Los Angeles, California, and Toronto, Ontario. The largest African American Pentecostal Church in North America is the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) founded by C. H. Mason in 1907.<sup>43</sup> The success of COGIC in Canada is largely due to the work of C. L. Morton (1897-1962) and his son C. L. Morton, Jr. (1942-) who established the Mount Zion church in Windsor, Ontario. Morton's ancestors settled in southwestern Ontario and were part of the Holiness movement where his maternal grandmother had a charismatic experience that shaped the family. As a teenager Morton had his own conversion experience and began attending a white Pentecostal church in Chatham. At age seventeen he was preaching and assumed pastoral duties a year or so later when the senior minister resigned. Morton also served in a white Pentecostal church in Branford, Ontario. However, when World War I broke out and conscription was introduced, Morton refused to serve because it was against his religious beliefs. Morton was tried and convicted and sentenced to three years in the Kingston Penitentiary.

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<sup>43</sup> S. S. Dupree, "Church of God in Christ." *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 535-37.

Morton served nine months when he was released with other conscientious objectors.<sup>44</sup>

Upon his release, Morton moved to Detroit and joined a COGIC congregation. Shortly he was sent to West Virginia where after three years of preaching he was called by God to go back to Canada and establish a church in his home country. Around 1925 he began preaching in Windsor with little success for the first three years. Morton held revival meetings in Amherstburg, Ontario where seventy-five people were baptized in the Detroit River. Morton opened another church in 1928 in Harrow, a small farming community east of Amherstburg. He also began radio broadcasts around the same time in Chatham and Windsor. The success of his radio ministry allowed him to build a new building for Mount Zion Full Gospel Church at 795 McDougall Avenue in 1939. Morton also planted a church in Buxton, Ontario. Morton unexpectedly died of a heart attack on November 15, 1962 turning the ministry of the Canadian COGIC over to his son.<sup>45</sup>

Other Black Pentecostal churches include the Church of God of Prophecy in Canada, which traces its founding to the Church of God (Cleveland, TN).<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>44</sup> Paul McIntyre, *Black Pentecostal Music in Windsor*, (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Paper No. 15, 1976), 1-18.

<sup>45</sup> McIntyre, 19-21.

<sup>46</sup> G.B. McGee and B.A. Pavia, 2002. "Church of God of Prophecy in Canada." *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Maas, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 542-43.

first CGPC congregation was established in Swan River, Manitoba in 1937. By the 1990s there were thirty-eight congregations in Canada with a membership of 3,107 and one hundred clergy. CGPC is currently located in Mississauga, Ontario. The Church of God (Cleveland, TN) was organized in Canada in 1920 with ministries primarily in Saskatchewan and Ontario. One congregation, the Kitchener Church of God, deserves some attention. The congregation began in 1975 and came under the leadership of Bishop Canute H. Riggin and his wife who both immigrated from Jamaica, representing a fourth important strand in the development of the Black Church in Canada; the migration of Pentecostals from the Caribbean Islands and Africa. The congregation has continued to grow reaching out to new immigrants and building a new multipurpose community complex in 2004.<sup>47</sup> KGC identifies itself as a multicultural congregation indicating the cultural context of multiculturalism as an important factor for Canadian identity.

Issues of race and racism are rarely discussed in the Canadian context, especially among Pentecostals. Yet, Canada is not exempt from the tensions surrounding racism. In the 1930s and 1940s controversy surrounded the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and one of its ministers. Concerned about how an interracial marriage may impact his ministry, the PAOC leaders passed a motion at

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<sup>47</sup> Donna Lynne Seamone. "This is My Story, This is My Song: Verena Maynard's Life Story and Her Ritual Performance at the Kitchener Church of God (Ontario)" PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2000. See [www.kitcherncog.org](http://www.kitcherncog.org) for church website.

the 1934 General Conference that said: “WE RECOMMEND that this conference go on record as unfavorable to the intermarrying of the colored races with the white, especially among our workers, and in so doing it will seriously affect their standing with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.”<sup>48</sup> In the 1941 PAOC Yearbook there appeared in a section titled “Workers (Rules Governing)” a prohibition concerning “the intermarrying of the coloured races with the white, especially among our workers.”<sup>49</sup> This same prohibition was last published in 1945 when the Yearbook then became a list of ministers, missionaries, and local assemblies. The General Constitution and By-Laws included the paragraph up until 1943 after which no new editions of this document were published until 1964 where the issue of interracial marriage is not mentioned. There is no reference to the removal of this prohibition in the General Conference minutes. We can only speculate that the decision was made internally sometime after 1945. The issue revolved around a credentialed minister who married a white woman after being warned by the PAOC that doing so would jeopardize his ministry. The minister disagreed with the policy and did marry the woman and in spite of the objection, had a prominent ministry in Canada, although as an independent Pentecostal. The systemic role racism played through

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<sup>48</sup> PAOC General Conference minutes, 1934, PAOC Archives. I want to thank Jim Craig for his assistance in locating materials.

<sup>49</sup> The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Year Book, 1941, p. 46, records of the General Secretary Treasurer, RC 1-05, Series 6, PAOC Archives.

PAOC policy was also reflected in its membership with the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, a “white” organization for Pentecostals that finally disbanded in 1994 at the so-called “Memphis Miracle” where white Pentecostal denominations apologized to African Americans for years of racism and exclusion.

Black Pentecostalism in Canada continues to grow and is more recently shaped by recent arrivals from Africa. In the 2001 census report (taken every ten years), it was reported that 369,475 Canadians identified themselves as Pentecostal. Of this number, 47,595 (7.7%) of the total Pentecostal population self identified as Black (see Table 5). Since the 1990s much of the growth of Black Pentecostalism in Canada is due to migration from Africa. New congregations are emerging with people from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nigeria, Haiti, Sudan, and many other African countries. Still, relatively little is known about these new congregations. Furthermore, a sustained research agenda needs to be established to fill in the many gaps in our knowledge of the Black Church and Black Pentecostalism in Canada.

### *New Immigrant Pentecostals*

Canadian Pentecostalism continues to change and is influenced by recent developments in migration.<sup>50</sup> Since the

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<sup>50</sup> I have written extensively on the implications of new immigrants for Canadian Pentecostalism elsewhere. See “The Globalization of Pentecostalism: The Role of Asian Immigrant Pentecostals in Canada” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3 (2000) 219-26; *The Spirit*



1970s, when immigration policy changed allowing for more immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Pentecostalism in Canada became increasingly culturally diverse. Research shows that the majority of new immigrants arriving in Canada are coming as Christians, and many of them are Pentecostals.<sup>51</sup> What this means for Pentecostals in Canada, is that Pentecostalism is increasingly culturally diverse. It also means that there are further changes happening to Canadian Pentecostalism, theologically, organizationally, and culturally. Yet, most denominational leaders seem to be unaware of the consequences of this new diversity. Furthermore, the contemporary and multicultural story of Pentecostalism is barely heard because of the ongoing debate over origins, especially, American holiness ones.

New immigrant Pentecostals maintain important networks with other Pentecostals illustrating a certain quality of religion in global society. Increasingly, religion is shaped by a variety of flows that move back and forth, over and above, traditional boundaries. These flows, especially flows of Pentecostal ministry exemplify the ease with which Pentecostalism travels the globe.<sup>52</sup> Pentecostal immigrants in Canada not only travel widely across these

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*Said Go: Pentecostal Immigrants in Canada* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2006).

<sup>51</sup> See Reginald Bibby, "Canada's Mythical Religious Mosaic: Some Census Findings," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (2000) 235-39; Census Canada, 2001 "Religions in Canada."

<sup>52</sup> Michael Wilkinson, "Religion and Global Flows" in *Religion, Culture, and Globalization*, Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman, eds (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 375-89.

borders, they also carry between home and host countries religious remittances that serve as a type of global cultural capital. Important networks are the missionary links among Pentecostals where Koreans, for example, are interconnected with each other in Canada and elsewhere through Yoido Full Gospel Church's missionary network. Global conferences also serve to link Pentecostals together where they share resources, pray together, worship, and support one another in their work. These networks also support new denominational ties, where resources like pastors are shared and recruited to serve in immigrant congregations in Canada.

**Table 5: Visible Minority Population for Pentecostals, 2001**

Minority Group	Total
Chinese	2,595
South Asian	4,310
Black	47,595
Filipino	3,545
Latin American	5,730
Southeast Asian	535
Arab	150
West Asian	125
Korean	685
Japanese	330
Other Visible Minority	3,040
Multiple Responses	1,270
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,910</b>

Source: Derived from Census Canada, 2001.

New Immigrant Pentecostals in the PAOC have struggled to be recognized as full partners. This struggle is illustrated through many misunderstandings, which they are now working towards resolving. For example, in the 1990s denominational leaders did not understand to what extent these new immigrants already identified as Pentecostal with established viewpoints, theologies, mission practices, organizational polities, theological training, ministry experience, or global networks. Further, denominational leaders were unsure how to incorporate new immigrant Pentecostal leaders into their existing structures. Changes are happening and in the past several years some districts like Western Ontario have developed positions in cultural ministry where those in the Korean Pentecostal community give excellent leadership.<sup>53</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The development of Pentecostalism in Canada is far more multicultural and global than recognized. Many immigrant Pentecostals of non-British, French, and American origin played a significant role in shaping the movement. Yet, researchers have not paid attention to their contributions. Even less so, have researchers considered the unique cultural ways in which Pentecostalism was adopted by aboriginal peoples. Black Pentecostalism in Canada is understudied. Today, with increased immigration from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Pentecostalism in Canada is becoming even more culturally diverse. Yet, very

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Jacob Joo by Michael Wilkinson, 2007.

little attention is paid to the role immigration plays in Pentecostal origins or the contemporary context. This problem exists for a number of reasons. First, there are very few Canadian researchers examining Pentecostalism. Even less so, are researchers who come from these groups – other European, aboriginal, Black, Asian, Latin American, or African. Certainly, Pentecostal studies in Canada are in need of research and support by academics, universities, and Pentecostal denominations to establish funding, collaboration, and a research agenda.

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