

## **BELIEF AND PRACTICE: CANADIAN PENTECOSTAL CASE STUDIES**

LINDA M. AMBROSE AND MARTIN W. MITTELSTADT

Pentecostals, like other believers, struggle with the tension that arises between belief and practice. Life in the Spirit can include times of exuberant worship, intimate encounters with God, and Spirit-empowered mission. But it also extends to everyday life. Pentecostals insist that these experiences must be lived out in the ordinary and mundane. In other words, belief should be reflected in practice. In this issue, we present three essays that address the question of lived religion. Each author drives home the tensions that exist between what Pentecostals believe and how they practice their faith.

Ewen Butler gives a snapshot of an extraordinary Canadian Pentecostal statesman: David Mainse. Butler celebrates the life of this Canadian pioneer and longtime TV personality, who brought Pentecostalism out of dubious obscurity and presented the Canadian public with a more ecumenical perspective on what the Spirit was doing across the country. Taking his own conviction about the necessity for evangelism, Mainse was amenable to working with any and all who would testify about what the Spirit of God was doing in Canada, including Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United Church colleagues. For many believers in the classical Pentecostal denomination where Mainse had served as a pastor, this open-minded ecumenism was difficult to accept. Butler portrays Mainse as a man of humble roots who coupled his passion for the Gospel with a “boots on the ground” work ethic. In other words, David Mainse put his belief about evangelism into practice. Mainse’s determination to take risks for the furtherance of the Pentecostal message even at the cost of being misunderstood by his own denomination, illustrates that his ecumenical spirit was ahead of its time. Mainse passed away in 2017 and with Butler’s work, we have a sympathetic analysis of what happened when this Pentecostal leader put his ecumenical convictions into practice to building a Canadian media ministry.

Michael Tapper takes up the question of belief and practice through an exploration of music. “What are we singing on Sunday morning?” is not just a question for the worship leaders or laypeople in congregations to know whether their favourite songs will be performed. Rather, Tapper invites readers to consider the implications of what is sung. Tapper looks closely at the lyrics of the most popular worship

songs used in PAOC churches, and questions whether the corporate singing matches the shared doctrines. Specifically, he interrogates popular lyrics for failed evidence of trinitarian expression. Tapper asserts that while trinitarian doctrine has long been a pillar of classical Pentecostal belief in the PAOC, he suggests that poor song choices often reflect erroneous views. In so doing, Pentecostals not only fail to offer “sound” worship, but they teach and reinforce false teaching.

Randy Holm and Martin Tampier explore a practice central to Pentecostalism: speaking in tongues. Sometimes used as proof that one has been baptized in the Spirit, tongues speaking is a widely shared practice among Pentecostals. Denominational gatekeepers regularly invoke this practice as a boundary-making tool, requiring for example, that those applying for ministerial credentials offer proof that they have in fact, experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidential tongues. Of course, it has proven difficult for denominational authorities to invoke that requirement and there is some evidence that beliefs and practices around tongues speech are shifting among some Pentecostal denominations. Holm and Tampier are less interested in the problems that such a measure presents to denominational policy and more interested in understanding how the practice of speaking in tongues operates among Pentecostal believers in general. Using a questionnaire and interview methodology, they set out to explore how, when, and to what effect Pentecostal believers use the practice of glossolalia, particularly in private devotional settings. Using a series of very direct questions, they explored people’s first experiences with tongues speech, whether or not they continue the practice, and what benefits they derive from speaking in tongues. This paper examines belief and practice under the microscope by steering clear of the official position of any particular Pentecostal denomination and focusing instead on the effect of tongues speech among everyday believers. Their work is an inquiry into “lived religion,” an exploration of what people actually do in practice as they live out their beliefs in their ordinary day-to-day lives.

In this issue we continue our series “Notes from the Archives” with a focus on Pentecostalism in Newfoundland and Labrador. Burton Janes, an independent scholar, is a resident expert on this topic. Janes penned the pioneering biography on the founder of Newfoundland Pentecostalism, Alice Belle Garrigus, as well as numerous congregational histories that trace the growth of the movement across Newfoundland and Labrador. More recently he has invested in his native land through preservation and submission of Pentecostal archival materials to the

Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. Janes has immersed himself in Pentecostal history over the decades and amassed a remarkable personal collection of primary source materials. Having had the privilege to visit Burton in Bay Roberts, Newfoundland, to see his collection of materials, and to profit from his generosity in sharing materials and his deep knowledge of Pentecostalism in that region, I (Linda) knew that when it came time to offer insight into archival sources about Newfoundland and Labrador Pentecostalism, it would be obvious that we should profile Burton Janes and let him guide us. In conversation with him, we posed the question of how one might best approach the study of Pentecostalism in Newfoundland and Labrador. Janes not only provides sage advice about how to search and find materials, but he offers a long list of potential topics for further research.

As always, we present book reviews as part of this issue. The reviews offer insight into recent publications on themes addressed in this issue, including Pentecostal music and worship, and ecumenism in the Charismatic movement. Our thanks, once again to Adam Stewart, our book review editor for his work in identifying books for review, recruiting the reviewers, and managing the review process. The books featured in this issue would make great Christmas gifts for the scholar on your list. And speaking of gifts, we know that what Adam really wants this Christmas is to receive recommendations about scholarly books on Canadian Pentecostalism that could be reviewed here, and news from you that you would be willing to complete one of those reviews.