

Notes From The Archives
Researching Canadian Pentecostalism at the Holy Spirit
Research Center, Oral Roberts University

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The Holy Spirit Research Center (HSRC) is a special collection of the Oral Roberts University (ORU) Academic Library that began in 1962 when Founder and President Oral Roberts and R.O. Corvin recognized that Pentecostals were doing little to preserve their own materials. These leaders saw this need as an opportunity for ORU to serve the growing Pentecostal and Charismatic constituency and the Christian church worldwide. Beginning with his own personal collection, Roberts created a library and hired a librarian to solicit materials from Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations, ministries, and organizations around the world. Advertisements for donations were regularly solicited from readers of Roberts' *Abundant Life Magazine*. The collection was named "Pentecostal Research Center" and became a centerpiece of the academic library when the school opened in 1965.

The center quickly became recognized as one of the best collections of materials for studying Pentecostal-Charismatic movements and researchers came from all over the world to use the materials. The list of scholars who visited the center was a who's-who in Pentecostal scholarship, beginning with Walter Hollenweger, Vinson Synan, R.M. Anderson, Edith Blumhofer, Charles E. Jones, Killian McDonnell, and James Tinney, just to name a few. In 1969, Hollenweger declared the Center to be "the best collection of primary resources for Pentecostalism in the world." Though many influential scholars within Pentecostalism have benefited greatly from this collection, Roberts envisioned a resource center that would extend beyond Pentecostal denominations. His influence in the Charismatic Renewal opened his eyes to the work of the Spirit in many mainline denominations. Over the years, the HSRC has become a leading archive for materials from the Catholic Charismatic movement as well as other

mainline charismatic renewal groups from Methodist, Lutheran, Anglican and Baptist traditions.

HSRC functions both as a library and archive. As a library, we have cataloged standard Pentecostal books, academic studies, dissertations, and periodical magazines. As an archive, we gather periodicals, minute books, newsletters, correspondence and artifacts from a broad range of individuals, ministries and organizations. Our broad collection policy also encourages the collection of popular level materials such as books, pamphlets, tape series, and videos. Over the years we have collected over 15,000 books, 1,200 different periodicals, 9,000 audio/video holdings, and 30,000 booklets, pamphlets, and other artifacts in our vertical files. Since the HSRC is not tied to a particular denomination or tradition, our collection policy includes material related to Pentecostalism, the Healing Movement of the 1950s, revivalism, the Charismatic Renewal, independent and third wave Pentecostals, and Word of Faith. The global influence of Oral Roberts University has helped us to collect many international materials, including Canadian Pentecostalism, particularly the New Order of the Latter Rain, and other associated Canadian ministries and institutions.

In addition to the physical collection, the HSRC began an online archive of digitized materials via the ORU Digital Showcase (<https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/hsrc>). This digital collection, started in 2017, contains over 2,000 items such as books, unique Pentecostal periodicals, artifacts, ORU archival materials, audio/video, and general works pertaining to the Holy Spirit. Most of these materials are open access. New items are being posted regularly to provide visibility and access to this rich collection of materials. The materials in this repository have been downloaded over 14,000 times in over 133 countries around the world. This also includes ORU's theological journal *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* which is jointly published by the College of Theology and Ministry and the HSRC.

The first appointed librarian over the collection was Juanita Walker, a professional librarian that Oral Roberts recruited from Emmanuel College. Walker served until 1974 and was followed by Karen Robinson (1975-1987). Robinson was largely responsible for many of the historical and archival resources such as interviews with individuals from Pentecostal history, photographs, and the large

collection of audio/video resources. Robinson was also responsible for the name change to the Holy Spirit Research Center in 1977. In the last few decades the Center has expanded its influence under the direction of Pentecostal academics such as the notable historian, Vinson Synan (1990-1994), Jim Zeigler (1994-1999), and Mark E. Roberts (1999-2017). Like many archives, the center has operated on an austere budget with one full-time director plus student worker assistance. The passion and expertise of these directors has kept the collection moving forward and today it is continuing to grow and expand its place among the best Pentecostal archives in the world. We enjoy strong partnerships with other Pentecostal archives. We do so through vast sharing of knowledge and materials, so that by working together, we might contribute to a growing understanding of Pentecostalism.

Researching Canadian Pentecostalism

For researchers interested in studying Canadian Pentecostalism at the HSRC, we offer a broad summary of relevant materials. Many of these materials are readily visible in the ORU Library catalog (<https://oru.libguides.com/library>). However, like all growing archives, the process of identifying, documenting and cataloging materials remains an ongoing process that includes a large backlog waiting to be processed. This year alone we have documented over 300 new magazine titles, and many of these have not yet been added to our catalog. Similarly, our vertical files contain many materials that are slowly being documented through finding aids. For information on uncatalogued materials, please contact us and we would be delighted to offer further assistance.

Canadian Pentecostalism

Our holdings of Canadian materials begin with a strong collection of materials from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada including the *The Pentecostal Testimony* (1940-1988). We hold two magazines from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland: *Prayer Chain Bulletin* and *Reach* (1973-1987), the youth magazine of the PAON. We also hold *End Times Messenger* (1959-1987) produced via the Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada. Pentecostal histories include: *Flames of Pentecost: A Drama of the Pentecostal movement* (1980) by Vincent A. Smith; *Songs of the Reaper: The Story of the*

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in Saskatchewan (1985); and *Fifty Years of Pentecostal History 1933-1983*. We also have one of the few library copies of *The Pentecostal Movement: Who We are and What We Believe* (1957) by Gordon F. Atter. We hold recent and important academic studies such as *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation* edited by Michael Wilkinson; *Winds from the North* edited by Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse; *Canadian Winds of the Spirit: Holiness, Pentecostal and Charismatic Currents* by Ewen Butler; *The New Canadian Pentecostals* by Adam Stewart; and other histories such as *A History of Bethel Pentecostal Church in Sarnia, Ontario* by Caleb H. Courtney.

The HSRC holds a number of biographical works on Canadian Pentecostals including: *My Experiences with God!* by Ingavar Solbrekken (1956); *Annie* by Grace Sjukvist (1986); *They Call Him Mr. Braeside: The Life Story of Rev. J.H. Blair* (1982) by Jack West and Harold Davis; and *Wings of the Gospel* by John Spillenaar. We also have collected a number of periodical titles and yearbooks from Canadian Pentecostal colleges including the British Columbia Bible Institute/Western Pentecostal Bible College (now Summit Pacific College) in Abbotsford, British Columbia; Central Pentecostal College (now Horizon College) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Eastern Pentecostal Bible College (now Master's College and Seminary) in Peterborough, Ontario; and Full Gospel Bible Institute (now Eston College) in Eston, Saskatchewan. Our vertical files contain a significant number of yet-to-be catalogued newsletters and brochures from these institutions.

Canadian Charismatic Materials

One of the strengths of the HSRC is our collection of materials focused upon Charismatic Renewal and other independent renewal movements. For Catholic Charismatic studies, we hold the periodical *The Bread of Life* (1989-Present), a magazine from the Catholic Charismatic Services Committee of Ontario. We also have a number of books and materials associated with Vineyard Fellowship and John Wimber including the magazines *Equipping the Saints* (1987-1996), *Vineyard Newsletter* (1986-1988) and *Voice of Vineyard* (1997-1998). We hold numerous academic studies of the Toronto Blessing associated

with John Arnott and Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship and the affiliated magazine *Spread the Fire* (1996-2000).

Another important wave highly relevant to Canadian Pentecostal and Charismatic studies is the New Order of the Latter Rain. We hold a number of studies of the Latter Rain movement including Richard Riss's M.A. thesis on the Latter Rain Movement (1987).¹ We have a number of primary sources from the New Order of the Latter Rain and George R. Hawtin. We hold the affiliated periodical *The Sharon Star*, a large collection of George R. Hawtin's works (over fifty titles), and periodical publications including *The Page* (1961-1983) and *Good Tidings* (1967-1988). We have valuable works by Latter Rain leaders including James Lee and Myrtle Beall of Bethesda Missionary Temple in Detroit and affiliated publications named *The Latter Rain Evangel: The Official Organ of Bethesda Missionary Temple* (1963-1966) and *America to Your Knees Radio Newsletter* (1969-1976). We also have the publications of Ivan Q. Spencer and the *Elim Pentecostal Herald*.

Oral Roberts & Canada

Finally, we may hold a key to one further area of potential study to students and scholars of Canadian Pentecostalism. Many would be surprised at Oral Roberts's work and influence on Canada. From his early days of ministry, Oral Roberts' ministry sought to reach Canada. In June of 1952, Roberts conducted his first Canadian campaign in Toronto hosted by the Pentecostal Holiness Church and Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.² He returned in 1953 to Vancouver for his second campaign where some 100,000 people attended his healing crusade.³ Over the next decade, Roberts conducted campaigns in several other parts of the country. His magazines, *Healing Waters* and *Abundant Life*, were sent to subscribers across Canada, and his radio broadcast was carried in stations across the country. Testimonies of

¹ Richard M. Riss, *The Latter Rain: The Latter Rain Movement of 1948 and the Mid-twentieth Evangelical Awakening* (Mississauga, Ont: Honeycomb Visual Productions, 1987).

² R.L. Rex, "2,000 People Come to God in Great Toronto Campaign," *Healing Waters* (August 1952), 4-6.

³ "Over 100,000 Attend Oral Roberts Vancouver Meeting," *Healing Waters* (November 1953), 10.

healing and salvation from Canada readers and listeners were often featured in his magazines. Surely, this provides fodder for a study of the Roberts' influence north of the border.⁴

Contact Us

The staff at the HSRC would be delighted to serve Canadian constituents. To get started, please visit our website at <https://oru.libguides.com/HSRC> to find out more about our holdings. Do not hesitate to contact me at (918) 495-6899 or by email (disgrigg@oru.edu).

⁴ A recent rediscovery of studies of Oral Roberts began with the Fall 2018 issue of *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* that highlighted twelve new studies of Roberts in honor of the centennial of his birth. *Spiritus* is an open source theological journal that seeks to serve the global Spirit-empowered movement. You can access *Spiritus* online at <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/spiritus/>.