

**TOWARDS A PENTECOSTAL CRITICAL FEMINIST THEOLOGY OF  
LIBERATION: “STARRING” WALTER BENJAMIN, MAX HORKHEIMER,  
THEODOR ADORNO, ELISABETH SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA AND THE  
PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF CANADA**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

**“Towards a Pentecostal Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation:  
‘Starring’ Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno,  
Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada”**

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology 2009

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The purpose of the thesis is to supplement and further the emergence of Pentecostal theological thought by interrogating issues foundational to the formation of a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation intent upon promoting the full flourishing of Pentecostal women and non-elite men as well as contributing to feminist critical theology. The corpus drawn upon will include critical and scholarly reflection from the academy and Pentecostalism.

The hypothesis is that, along with problematic practices and beliefs, Pentecostalism also contains ideas and rituals with rhetorical and symbolic significance expressing liberative potential for the actual lived realities of women, individually and communally, throughout the globe. Placing these ideas and practices in a self-reflective, critical dialogue with carefully chosen conversation partners will illuminate this emancipatory potential. The goal is to explore the possibility of developing a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation.

The major scholars whose work is considered include Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, the representatives from the Society for Pentecostal Studies and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Shifts in thought involved including the differences between traditional theorizing and critical theory, critical theory of religion, feminist critical theory of religion and feminist critical theology of liberation are examined. Concrete examples of ministering women within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada are cited. Typical explanations given for the challenges facing ministering Pentecostal women along with an argument for the need for an explicitly feminist approach are overviewed. Theoretical aspects of the project are evaluated through a discussion of the nature and power of enlightenment rationality, an examination of identity thinking and an analysis of two major sources of authority that have been used to dominate women. The significance of hope involved in the use of utopic thinking coupled with Adorno's negative dialectic in provisionally transforming Pentecostalism toward an emancipatory praxis is explored. Finally, concluding comments summarize the project and suggestions for further explorations are made.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE, APPROACH, PARTICIPANTS AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

#### Introduction

In the early years of the twentieth century, while critical theorists from the early Frankfurt School were analyzing the political revolutions going on around them and advocating the need for even further “Counter-Revolution and Revolt”(s),<sup>1</sup> out of view of middle and upper class echelons of culture and the academy, a revolution of another sort was underway, among the descendents of slaves and other disenfranchised people<sup>2</sup> against their former owners and current oppressors both within the Christian churches and society of the time, spurred on by the efforts and activities of women and men of various colours, on a small street in Los Angeles, in a former stable. That revolution was the modern day Pentecostal movement.

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> See Robert M. Anderson’s work *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979). While in agreement with Anderson that the Azusa Street Revival was primarily instigated by dispossessed people, it was not only the marginalized who became involved in the movement. Pentecostal beginnings are much more diverse and include solidly middle class people as well.

Currently, "we are witnessing the emergence of the Pentecostal mind," Pentecostal academic and former President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies,<sup>3</sup> Russ Spittler, claimed in a recent commemorative edition celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Society for Pentecostal Studies,<sup>4</sup> a global network of Pentecostal scholars. As a movement which has infiltrated almost all Christian denominations and fellowships in the form of a "charismatic movement," the Pentecostal/charismatic movement is influencing a significant portion of Christianity whether for good or ill.<sup>5</sup> While presently Pentecostalism is second only to Roman Catholicism in numbers of adherents,<sup>6</sup> critical investigations of the movement as a whole along with its numerous, diverse manifestations are only in their early stages. Nevertheless, Pentecostal scholars from within the movement are now beginning to critically examine Pentecostalism, often in dialogue with partners beyond the Pentecostal community.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "1973," *The Society for Pentecostal Studies: Commemorating Thirty Years of Annual Meetings, 1971-2001*, Mark E. Roberts, Ed., Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2001, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Russell P. Spittler, "The Dawning of the Pentecostal Mind," *The Society for Pentecostal Studies: Commemorating Thirty Years of Annual Meetings, 1971-2001*, Mark E. Roberts, Ed., Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2001, 3.

<sup>5</sup> See D. B. Barrett, T. M. Johnson, "Global Statistics" in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 284-302, 284 for an explanation of these labels.

<sup>6</sup> Editors, "Did You Know? Little-known or remarkable facts about early Pentecostalism," *Christian History*. Issue 58, Vol. XVII, No. 2, 1998: 3-4, 3.

<sup>7</sup> See *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*.

## Purpose

### Contributing to the Emergence of Pentecostal Theologies

Until recently, many Pentecostal groups, if they have a statement of beliefs, have tended to borrow such statements from other Christian and religious traditions<sup>8</sup> and inserted into them what were considered Pentecostal “distinctives.”<sup>9</sup> Within Canada and the United States, Evangelical statements of faith were frequently adopted. However, during the past three decades, some Pentecostals have started to discuss the development of a particularly Pentecostal theology.<sup>10</sup> As recently as 1998 one systematic Pentecostal theologian, Amos Yong, bemoaned the controversial and as yet undeveloped nature of Pentecostal theology in an article entitled "Whither Systematic Theology? A Systematician Chimes in on a Scandalous Conversation" in *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*.<sup>11</sup> Echoing Yong's concern, a year later Pentecostal

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<sup>8</sup> See for example the discussion of some Pentecostal groups in Africa that openly admit the inclusion of both Christian and non Christian elements in their practices by Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 243-262.

<sup>9</sup> Whether they were in fact “distinctive” is debatable.

<sup>10</sup> Organizations such as the *Society for Pentecostal Studies* and the *European Pentecostal/Charismatic Research Association*, founded in the early 1970s, and the more recently established website *Pentecostal and Charismatic Inquiry International* have been created to address the need for scholarly discussion among Pentecostals/charismatics.

<sup>11</sup> Amos Yong, "Whither Systematic Theology? A Systematician Chimes in on a Scandalous Conversation" in *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Volume 20, Number 1, Spring 1998: 85-93.

theologian and former President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies,<sup>12</sup> Frank Macchia, also pointed out that a comprehensive and systematic Pentecostal theology has not yet been written.<sup>13</sup> Yet, due to the diversity within Pentecostalism, what will eventually and appropriately emerge are *theologies*, plural. This work hopes to assist in the continuing efforts to develop such theologies which honour and reflect the diversity of the global movement.

As Pentecostal theologizing of a scholarly nature is a recent enterprise, a great number of Pentecostal beliefs, as found in the preaching, telling of personal testimonials and songs, remain unexamined. Therefore, these oral, narrative expressions of beliefs as well as written sources shall be drawn upon.

Although Pentecostalism is a diverse global movement, the focus in this project will be on Pentecostalism in Canada particularly as expressed within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.<sup>14</sup> Aspects of the situation in the United States taken into consideration when such is deemed to be relevant to the Canadian scene. One of the intentions is to demonstrate that Pentecostalism has insights which intersect with the concerns of non-Pentecostal, Christian, feminist and secular communities.

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<sup>12</sup> "2000," *The Society for Pentecostal Studies: Commemorating Thirty Years of Annual Meetings, 1971-2001*, Mark E. Roberts, Ed., Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2001, 36.

<sup>13</sup> Frank Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology," *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Dempster, Murray W., Klaus, Byron D. and Petersen, Douglas, Eds. (UK, USA, Ghana, Argentina: Regnum Books International, 1999), 8.

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise noted within the context, within this project reference to Canadian Pentecostalism refers to that particular expression as embodied by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

## **Advocating for Canadian Pentecostal Women**

This thesis will explore whether or not, along with problematic practices and beliefs, Pentecostalism also contains ideas and rituals with rhetorical and symbolic significance expressing liberative potential for the actual lived realities of Canadian Pentecostal women both individually and communally. Placing these ideas and practices in a self-reflective, critical dialogue with carefully chosen conversation partners may illuminate any such emancipatory potential. Similar to the theological approach of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, the intention is to draw out the implications for Pentecostal women in order to further their interests since feminist theology is not only a scholarly, theoretic enterprise, it is also rooted in feminist action. Therefore, a first step in the development of a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation is demonstrating that women have been and continue to be ignored and oppressed and then analyzing some implications of that fact. In this sense, a generalized purpose of this project is to contribute to the ongoing search for and refinement of both Pentecostal and feminist critical theory and theology.

### **Participants in the Dialogue**

The following are the major participants whose work will be considered in this exploration of the possibility of developing a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation.

## **Pentecostalism**

Pentecostalism is a movement that emerged in several different places and in many different forms in the opening years of the twentieth century. Many Pentecostals, although definitely not all, point to the Azusa Street Revival as a sort of corporate myth of beginnings. Azusa Street is the label given to events that started in 1906 centered on the Apostolic Faith Mission located at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California established by William J. Seymour, the son of ex-slaves.<sup>15</sup> While the core membership only numbered around 50 or 60, around 300-350 worshippers crowded into the building to attend the services.<sup>16</sup> Outside, crowds of up to 1500 people attempted to join in on the Sunday services by listening to the sounds drifting through the windows.<sup>17</sup> Hundreds of people visited this center and returned to their home areas spreading the Pentecostal gospel in the process. Azusa Street has been directly credited with the establishment of various black, white and ethnic congregations throughout the world.<sup>18</sup> Many of these

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<sup>15</sup> H. V. Synan, "Seymour, William Joseph" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, Eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988): 778-781.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 346-347.

<sup>17</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006), 6-7.

<sup>18</sup> C. M. Robeck, Jr., "Azusa Street Revival," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, Eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988): 31-36, p. 34.

congregations are led by women.<sup>19</sup> Today the majority of Pentecostal congregations are in the so-called two-thirds world.<sup>20</sup> Several of these congregations developed independent of any connection to any missionary endeavour on the part of American or Canadian Pentecostals. In recent decades, as these various Pentecostal groups from different parts of the globe compared research with one another, the stories of Pentecostalism's beginnings are found to be much more diverse than pointing to one time or place or leader can encapsulate.<sup>21</sup> The movement today manifests the diversity of its beginnings.<sup>22</sup>

### **Canadian Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements**

At the risk of oversimplifying the fluid complexity and interaction of the movements of the Spirit within Canada, Ron Kydd, a former President of the Society for

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<sup>19</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 137-138.

<sup>20</sup> See D. B. Barrett; T. M. Johnson, 301.

<sup>21</sup> See Various Authors, "PART 1: Global Survey," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 3-282.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the multiplicity and diversity within Pentecostalism see Everett A. Wilson, "They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn't They? Critical History and Pentecostal Beginnings," *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made To Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, Douglas Petersen, Eds. (Oxford, California, Ghana, Argentina, India: Regnum Books International, 1999), 85-115, 105 and Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven*.

Pentecostal Studies,<sup>23</sup> has claimed that there have been “two major pulses of the Spirit.” The first coincided with the American Azusa Street Revival. The second was in the middle of the twentieth century in what has come to be known as the Charismatic Renewal. These two pulses “have constantly interacted with each other with indebtedness and influence passing back and forth freely.”<sup>24</sup> Two major differences have been used to distinguish between the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. The first is theological. The second is ecclesiastical. Theologically, and admittedly oversimplified and not entirely accurate, Pentecostals have been said to understand “Spirit baptism” as “a work of grace subsequent to conversion, in which Spirit baptism is evidenced by glossolalia (speaking in tongues).” Charismatics, “do not always advocate either the necessity of a second work of grace or the evidence of glossolalia as an affirmation of Spirit baptism.”<sup>25</sup> Using this differentiation, I would be considered a Charismatic. Yet, I am a third generation Pentecostal.

Ecclesiastically and again admittedly oversimplified, Pentecostals are those who are actively involved in a classical Pentecostal group. Charismatics are those with

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<sup>23</sup> “1988,” *The Society for Pentecostal Studies: Commemorating Thirty Years of Annual Meetings, 1971-2001*, Mark E. Roberts, Ed., Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2001, 25.

<sup>24</sup> R. A. N. Kydd, “Canada,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 48-51, 48.

<sup>25</sup> “Introduction,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): xvii-xxiii, xxi.

connections to “mainline denominations,” such as Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran. Illustrating the fluidity and complexity of categorizing Pentecostals and Charismatics, Kydd then defines a third category, “Neocharismatics” as those who are active in “independent, postdenominational, nondenominational, or indigenous groups or organizations, such as the Vineyard Christian Fellowship.”<sup>26</sup> In this differentiation, I would be considered a Pentecostal as my grandparents and parents were involved in identifiably classical Pentecostal groups although I might, mistakenly in my opinion, be categorized as a “Neocharismatic” due to the emphasis on independent congregational polity within the Fellowship of Christian Assemblies where I am a member and ordained minister.<sup>27</sup>

Together the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement within Canada numbers approximately 4,425,000<sup>28</sup> forming a significant percentage of the membership of the Canadian churches and society as a whole. Classical Pentecostalism which does not include the Charismatic movement makes up about half a million or only approximately one ninth of this number.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Joseph R. Colletti, “Lewi Pethrus: His Influence Upon Scandinavian-American Pentecostalism,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies: An International Organization of Scholars Working Within the Charismatic Tradition*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall 1983): 18-29, 24.

<sup>28</sup> Kydd, “Canada,” 48.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-51.

### **The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC)**

Tracing their origins to Acts 2 and the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in the United States early within the twentieth century, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) was chartered in 1919.<sup>30</sup> From its beginnings the PAOC closely interacted with its counterparts in the States. As one commentator explains it,<sup>31</sup>

Within months of the outpouring of the spirit at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, Pentecostalism had taken root in Canada. By 1910 it had spread to both coasts, with comparatively large concentrations in Toronto and Winnipeg. In the early decades of the century, the Prairie Provinces had the largest proportions of Pentecostals relative to their population size. Not coincidentally these provinces also had the largest proportions of immigrants from the U.S. It has often been observed that throughout the history of the country, Canadian sectarianism has been fundamentally American (U.S.) in nature, and in no case has this been truer than for PAOC. Alongside American brethren, Canadian Pentecostals have dynamic Christian experiences focusing simultaneously on Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Originally when the PAOC organized, the intention had been to join the “interracial Oneness”<sup>32</sup> Pentecostal Assemblies of the World (PAW) headquartered in the United States.<sup>33</sup> “Oneness” or “Jesus Only” Pentecostals adhere to a “modalist view of

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<sup>30</sup> *Vital Statistics: Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Fellowship Data for 2005*, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Website, paoc.org.

<sup>31</sup> R. A. N. Kydd, “Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,” *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 961-964, 961.

<sup>32</sup> D. A. Reed, “Pentecostal Assemblies of the World,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 965.

<sup>33</sup> Kydd, “Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,” 961.

God, a doctrine of the name of Jesus, and an insistence upon re-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” thereby challenging the “traditional Trinitarian doctrine and baptismal practice.”<sup>34</sup> R. E. McAlister, one of the charter members of the PAOC was the figure who had provided the “initial impetus for the Oneness movement” when he preached a sermon on baptism in a “highly publicized international pentecostal camp meeting” in 1913. In this message he,<sup>35</sup>

...proposed that the reason that the apostles baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (variations in Acts) instead of the triune name commanded by Jesus (Matt. 28:19) was that they understood “Lord-Jesus-Christ” to be the Christological equivalent of “Father-Son-Holy Spirit.”

However, the intention to join the PAW never materialized. Instead, in “1919 McAlister formally renounced the ‘Oneness’ doctrine”<sup>36</sup> and in 1920 the PAOC aligned itself with the Trinitarian Assemblies of God (AG). This alliance with the AG lasted until 1925 when the two Pentecostal groups amicably went their separate ways.<sup>37</sup> By the 1950s, the PAOC had not only grown numerically but also economically, so much so, that “the *Pentecostal Testimony* carried articles that promoted private enterprise and investment and that showed how money could be used to further denominational

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<sup>34</sup> D. A. Reed, “Oneness Pentecostalism,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 936-944, 936.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 937-938.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas William Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, William A. Griffin, Ed. (Full Gospel Publishing House: Mississauga, Ontario, 1994), 65.

<sup>37</sup> Kydd, “The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,” 961-962.

objectives.” By the 1970s, “a national stewardship department was created in order to provide investment counselling and estate planning” and at least two churches, one in Edmonton and one in Winnipeg, were built with a seating capacity of 2000 and 2500 respectively. The last two decades of the twentieth century was a time of turmoil and organizational restructuring for the PAOC.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, it appears to have entered the twenty-first century intact, having established itself as a permanent player in the Canadian landscape.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada’s primary national periodical established in 1920, the *Pentecostal Testimony*, listed 27 churches in 1920. By 2005 there were 1107 churches, 3430 credential holders and 242,873 people who identify themselves as affiliated with this fellowship.<sup>39</sup> The “13 long-established Canadian Pentecostal groups” and the newer Pentecostal “fellowships of networks” together have almost as many members bringing the combined number of classical Canadian Pentecostals to 504,551.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, due to its relative size and organization, the PAOC exerts a major influence on the other classical Pentecostal groups.

### **The Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS)**

Harvey Cox, one of the very few academics outside of Pentecostalism within Canada and the United States to take Pentecostalism seriously, has stated,

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 963.

<sup>39</sup> *Vital Statistics: Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Fellowship Data for 2005*.

<sup>40</sup> Kydd, “Canada,” 48-51.

No one now denies that the Pentecostal-Charismatic is the fastest growing and most vigorous wing of Christianity. But not until the splendid work of the SPS [Society for Pentecostal Studies] started bearing fruit did it begin to become evident that this movement is also generating a theological conversation that will enlarge and deepen the entire Christian intellectual enterprise. I have been challenged, enriched and stretched by my many contacts with SPS and its members. The SPS represents voices we need to hear from, now more than ever.<sup>41</sup>

The Society of Pentecostal Studies was founded in 1970 by four men: William Menzies, Russell Spittler (both of whom were members of the Assemblies of God), Vinson Synon (from the Pentecostal Holiness Church) and Horace Ward (of the Church of God). At the time, the Society planned "to serve the church world by providing an authoritative interpretation of the Pentecostal Movement" by highlighting scholarship about Pentecostalism by Pentecostal scholars.<sup>42</sup> Its purpose was later revised to include the provision for a "form of discussion for all academic disciplines as a spiritual service to the kingdom of God" through the encouragement and recognition of both Pentecostal scholars and the implications of Pentecostal perspectives to other academic disciplines, as well as "to support fully, to the extent appropriate for an academic Society, the statement of purposes of the World Pentecostal Fellowship..."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Mark E. Roberts, Ed., *The Society for Pentecostal Studies: Commemorating Thirty Years of Annual Meetings, 1971-2001*, Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2001, v.

<sup>42</sup> *The Society for Pentecostal Studies: A Brief History*, "Adapted from an article written by Kate McGinn and D. William Faupel which appeared in the December issue of *Ecumenism*," 1, Society for Pentecostal Studies website.

<sup>43</sup> Society for Pentecostal Studies' *Constitution and By-Laws*, Revised November 13, 1993, *Constitution*, Article II: Purpose.

By 1982 the SPS broadened its agenda to include participation from scholars from other Christian churches not affiliated with the classical Pentecostal movement. In the years that followed a number of “firsts” for the organization occurred related to the office of president: in 1985 the first charismatic, J. Rodman Williams, a Presbyterian, became president; in 1986 the first Roman Catholic (and presumably Charismatic), Father Peter Hocken; in 1987 the first woman, Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer; in 1988, the first non-American, Ronald Kydd from Canada; in 1989, the first non-Pentecostal (and presumably non-Charismatic), Donald Dayton, a Wesleyan; and in 1990, the first Oneness Pentecostal, Manuel Gaxiola-Gaxiola, of Mexico.<sup>44</sup> In 1987 the SPS became affiliated with the Council of Societies for the Study of Religion in the United States. More recently, ethnic reconciliation, particularly among classical Pentecostalism with its African American roots, has been highlighted. Currently, as Russ Spittler explains, “the SPS faces a delicate balance between its growing acceptance among scholarly and ecumenical circles and its mixed reception on the part of the classical Pentecostal establishment.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> R. P. Spittler, “Society for Pentecostal Studies,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 1079-1080, 1079.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

## Critical Theory

The term “critical theory” itself was first used in 1937 by Max Horkheimer.<sup>46</sup>

Critical theory is historically associated with the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) established in 1923 in affiliation with the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany during the early years of the Weimar Republic.

Particularly under the tutelage of Max Horkheimer who became the Institute’s director in 1930, the Frankfurt School, as it eventually became known, was a radical, multidisciplinary school of social and cultural criticism, social research and philosophy.<sup>47</sup>

The early Frankfurt School drew heavily upon Hegel and Marx for its approach and orientation.<sup>48</sup> Then again, the Frankfurt School went far beyond their work. Bringing together such streams of thinking as historical materialism, social psychology, phenomenology, scepticism and romanticism, the Frankfurt School also drew upon the works of George Lukács, Ernst Bloch, George Simmel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud and others.<sup>49</sup> Many of the methods and disciplines involved in the Frankfurt School’s multidisciplinary approach were seminal or relatively new. The

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<sup>46</sup> Tom Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School* (New York: Tavistock Publications and Ellis Horwood Limited, 1984), 12-14. See also Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), 16.

<sup>47</sup> Eduardo Mendieta, “Introduction: Religion as Critique,” in Eduardo Mendieta, Ed., *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005): 1-17, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Jonathan Wolff, *Why Read Marx Today?* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 14-16.

<sup>49</sup> Mendieta, 7.

Frankfurt School's efforts were instrumental in these various methods' development as recognized and credible means and areas of scholarly exploration. Somewhat paradoxically, the Frankfurt School's revision of Marxism has also been a major factor in the renewed interest in Marxism within the Western world since the late 1960s.<sup>50</sup>

The history of the Institute and the Frankfurt School has been divided into four main periods of development. Between 1923 and 1933 when the emphasis was empirical and historical, the approach to Marxism was economic and traditional. The first director of the Institute, Carl Grünberg, considered Marxism to be a social science. Therefore, it wasn't until after his retirement and Max Horkheimer's assumption of the directorship that the emphasis and approach broadened.

The second period which ran from 1933 until 1950 involved exile in America. It was during this period that a distinctive, neo-Hegelian critical theory was formulated under Horkheimer's leadership. It was also during this second period that many of the members of the Institution survived the Nazi era through exile, first in Switzerland and then, in 1934, in New York, thus allowing the Institute to become an influential center of social theory in the decades following World War II. Once the Institute returned to Frankfurt in 1951, the name the Frankfurt School was coined.

During the third period, from the 1950s to the early 1970s, the Frankfurt School reached its greatest influence. German social thinking, the 1950s "New Left" in Europe

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<sup>50</sup> See for example Craig Calhoun and Joseph Karaganis, "Critical Theory" in *Handbook of Social Theory*, George Ritzer and Barry Smart, Eds. (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 179-200.

and the United States and the radical student movements of the 1960s all reflected the political and intellectual vitality of the School at this time.

The fourth period involving declining influence and ultimately dissolution coincided with the deaths of Adorno in 1969 and Horkheimer in 1973. Since then, major revisions have occurred by scholars such as Jürgen Habermas.<sup>51</sup> This project will draw upon the second through fourth periods of the School. While several theorists interacted with or were engaged in the work of the Frankfurt School, I will primarily be concerned with the work of Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.

### **Feminist Theologians**

#### **Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza**

The primary feminist theologian whose work will be engaged is Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. As a Roman Catholic, feminist, biblical theologian who works within the reformist stream of Christian feminism, Schüssler Fiorenza not only uses critical theory in her work,<sup>52</sup> she also remains committed to the Christian tradition as a potentially emancipatory and meaningful part of many women's lives. As a Reformist

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<sup>51</sup> Bottomore, pp. 12-14. See also Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), Chapter 1 and Wiggershaus.

<sup>52</sup> See for example, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 4, 7; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation" in *Theological Studies* 37 (1975): 606 – 626, 612; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation" in *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroad, 1993, 1994): 53-79, 54; Schüssler Fiorenza criticizes the fact that many reviewers have discussed her "dialogue with or dependence on" the "masters' of hermeneutics," including the Frankfurt School, without

feminist theologian, while analyzing the oppressive elements within the Christian churches and tradition, Schüssler Fiorenza continues to find meaning within Christianity. Therefore, she chooses to remain within the churches and work to reform them by drawing “its theological power ... not from ‘secular’ (whatever that means) feminism but from the Christian tradition of the *basileia*, the vision of G-d’s<sup>53</sup> alternative world, a vision of justice, human dignity, equality, and salvation for all.”<sup>54</sup> Among Reformist feminist theologians there are many different approaches. Schüssler Fiorenza insists that “the central spiritual and religious feminist quest is the quest for women’s self-affirmation, survival, power, and self-determination.”<sup>55</sup> Convinced that “particular feminist discourses are not only shaped by their cultural-religious location” but are, additionally, “also defined through their interface and interaction with feminist

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inquiring as to the “intellectual ‘foresisters’” who have influenced her work. *Sharing Her Word*, 72.

<sup>53</sup> In recognition that language is “not capable of adequately expressing the Divine,” Schüssler Fiorenza first used this manner of spelling God and later G\*d. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cartography of Struggle,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994: 1-12, 10, n. 13. In her book, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*, ESF “switched from the orthodox Jewish writing of G-d which she had adopted in *But She Said* and *Discipleship of Equals* in order to indicate the brokenness and inadequacy of human language to name the Divine to this spelling of G\*d, which seeks to avoid the conservative malestream association which the writing of G-d has for Jewish feminists.” Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophialogy,” in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, xxxv, n. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cartography of Struggle,” p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Will to Choose or to Reject: Continuing Our Critical Work,” *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Letty M. Russell, Ed. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press 1985): 125-136, 126.

movements and theoretical articulations,”<sup>56</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza remains connected with the various global women’s movements.

Schüssler Fiorenza recognizes that “feminism” and “feminist theology” are sometimes viewed as “‘dirty words’ associated with ideological bias and heresy.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore, she explains how she uses and understands the word “feminism”, or more accurately “feminisms”, as there are many variations involving “not only a political movement akin to other emancipatory movements but also an intellectual methodology for investigating and theorizing the experience and structures” of the oppression of women.<sup>58</sup> Her “preferred definition” is found on many bumper stickers which state, “Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.” This definition not only “alludes to the democratic assertion ‘We, the people,’” thereby positioning “feminism within radical democratic discourses that argue for the rights and well-being of all people without exception,” it also highlights the contradictory notions that feminism is both a “commonsense” idea and yet at the same time a radical concept. Many within the Western world would agree that women are people who deserve freedom from discrimination, violence and sexual harassment along with equal pay for equal work. Unfortunately, whenever it is pointed out that such freedom is not always the case and that changes are in order, the pointing out is deemed radical and either opposed or

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<sup>56</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophialogy,” xvi.

<sup>57</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

dismissed. Nonetheless, all “feminisms” challenge the idea that sex is “innate or ordained” by God and confront “elite male supremacy.”<sup>59</sup> Within theological contexts, Christian feminism asserts that women are people of God and critiques any authorities, structural systems, doctrines or assumptions (conscious or unconscious) that deny women their full flourishing even as it “indicts the death-dealing powers of oppression as structural sin and life-destroying evil.”<sup>60</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza is not seeking the “full humanity” of women because in her opinion “humanity as we know it is male defined.” Rather, she is seeking “women’s religious self-affirmation, power, and liberation from all patriarchal alienation, marginalization, and oppression.”<sup>61</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza recognizes that among feminists the word “feminist” itself is problematic. While seeking to uphold the rights of various women to name their own work in light of their particular struggles, she cautions that “a proliferation of ... self-designations ... easily could lead to the fragmentation and division of feminist theology and movement” in such a manner as to serve the interests of dominate powers who could then dismiss the various factions as “special interest groups.” In place of such fragmentation, she suggests conceptualizing “debates over self-naming as open political discourses that are to be again and again problematized, destabilized, and defined

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 2-4.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Will to Choose or to Reject,” 126.

different” in an “open ended” fashion in order to prevent the reification of the word “feminist” as a middle class, Caucasian, “essentialist Euro-American” undertaking.<sup>62</sup>

### **Marsha A. Hewitt**

In her work, Marsha Hewitt attempts to highlight the areas of convergence within feminist liberation thought with critical theory, while at the same time uncovering and examining the sexist tendencies within critical theory itself. She claims that, as a comprehensive critique of society, culture and religion, critical theory allows feminist religious thought to move beyond theological resources to include social and political critique in its furtherance and practical manifestation of feminist goals.<sup>63</sup>

Hewitt views feminism as an advocacy position, which theorizes “in the service of” women as part of a “political commitment to transforming women’s condition ... through active struggles for the liberation of women and all humanity.” As such, feminism is “a particular form of critical consciousness” which intentionally focuses on “the subjugation of women through the theory and practice of liberation.”<sup>64</sup> A feminist critical theory of religion encourages critical thinking and reflection on the real life conditions in which women live.

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<sup>62</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophiology,” xx.

<sup>63</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “Dialectic of Hope: The Feminist Liberation Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as a Feminist Critical Theory,” *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, Fernando F. Segovia, Ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003): 443-458, 444-445.

While feminism itself does not aspire to be either “a monolithic theory” or “unitary political practice,” it does have a “central preoccupation,” that is, “domination” and “a critique of domination” as part of its “critique of oppression.” Similarly, “feminist critical theory ... seeks to comprehend the phenomenon of domination and its integral role in the development of Western civilization,” as well as to conceptualize strategies for overcoming it.”<sup>65</sup> As Hewitt explains,<sup>66</sup>

A critical understanding of the reasons for oppression, as well as the knowledge that it is unnecessary and thus open to change, is itself part of the process of emancipation of those who are exploited. A feminist must be critically educated to be critically conscious of the mechanisms and forms of domination that structure and mediate most women’s experiences as well as committed to changing all such forms and mechanisms.

Hewitt’s work shall not only be utilized throughout this project, the connections that she makes between critical theory and feminist religious thought forms part of the basis for it. Bringing Pentecostalism into conversation with select critical theorists and feminist religious theologians is unique to this dissertation.

## Summary

These then are the primary participants in the discussion to follow. While possibly seeming an unwieldy number of dialogue partners, not all of these participants

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<sup>65</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “Chapter 15: The Negative Power of ‘The Feminine’: Herbert Marcuse, Mary Daly and Gynocentric Feminism,” *Gender, Genre and Religion: Feminist Reflections*, Morny Joy and Eva K. Neumaier-Dargyay, Eds. (Wilfred Laurier University Press for The Calgary Institute for the Humanities: Waterloo, Ontario, 1995): 257-275, 257.

<sup>66</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “Dialectic of Hope: The Feminist Liberation Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as a Feminist Critical Theory,” *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, Fernando F. Segovia, Ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003): 443-458, 445.

will engage in each and every issue. The exploration will not try to be comprehensive, primarily due to space limitation. Even so, these authors and their work are important due to their potential for constructing a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation in the tradition of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. At no time is this attempt to lay the foundation for a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation intended as being in any way anti-Pentecostal or as intimating that individuals involved in Pentecostalism were consciously seeking to be malicious or intentionally setting out to mistreat women. Rather, an attempt will be made to demonstrate that women have been ignored and oppressed within Pentecostalism and are thus in need of liberation, along with an exploration of some of the factors involved in both their oppression and liberation.

## **Approach**

### **Choice of Material**

The specific topics selected for discussion shall arise from the goal stated above, that is, to demonstrate that, along with problematic practices and beliefs, Pentecostalism also contains ideas and rituals with rhetorical and symbolic significance expressing liberative potential for the actual lived realities of Canadian Pentecostal women both individually and communally. More specifically, topics selected for discussion shall be drawn from the practices and teachings of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as the largest Pentecostal group within Canada wherein many Pentecostal women worship and minister and the Society for Pentecostal Studies as a representation of one of Pentecostalism's global, scholarly communities. In short, the well being of Canadian

Pentecostal women shall establish the agenda with which feminist theology, critical theory and Pentecostal attempts at theologizing shall engage.

### **“Constellating”**

The methodological approach of this project will be drawn from critical theory, that is, “constellating” various ideas in a non-synthesizing dialogue in the hopes of illuminating both liberative and oppression practices and beliefs for the purposes of evaluation. Walter Benjamin is associated with the practice of “constellating” involving the highlighting of particular “stars” not typically considered together in order to form and illumine different pictures and ideas than what might be possible by simply using known constellations of stars. Rather than relying on abstract categories, Benjamin “constellated” ideas. As he explains, “Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.” While constellations are ever moving, they are given an interpretation that arises from their arrangement. By analogy, ideas, when allowed to shift from their historical contexts to form new constellations of ideas, can display new meanings.<sup>67</sup>

Theodor Adorno utilized Benjamin’s method of constellating various ideas and items in order to illuminate that which might be hidden in the typical dualistic patterns of historical reality. As he explains, “the constellation illuminates the specific side of the object, the side which to a classifying procedure is either a matter of indifference or burden ....” In the process, the “history ... in the individual and outside of it ...” within which the individual is encompassed and has its place may be unlocked. Part of what

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<sup>67</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Origins of German Tragic Drama*, John Osborne, Translator (London: NLB, 1977), 34-35.

may be illumined and unlocked includes the illusions and tragedies of concrete, historical reality with all of its dialectical tensions.<sup>68</sup>

### Overview of the Project

With Schüssler Fiorenza's cautions and suggestions in mind, this project will be named a Pentecostal, critical feminist theology of liberation both to recognize its particularity from within the Pentecostal movement as well as its commonalities and continuities with the wider critical feminist theologies of liberation.

In the pages which follow, the need for and possibilities of a Pentecostal feminist, critical theology of liberation shall be explored by constellating it with representatives of the early Frankfurt School and particular feminist theologians who utilize critical theory in their work, in order to shed light on those aspects of Pentecostalism which oppress women and those which hold potential for their emancipation. Still, at no time will a synthesis of the various discussion partners be attempted. This project will not seek to reconcile the material or to offer an apology for Pentecostalism or feminist and/or critical theory. Rather, arguments and counter-arguments will be assessed on the basis of what furthers the declared goal of the thesis: the flourishing of women, particularly those within Canadian Pentecostalism.

The major stars to be illuminated in various combinations in the constellations are representative writings of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and the Society for

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<sup>68</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (E. B. Ashton, Trans. New York: Continuum, 1966, 1973), 162-163.

Pentecostal Studies along with works of critical theorists Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno from the early Frankfurt School and feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as well as various others as deemed pertinent.

The explorations will be located in actual historical events; more specifically, certain aspects of the history of ministering women within the twentieth century Pentecostal movement, particularly as it unfolded in Canada. Issues and concerns for a development of a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation will be addressed by intentionally using the historical involvement of women within Pentecostalism as a case study and a lens. By grounding this work in the actual lived experiences of Pentecostal women, the implications for and relevancy of the theoretical work will be highlighted. This historical grounding is in keeping with the concerns of the Frankfurt School and feminist theologians.

This dissertation will, following this introduction in Chapter one, in Chapter two discuss the shifts in thought that are involved in the development of a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation including the differences between traditional theorizing and critical theory, critical theory of religion, feminist critical theory of religion, and finally Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation. With Chapter three, the concrete example of ministering women within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada will be explored thereby demonstrating that Pentecostal women have always been active subjects and agents within Pentecostalism. Chapter four will overview typical explanations given for the situations of those ministering Pentecostal women along with an argument for the need for an explicitly feminist approach. Chapter five

will return to theoretical aspects of the project, with the situation of Pentecostal women in mind, in order to launch a detailed, deep critique of that situation through a discussion of the nature and power of enlightenment rationality generally throughout history, and more specifically within the PAOC, in conversation with Adorno and Horkheimer. Discussion of identity thinking and its operation within Pentecostalism, particularly as it pertains to the oppression of women, will be highlighted in Chapter six through an examination of the thinking of Adorno and Schüssler Fiorenza on the topic. Chapter seven will explicitly deal with two major sources of authority that have been used to dominate women. The first will be Pentecostalism's identification with fundamentalism. Such identification will be analyzed and refuted. The second will be the use of the Scriptures. The attribution of authority to particular interpretations and interpreters of Scriptures will be examined. Its potentially liberative use within a Pentecostal critical feminist community will be suggested as well. Chapter eight will explore the hope involved in the use of utopic thinking coupled with Adorno's negative dialectic in provisionally transforming Pentecostalism towards an emancipatory praxis. Finally, a conclusion in Chapter nine will summarize the project before making suggestions for further exploration.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **TOWARDS A PENTECOSTAL, CRITICAL, FEMINIST THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION**

### **Introduction**

The Early Frankfurt School utilized religion in its project of criticizing contemporary society. The following chapter will be an attempt to set the groundwork, in a manner that both Pentecostals and academia might understand, for the beginnings of the development of a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation. In keeping with its status as foundational, this project will start with an overview of critical theory of religion and its relationship to critical theory generally before moving on to feminist critical theory of religion and the feminist critical theology of liberation of Schüssler Fiorenza. Finally the necessity of the development of a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation will be demonstrated.

### **Traditional Versus Critical Theory**

In his 1937 essay, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” written while he was in exile

in the United States,<sup>1</sup> Horkheimer produced what has been called the “manifesto” of the Frankfurt School.<sup>2</sup> In this essay Horkheimer denounced Western culture’s traditional approach to theorizing as a closed, value-laden, contradiction-free, mathematical-like process which legitimated “the rest of life in a society dominated by industrial production techniques.” As he explained it, traditional theory functions as “stored-up knowledge, put in a form that makes it useful for the closest possible description of facts.” Its goal was a “universal systematic science, not limited to any particular subject matter but embracing all possible objects.” In this way, “the conception of theory” becomes “absolutized, as though it were grounded in the inner nature of knowledge as such or justified in some other ahistorical way.”<sup>3</sup> In the end, an illusionary disconnect and division of labour between the theorizing and its results as well as intellectual and other societal activities is created and maintained.<sup>4</sup> Critical theory responded to this situation.

Early in his career, in his essay entitled “Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History,” Horkheimer insisted that ideas can only be understood within their context. He soundly criticized “modern philosophy” for proclaiming its theories “definitive and

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 360.

<sup>2</sup> John McCole, Seyla Benhabib, and Wolfgang Bonb, eds., “Introduction: Max Horkheimer: Between Philosophy and Social Science,” *On Max Horkheimer: New Perspectives* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press, 1993): 1-22, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Max Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, Matthew J. O’Connell and Others, Trans. (New York: Continuum, 1972) : 188-243, 188-194.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

final” while all “previously held convictions” and “past intellectual achievements” were labelled “deception,” “error” or the “product either of an impoverished conscience or of an impoverished understanding.” Horkheimer agreed with Hegel that “ideas that emerge in the course of history” can only be understood by comprehending the “historical contexts, i.e. once we see their relation to all spheres of social life.” Empirical and historical contexts are essential to explore and understand.<sup>5</sup> In particular, “... it is impossible to understand the content or nature of people’s intellectual makeup without knowledge of the epoch in which they live, or indeed ... without knowing the specific position they occupy in the social production process.”<sup>6</sup> This does not, according to Horkheimer, lead to “historical relativism.” Rather, all human knowledge and “intellectual advances” are “subject not only to analysis but also to verification and, in certain cases, to change.”<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to traditional theory, Horkheimer outlined an open-ended, historical and socially grounded “critical theory,” which was consciously aware of “the influence of social development on the structure of theory.”<sup>8</sup> With an emancipatory concern for the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Max Horkheimer, “Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History,” *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, G. Frederick Hunter, Matthew S. Kramer, and John Torpey, Trans., G. Frederick Hunter, “Introduction,” (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The MIT Press, 1993, 1995): 313-388, 358-361.

<sup>7</sup> Horkheimer, “Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History,” *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, 362.

<sup>8</sup> Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, 188-243, 238.

“reasonable conditions of life,”<sup>9</sup> Horkheimer’s critical theory focused on “a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally, in the resultant web of relationships within the social totality and with nature.”<sup>10</sup> His approach was also suspicious of any claims to be progressive, against positivism in any form and rejected the use of conceptual systems to discover supposedly objective facts. At the same time, recognizing the necessity for caution in that critical theory “itself emerges from the social structure,” Horkheimer maintained the acknowledgement of the historical and social constitution of knowledge coupled with an intentional and critical awareness of theory’s power to transform. With such power, it was his hope that critical theory would become part of an emancipatory project leading to a more humane existence.<sup>11</sup>

### **Critical Theory of Religion**

From the beginning, Horkheimer’s views on religion were almost seamlessly interconnected with his interdisciplinary and materialistic approach to analyzing human life.<sup>12</sup> Horkheimer scoffed at the idea that reason and religion were completely different and opposed to one another. In fact, in his essay entitled “Beginnings of the Bourgeois

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 199.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 200, 211.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 218.

<sup>12</sup> Horkheimer, “The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute for Social Research,” *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings*, 1.

Philosophy of History,” Horkheimer pointed out the “religious” nature of much of thinking since the Enlightenment as “the confidence of the belief in itself and in a trans-temporal truth” removed from its “temporal and spatial” context. As he explains it, “Just as the true believer sorted out heretics from saints on the basis of revelation taken to be eternal truth, bourgeois materialist philosophy distinguishes deceivers and fools from martyrs and sages based on its own ‘reason.’ Anything that aligned itself with that ‘reason’ was considered ‘chance occurrences of genius.’” As reason since the Enlightenment was understood to remain “forever the same, and ... we are able, here and now, to grasp truth in all its manifold varieties for all time,” an ahistorical and noncontextual “thumbs-up or thumbs-down” was given to all “cultural phenomena of the past” and ideas “torn out of their original context, compared to one’s own views, and then either cast aside or approved of” without ever having to make the effort to understand the historical context.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast to such religiously endowed reason and anti-intellectual religion, Horkheimer placed religion and reason in an ongoing dialectical relationship which not only negated the original but also preserved it in the newer ongoing syntheses. In this sense, the dualistic antagonism between religion and reason, stemming from at least the time of the Enlightenment and in evidence to this day was subsumed. Rather than simply explaining the development of religion, Horkheimer attempted to discern what was “essential” and “critical” within the impulse to religiosity through an “inner critique of religion.” This inner critique allowed for the measurement of “what is religiously the

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 358-359.

case by what the religion itself claims to be, in order to recognize in this contradiction the potentials of the possibilities of change.”<sup>14</sup> Horkheimer and the other critical theorists critiqued religion in the hopes of a more just and peaceful existence for humankind.

### **Feminist Critical Theory of Religion**

Feminist critical theory of religion, as suggested by Marsha Hewitt, is a revisioning of feminist theory and religious thinking which takes into consideration both critical theory and feminist goals in order to mount an intentional and self-conscious "counterdiscourse of modernity."<sup>15</sup> As she states, <sup>16</sup>

As a theory of the emancipatory potential of reason and as an immanent critique of the historical forms of domination which are the concrete expressions of reason as instrumentality and mastery, the tradition of critical theory offers a rich theoretical resource for liberation movements in its capacity to function as their critical self-consciousness. In particular, critical theory lends itself most appropriately in this role to feminism, since feminism is also a theoretical and immanent critique of domination...

In Hewitt's opinion, there are political and theoretical similarities between critical theory and feminist religious thought. Both critical theory and feminist religious thought are concerned to critique in such a way that oppression and injustice can be abolished. Both involve utopian hopes for a more humane and just relationship between human

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<sup>14</sup> Rudolph J. Siebert, *The Critical Theory of Religion*, Copyright by Rudolph J. Siebert, 2001. First posted on the World Wide Web on Nov. 9, 2001, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Marsha Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 35.

<sup>16</sup> Marsha Hewitt, "The Politics of Empowerment: Ethical Paradigms in a Feminist Critique of Critical Social Theory," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1991): 173-192, 174.

beings and between human beings and nature. Both go beyond a strictly theological approach to include broader cultural realities. Critical theory does so by focusing on the distortions and cruelties of human existence through the explicit use of religious language, feminist religious thought by utilizing social and political theory in a sustained critique of domination and oppression.<sup>17</sup> Hewitt claims that, as a comprehensive critique of society, culture and religion, critical theory allows feminist religious thought to move beyond theological resources to include social and political critiques in its furtherance and practical manifestation of feminist goals. Concrete conditions are examined with an emancipatory agenda in mind including the potentially liberative characteristics of a religion and the non-religious interlocking structures of domination and oppression which form the context for the religious. As such a process encourages critical thinking and reflection on the real life conditions in which women live, it points toward the possibility of liberative and critical feminist theological thinking.<sup>18</sup> The rationale for the selection of the dialogue partners in this project is based upon these insights of Hewitt. However, as there are not yet any Pentecostal critical feminist theologians, how this deepening and critique might unfold must be explored.

Hewitt views feminism as an advocacy position which theorizes “in the service of” women as part of a “political commitment to transforming women’s conditions ... through active struggles for the liberation of women and all humanity.” As such, feminism is “a particular form of critical consciousness” which intentionally focuses on

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<sup>17</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 228.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 1-3.

“the subjugation of women through the theory and practice of liberation.”<sup>19</sup> Resonating with the “Marxian notion of class consciousness,” feminists seek not only to raise awareness of the fact that they are an exploited group but also to “*understand why (sic)*” this exploitation occurs. As she explains, “a critical understanding of the reasons for oppression, as well as the knowledge that it is unnecessary and thus open to change, is itself part of the process of emancipation of those who are exploited.” Therefore being “critically conscious of the mechanisms and forms of domination that structure and mediate most women’s experiences as well as” being “committed to changing all such mechanisms and forms” is necessary.<sup>20</sup> A feminist critical theory of religion encourages critical thinking and reflection on the real life conditions in which women live.

### **Schüssler Fiorenza**

In spite of the obvious need of a feminist critique as Hewitt has highlighted,<sup>21</sup> the work of some contemporary feminist theologians echo themes of concern by various members of the early Frankfurt School. One such feminist is Schüssler Fiorenza who attempts to develop her own critical feminist theology of liberation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “Dialectic of Hope: The Feminist Liberation Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as a Feminist Critical Theory,” *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, Fernando F. Segovia, Ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003): 443-458, 444-445.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 444-445.

<sup>21</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 37ff.

<sup>22</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Theological Studies* 36 (1975): 605-626.

Schüssler Fiorenza uses the word “critical” to describe her liberation theology both to indicate her indebtedness to the work of Jürgen Habermas and to distinguish it from Latin American, “hermeneutic-liberal” theologies as well as “black liberation theologies.”<sup>23</sup> Additionally, in her opinion, “the Frankfurt School provides a key for a hermeneutic understanding that ... uncovers and criticizes Christian traditions and theologies that have stimulated and perpetuated violence, alienation, and oppression.”<sup>24</sup> Referring to the work of Habermas, Schüssler Fiorenza summarizes,<sup>25</sup>

Since feminist theology deals with theological, ecclesial, and cultural criticism and concerns itself with theological analysis of the myths, mechanism, systems, and institutions which keep women down, it shares in the concerns of and expands critical theology. Insofar as it positively brings to word the new freedom of women and men, insofar as it promotes new symbols, myths and lifestyles, insofar as it raises new questions and opens up different horizons, feminist theology shares in the concerns and goals of liberation theology. But because Christian symbols and thought are deeply embedded in patriarchal traditions and sexist structures, and because women belong to all races, classes, and cultures, its scope is more radical and universal than that of critical and liberation theology. Feminist theology derives its legitimization from the eschatological vision of freedom and salvation, and its radicalism from the realization that the Christian church is not identical with the kingdom of God.

In an article entitled “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” Schüssler Fiorenza has highlighted that, while feminist critiques have uncovered the

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Theological Studies*, 617.

“sexist structures and myths of our culture and society,” little has changed for women.

Their “predominant role” still remains,<sup>26</sup>

... to be man’s helpmate, to cook and work for him without being paid, to bear and rear his children, to guarantee him psychological and sexual satisfaction. Woman’s place is in the home, whereas man’s place is in the world earning money, running the state, schools, and churches. If woman ventures into the man’s world, then her task is subsidiary, as in the home; she holds the lowest-paid jobs, because she supposedly works for pocket money; she remains confined to women’s professions and is kept out of high-ranking positions ... In spite of a century of struggle for equality, women have not yet succeeded in getting leading positions and equal opportunity in the public and societal realm. On the contrary, they were incorporated into the economic system and moral values of our sexist culture, which merely organized women’s capabilities for its own purposes.

Therefore, as a liberationist feminist, Schüssler Fiorenza works within the framework of “liberation” theologies in order to uncover and dismantle oppressive attitudes and structures and to work toward equal justice especially for the dispossessed. This includes the restructure of “societal institutions” along with the redefinition of the “cultural images and roles of women” *and* men in its goal of “economic and political equality” for women as “autonomous human persons.”<sup>27</sup> According to Gustavo Gutiérrez, liberation theologies with their “preferential option for the poor,” “was forcefully brought to the attention” of the theological establishment “about forty years ago in Latin America, a continent inhabited by a population at once *poor and believing*,” as well as “among the black minority of the United States, and from a variety of different areas and social sectors of humanity” including “those who live their faith in the midst of

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 605-606.

<sup>27</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 53-79, 56-57.

poverty and insignificance.” During the 1950s and 1960s an “irruption of the poor” occurred whereby “decolonization, the emergency of new nations, popular movements, better knowledge of the causes of poverty, and so forth” revealed those whom have been “*absent*” or “invisible to a way of doing history in which a sector of humanity, the Western world, emerged as victor in all realms.” While many considered poverty to be only a social or economic problem, John XXIII made it specifically theological when he “declared that the Church had to be ‘the Church of all and especially the Church of the poor.’” Liberation theology maintains that “it is imperative to see history from its underside, that is, from the side of the victims” in that the “cross of Christ enlightens this vision and makes us see it as a step to the definitive victory of life in the Risen One.”<sup>28</sup>

However, Schüssler Fiorenza does not consider liberation theology comprehensive enough. While “liberation theologians have pointed out that theology in an American and European context is ‘white’ theology” thereby sharing in the “cultural imperialism of Europe and America,” it does not go far enough. Not only is “theology mainly done in an academic context” thereby reflecting “the questions and investigations ... of the white, middle-class academic community,” it is also “white-middle-class-*male*” (emphasis mine) thereby sharing in the “cultural sexism and patriarchalism” of the same.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, “The Theology of Liberation: Perspectives and Tasks,” *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth: Essays in Honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, Fernando F. Segovia, Ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003): 287-299, 290-292.

<sup>29</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Discipleship of Equals*, 64.

Furthermore, as she highlights,<sup>30</sup>

Latin American liberation theology has not sufficiently attended to the fact that the majority of the poor in the world are women and children dependent on women. This realization requires not just an incorporation of “women’s questions” into the framework of liberation theology but calls for a different analysis and theoretical framework.

As Schüssler Fiorenza explains it, liberation theologies “begin with the praxis of the people of God, scrutinizing, evaluating, and re-articulating theology in light of this praxis.”<sup>31</sup> That women are oppressed, she illustrates with the definition of Paulo Freire which reads,<sup>32</sup>

Any situation in which “A” objectively exploits “B” or hinders his [sic] pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with man’s [sic] ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human.

“Against the so-called objectivity and neutrality of academic theology,” Schüssler Fiorenza argues, in line with liberation theology, that “theology always serves certain interests and therefore has to reflect and critically evaluate its primary motives and allegiance.” Only when it becomes “partisan” in that it is “on the side of the outcast

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<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Politics of Otherness: Biblical Interpretation as a Critical Praxis for Liberation,” in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutiérrez*, Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro, Eds. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989): 311-325, 311.

<sup>31</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Professional Ministry of Women in the Church,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 13-22, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Discipleship of Equals*, 40-41.

and oppressed, as was Jesus, can it become incarnational and Christian.”<sup>33</sup> Feminist liberation theology attempts to free women from both the external and internal oppression by unmasking the “oppressive function” of “patriarchal theology” and by focusing on “women’s experience of oppression and discrimination in society and religion” along with their “experiences of hope, love and faith in the struggle for liberation and wholeness.”<sup>34</sup> No longer satisfied with the mere “admission and marginal integration into traditionally male-dominated hierarchical institutions of the church and theology” as a form of “equal rights,” a “liberated and liberating theology” demands a “radical change of these institutions and structures” towards being “liberated and humanized” in order to stop oppressing women and start serving them.<sup>35</sup>

### **Patriarchy and Kyriarchy**

Schüssler Fiorenza develops “a critical systemic analysis that can lift into consciousness the realization that multiplicative structures of oppression determine

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>34</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Breaking the Silence-Becoming Visible,” *Concilium: Women-Invisible in Theology and Church*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Mary Collins, Eds., Marcus Lefébure, English Language Ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1985): 3-16, 4.

<sup>35</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Discipleship of Equals*, 63.

wo/men's<sup>36</sup> lives. Such a systemic analysis," she argues, "is essential" to what she labels "a critical feminist theology of liberation" which is "committed to transformation."<sup>37</sup>

While paying particular attention to the experiences of women, Schüssler Fiorenza is also committed to the liberation and flourishing of all peoples. The structure which hinders such liberation and flourishing she labels "kyriarchy."

"Since Simone de Beauvoir, feminist theory ... has focused on the 'other.'"<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, according to Schüssler Fiorenza, many feminists use the term "patriarchy" to refer to, not the "power of the father over his kinship group" but rather "as a means for identifying and challenging the social structures and ideologies that have enabled men in general to dominate women in general throughout recorded history."<sup>39</sup> Originally Schüssler Fiorenza's used the term "patriarchy," not in the sense of "an ahistorical, universalizing concept"<sup>40</sup> whereby "all men dominating all women equally" but rather in

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<sup>36</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza has "resorted to this way of writing wo/men in order to destabilize the essentialist notions of woman and to indicate that from the perspective and positionality of wo/men who are multiply oppressed, the term is also inclusive of disenfranchised men." Schüssler Fiorenza, "Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophialogy," in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, p. xxxv, n. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994, 1995), 12.

<sup>38</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Politics of Otherness," 311.

<sup>39</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics and Politics of Liberation: Theorizing the *Ekklēsia* of Women," *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 332-352, 338.

<sup>40</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 105.

the “classical Aristotelian sense” as a “male pyramid of graded subordinations and exploitations” which “specifies women’s oppression in terms of the class, race, country, or religion of the men to whom” women “belong.”<sup>41</sup>

In place of patriarchy with its dualism and oversimplification of the relationship between oppressed women and male oppressor, Schüssler Fiorenza uses the term “kyriarchy.” “Kyriarchy” refers to the social-political system of domination and subordination based on the power and rule of the emperor, empress, lord, master, mistress, father, superior, aristocratic ruler or governing authority, and so on, involving multiple and “interlocking structures of domination” including gender, race, class and colonialism.<sup>42</sup> As Schüssler Fiorenza explains it, while “patriarchy” understood as the “rule of the fathers,” “androcentrism” as “male centeredness,” and sexism as “the domination of all men over all wo/men in the same way” were the primary analytical concepts in use when she first started her feminist explorations, she found these concepts dualistic and limiting in that they posited an essentialist male/female division which overlooked the many faceted and layered nature of oppression. Therefore, she set out to develop “an analytic concept of patriarchy that was historical and at the same time could express the changing social relations of domination/subordination ... structured by the

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<sup>41</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, xiv.

<sup>42</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 8.

economic political discourses not only of gender but also of race, class, and colonialism.”<sup>43</sup>

The concept “kyriarchy” as the “domination of the lord, slave master, husband, the elite freeborn educated and propertied male over all wo/men and subaltern men”<sup>44</sup> allowed for a shift in focus away from gender analysis to “critical systematic analysis of domination.”<sup>45</sup> The concept of “kyriocentrism” “has the ideological function of naturalizing and legitimizing not just gender but all forms of domination.”<sup>46</sup> This multivalent approach, while continuing to highlight gender issues, also allows for a recognition, differentiation and analysis of the complex patterns of oppression which different women experience in their diverse situations, including, for examples, “racist dehumanization, multiplied by economic exploitation, multiplied by cultural colonization, multiplied by heterosexist prejudice, multiplied by ageist stereotypes,

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<sup>43</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction to the Tenth Anniversary Edition,” *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins: Tenth Anniversary Edition With a New Introduction*, (New York: Crossroad, 1983, 1994, 1998), xviii and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 7-8.

<sup>44</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation* (New York, London: Continuum, 2000), 95.

<sup>45</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet*, 13.

<sup>46</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation*, 95.

multiplied by religious demonization,” thereby concretely grounding the conditions necessary for liberation and change. As Schüssler Fiorenza elaborates,<sup>47</sup>

Such multiplicative structures of women’s oppression are ideologically legitimized, not simply by androcentrism which privileges the experiences, knowledges, and belief-systems of men, but much more so by kyriocentrism that interprets the world and human life from the perspective and in the interest of kyriarchal domination, exploitation, and dehumanization. Kyriarchy/kyriocentrism is a heuristic tool that allows one to investigate the complex interstructuring of systemic oppression which continues to engender western dualistic ideologies of othering and in turn is sustained by its politics of dehumanization.

According to Schüssler Fiorenza, any “feminist strategies for change must be rooted in a common systemic analysis” including “the recognition and elaboration of kyriarchal sexism and violence against wo/men as a structural sin” as well as “the theological-ecclesiastical silencing of wo/men and the function of church and theology for internalizing and perpetuating the structural evil of kyriarchal oppressions and dehumanization.”<sup>48</sup>

Insisting that both men and wo/men be recognized as “theological subjects,” Schüssler Fiorenza sets forth to develop a Christian theology which moves away from “malestream scholarship produced by ... academic institutions” to one that reflects “a feminist comprehension of the world, human life, and Christian faith.” Such a theology would differ from that of “fundamentalist, traditional” or “liberal modern theologies” partly due to the fact that “secularization” is not viewed as the “great problem for faith.”

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<sup>47</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophiology,” in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, xxi.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, xvi.

Additionally, rather than asking “how can we believe in G\*d,” the new way of theologizing that Schüssler Fiorenza is proposing asks, like other liberation theologies, “in what kind of G\*d do Christians believe” and whether or not “religion makes a difference in the struggle for the well-being of all in the “global village.” With that primary question in mind, her critical feminist theology of liberation explores which “religious teachings” including “Scriptures and religious traditions,” “legitimate the status quo and which promote G\*d intention for the well-being of all?” As a result, the “lenses of theological interpretation” utilized are not that of “modern individualistic understanding of religion” but rather that of “poor and marginalized wo/men.” The intention is to “interpret daily life ... with the help of the biblical G\*d of justice and salvation” and to “inspire Christians for transformation with the biblical vision of a world freed from the structural sin of kyriarchal domination.”<sup>49</sup>

Such a critical feminist theology of liberation as a “critical reflection and exploration of G\*d at work in the midst of structural sin and the death-dealing powers of oppression and dehumanization,”<sup>50</sup> uses a “critical strategy” which can “theoretically ... explore the ways the structures and ideological systems of kyriarchy have shaped and still shape biblical self-identity, memory, theology, and communal practice.” It also reclaims “those religious visions, memories, and unrealized possibilities that can sustain resistance to oppressive structures” along with those which “inspire self-affirmation, energy, and hope for ... transformation.” Important to this process is the recognition and reclaiming

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, xxx.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, xxxi.

of “the authority of wo/men for shaping and determining biblical religions.” Therefore the experiences and voices “of those women who struggle at the bottom of the kyriarchal pyramid” are privileged “because their courage and survival against all odds reveals the life-sustaining power of Divine Presence and Wisdom in our midst.”<sup>51</sup>

The traditional formula for “doing theology” often summarized as “faith seeking understanding” is not sufficient for such a feminist theology as “it does not specifically name the subject who does theology.” Additionally, critical feminist theologians of liberation are not simply seeking to understand but also to change “kyriocentric theology and kyriarchal church into the discipleship of equals.” Therefore, Schüssler Fiorenza prefers “the active meaning of the literal sense of theology in Greek [*theo-legein*]” whereby theology “can be conceptualized as activity, as speaking of the Divine” rather than “construed as ... an object of faith and inquiry, as word and teaching about God [*theo-logos*].” As “an ongoing activity and process that explores how Christians can and should speak about G\*d” in the midst of the “particular kyriarchal situations and ever-changing socio-political contexts” within which women live, a critical feminist theology of liberation “seeks to critically analyze and change the ways Scripture, traditions, and malestream theologies speak about G\*d” so that it reflects the interests of “all wo/men, especially those struggling at the bottom of the kyriarchal pyramid of oppressions for survival and well-being” rather than for the interest of elite men.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, xxx.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, xxxiii.

### **Towards a Pentecostal Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation**

The theological subject in this project will be a Pentecostal feminist theologian whose goal is to explore the possibilities of the basis for a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation which intentionally seeks the well being of Pentecostal women. Unfortunately, Pentecostals tend to be anti-feminist. Within Pentecostalism, feminism is viewed as a Western, middle class, academic pursuit which neglects or dismisses movements of the Spirit. Although discussions have started regarding the development of a systematic theology which honours Pentecostal particularities, feminist work is only beginning.<sup>53</sup> For instance, during the revision of this project, an article appeared in *Pneuma*, the Society of Pentecostal Studies periodical, written by Andrea Hollingworth. This article not only admits that the words “feminism” and “Pentecostalism” are rarely heard together but also goes on to suggest that viewing the “Spirit” as the “divine voice” of God could assist in the development of a feminist Pentecostal pneumatology.<sup>54</sup> While Hollingworth’s efforts are significant, to grant the Spirit a “voice” could, as has been argued by David G. Roebuck in the article ““Go and Tell My Brothers?”: The Waning of

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<sup>53</sup> An American Ph.D. student who contacted me in April 2006 indicated her surprise and delight to have come across my written work within the published papers of the Society of Pentecostal Studies. She too is interested in a feminist and Pentecostal approach and was pleased that I had already begun the process and wanted to know more about my work to date.

<sup>54</sup> See Andrea Hollingworth, “Spirit and Voice: Toward a Feminist Pentecostal Pneumatology,” *Pneuma* 29:2 (2007): 189-213.

Women's Voices in American Pentecostalism,"<sup>55</sup> imply that women were simply "instruments or vessels" which the Spirit used with no inherent authority themselves. To avoid such disempowering situations, critical work needs to be accomplished before any constructive work.

While many of the more recent systematic theologians and other academics within Pentecostalism utilize insights and critiques gleaned from feminism, such as the use of inclusive language, rarely is such use explicitly acknowledged. A striking example of this is the work of Randal Holm. As a part of his work Holm investigates the way in which authority issues played out within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada when it came to the ordination of women. While *not* using the word "feminist," Holm nevertheless speaks openly of the role a "patriarchal" culture played in the restrictions placed on ministering women within the early years of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC).<sup>56</sup> Not only does Holm use the feminist concept of "patriarchy" without acknowledging the feminist basis and interpretation being given the concept, he also distances himself from feminist analysis, when he describes the "two salient trends of modern feminism" as "bitterness" and "militancy" even as he engages in a feminist style analysis utilizing the category of "patriarchy." His use of feminist categories and methodology without acknowledging it while at the same time stereotyping feminists

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<sup>55</sup> David G. Roebuck, "Go and Tell My Brothers"?: The Waning of Women's Voices in American Pentecostalism," paper presented at the Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting (1990), F1 - F19, 13-19. See discussion above.

<sup>56</sup> Holm, Randal. *A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism*. PhD Dissertation. Laval University. 1995, 251-265.

generally in a disparaging manner seems to be unconscious and unintentional but noteworthy.<sup>57</sup>

Until the late nineties, when feminism was explicitly mentioned within Pentecostal scholarly writings, it was typically in such a derogatory fashion. Two examples from the writings of the Society for Pentecostal Studies in the early nineties highlight this attitude and approach. In an article in 1992 when speaking of the “*sensus plenior*, or fuller meaning” of the Scriptures, Gordon Anderson states that the “obvious and dangerous circularity of this approach can [be] seen by considering the hermeneutics and theology of a radically biased methodology, a radical feminist or homosexual interpretation, for example. The proper criticism of such a method is to assert that the interpreter never got a sound theology in place to begin with, resulting in a constant rereading of theological biases back on to the text.”<sup>58</sup> Moreover, claiming that the concern to develop a Pentecostal hermeneutic is “misguided,” Richard Israel argues that such a hermeneutic would be “motivated either by an ideology (as some Marxist and Feminist hermeneutics are) or an epistemology of the Spirit.”<sup>59</sup>

Even many Pentecostal women have shied away from a frank discussion of patriarchy or the use of feminist insights, perhaps partly out of fear of being labelled a

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 251-258.

<sup>58</sup> Gordon L. Anderson, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” *Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers*, 1992, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Richard D. Israel, Daniel E. Albrecht, and Randal G. McNally, “Pentecostals and Hermeneutics: Texts, Rituals and Community,” *Society of Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers*, Dallas, Texas (November, 1990): A8-9.

“feminist.” Janet Everts Powers in her insightful chapter entitled “‘Your Daughters Shall Prophesy:’ Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, argues for a Pentecostal exploration of women in ministry based on a Pentecostal appropriation of Scriptures rather than a “secular or feminist grid which ends up misunderstanding or distorting the tradition.” She then stresses that if Pentecostals would apply the same hermeneutical approach to the question of women as they do Spirit baptism, there would be no problem. When speaking of Spirit baptism, the question of the patriarchal appropriation of Scriptures that limit women’s involvement in leadership does not figure in.<sup>60</sup> Although Powers’ dismissal of feminists is unfortunate, her point that a Pentecostal Spirit-based hermeneutic applied to the Bible has empowered Pentecostal women is valid. However, what she calls the “traditional” approach could be labelled “patriarchal.”

It soon becomes evident when reading literature written by Pentecostals that rare are the suggestions that feminists have something positive to say although there are the occasional brave souls, such as Timothy B. Cargal, who as early as 1991 dared suggest that feminists might be illumined by the Spirit.<sup>61</sup> Susan Hyatt has been one refreshing exception to this rule. In 1998 she published a book entitled *In The Spirit We’re Equal:*

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<sup>60</sup> Janet Everts Powers “‘Your Daughters Shall Prophesy:’ Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women,” in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, Douglas Petersen, eds. (Oxford, California: Regnum Books, International, 1991): 313-337.

<sup>61</sup> Timothy B. Cargal, “Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age,” *Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers* 1991, 22.

*The Spirit, The Bible, and Women, A Revival Perspective.*<sup>62</sup> Notably, this book was published by the organization which she and her spouse founded and lead, “Hyatt International Ministries, Inc.”<sup>63</sup>

Hyatt proposes that it was a “strongly patriarchal and hierarchical worldview borrowed from pagan philosophy, a worldview that is permeated by unmistakably misogynous attitudes,” that has led to the squelching of an egalitarian interpretation of Scriptures and practice within Spirit focused religious groups. Compounding this historical trajectory, she claims that “in recent years, an inordinate fear of feminism has kept many from exploring the biblical truth of equality. Pulling back the veil and shining the light of truth on this bogey-man should alleviate this ignorance-based fear.”<sup>64</sup> Thus she sets out to demonstrate that the Scriptures can be interpreted within an egalitarian framework. While both men and women are affected by patriarchy, androcentrism, sexism and misogyny, feminism would stress that women have been particularly victimized. As elite men have historically controlled the governmental, business and ideological realms, women have not only suffered economic dependence but have also had their very being, their reality as women, including their spiritual reality, defined by men. As Susan Hyatt explains,<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Susan C. Hyatt, *In The Spirit We're Equal: The Spirit, The Bible, and Women, A Revival Perspective* (Dallas, Texas: Revival & Renewal Resources by Hyatt Press, 1998).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, front matter.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, x-xii.

<sup>65</sup> Hyatt, 9.

The Church's traditional theology of womanhood is unequivocally patriarchal, ascribing to women an inferior condition, a secondary importance, and a subordinate status. Consequently, under authoritative male headship, covering and control, women have, at the best of times, been "honored" as second-class citizens. They have been dominated, marginalized and occasionally patronized, while men have been elevated.

And the struggle for women does not end there. As Cheryl Sanders points out, the interlocking systems of sexism, racism, classism, colonialism and other oppressions including spiritual, political, cultural, emotional and psychological facets make women's "place" a site of ongoing struggle.<sup>66</sup>

### **Patriarchal Pentecostalism**

That American and Canadian Pentecostalism was patriarchal from the beginning even with its egalitarian impulse is clearly demonstrated by its treatment of women and their ministries. At Azusa Street, even though many women influenced and ministered with William Seymour and his wife, Jenny Evans Moore, who eventually took over the leadership of the mission, Seymour bequeathed his ministry to a "man of color." In addition, William Seymour was and still is credited with being the mission's designated leader.<sup>67</sup> Azusa Street's legacy regarding the "place" of ministering women is ambiguous.

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<sup>66</sup> Cheryl J. Sanders, *Living the Intersection: Womanism and Afrocentrism in Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 9-10.

<sup>67</sup> H. V. Synan, "William Joseph Seymour" in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, Eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988): 778-781, 781.

Within Canada, the legacy of Ellen K. Hebden and her Toronto based East End Mission has been both disparaged and co-opted. Even though Hebden reported in her publication, *The Promise*, that she had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on November 17, 1906 *possibly* making her the first Canadian to have spoken in tongues,<sup>68</sup> the leading male figure behind the establishment of the PAOC, R. E. McAlister, was given that honour.<sup>69</sup> Ellen Hebden is *possibly* the first person because there is one other account in the December 1906 edition of *The Apostolic Faith* (1:4) of a man named John Loney of Snowflake, Manitoba who had received the baptism of the Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues even earlier. However, it is not clear whether he actually lived in Canada or the United States. In any case, it was not McAlister who first spoke in tongues.

Many early Pentecostals, such as G. A. Chambers, one of the early leaders of the PAOC, were suspicious of organized religion. As Chambers explained it, the early Pentecostals believed that “God was forever through with organization.” When the *Trinitarian* Hebden, along with many other early Pentecostals, were against organization of any kind<sup>70</sup> it was Ellen Hebden’s prophetic ministry which came under public scrutiny

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<sup>68</sup> Hebden, “How Pentecost Came to Toronto,” *The Promise*, 1 (May 1907), 1-3. See also William Seymour, ed., *The Apostolic Faith*, 1:6 (February-March 1907), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Gloria Grace Kulbeck, B.A. *What God Hath Wrought: A History of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, Rev. Walter E. McAlister and Rev. George R. Upton, eds. (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958), 29, n. 23.

<sup>70</sup> Letter to Douglas Rudd from H.H. Barber, PAOC Archives. See also Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Mississauga, Ontario: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 44.

and was condemned.<sup>71</sup> R.E. McAlister's involvement in providing the impetus for the *Oneness* movement<sup>72</sup> was handled much more discreetly as the PAOC officially adopted *Trinitarian* theology. While both could be viewed as posing a threat to "orthodox Christianity," Ellen Hebden's emphasis on the prophetic was said to have caused her to lose "her pre-eminence in the movement" with the "moral and legislative leadership" passing on "to those men who united in 1919 to form the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada"<sup>73</sup> including McAlister. In contrast, McAlister's involvement with "'Jesus Only' teachings" and with "Frank Ewart and Franklin Small, both advocates of the 'Jesus Only' teachings" which were admitted to possess "heretical tendencies" was "attributed to the lack, among the pioneer ministers, of any systematic statement of their cardinal doctrines," "the lack of any form of Pentecostal organization until 1914 in the United States and 1919 in Canada," and the reasoning that "the earliest form of the 'Jesus Only' teaching was primarily an emphasis on worship of Jesus." Therefore, it was reasoned, "none of the pioneers could fault" such a teaching including the "indefatigable evangelist," "pastor, evangelist, author, theologian, financier, administrator ... promoter of missions both at home and abroad ... constitutional expert" and "man with God-given

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<sup>71</sup> *Pentecostal Testimony* (November 1934), 7. Along with Hebden, others had openly spoken against early attempts at organization. See Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals*, 105-107, 113 and Gordon F. Atter, *Third Force* (Peterborough, Ontario: The College Press, 1962, 1970), 95, 107.

<sup>72</sup> D. A. Reed, "Oneness Pentecostalism," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 936-944, 936.

<sup>73</sup> Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals*, 44.

wisdom,”<sup>74</sup> R. E. McAlister.<sup>75</sup> As late as 1994, with knowledge of Hebden and the East End Mission having become more widespread, this ministry has been co-opted as part of “several religious events in Canada that played a significant role in the formation of the Fellowship,” that is, the PAOC.<sup>76</sup> Such co-optation and disparagement of this early founder of Canadian Pentecostalism, Ellen Hebden, in favour of a male leader who later arrived on the scene is an outstanding example of patriarchy at work.

### **Kyriarchal Pentecostalism**

That American and Canadian Pentecostalism is kyriarchal can be easily demonstrated as well. In contrast to American culture and many of the mainstream churches in the early years of the twentieth century which were racist<sup>77</sup> and class conscious,<sup>78</sup> Azusa Street consisted of a modest collection of poor people from assorted

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<sup>74</sup> Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals*, 65-66.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 65-67.

<sup>76</sup> Dr. Thomas Miller, “‘Firsts’ For the Fellowship,” *The Pentecostal Testimony* September 1994: 24-26, 24-25.

<sup>77</sup> For a brief discussion of Jim Crow and its influence on early Pentecostalism see Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge, U.K.): William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971,1997), 167-174. For a description of the racial composition of Los Angeles at the time of the Azusa Street Mission see, Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street: Mission & Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006), 56-57.

<sup>78</sup> Robert M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979, 1992), 28-31, 62-63. Carl Brumback, *A Sound From Heaven: The Dramatic Beginning of the 20th Century Pentecostal Revival* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1961, 1977), 39-40.

ethnic groups.<sup>79</sup> Leadership incorporated people of colour and Caucasians<sup>80</sup> who collectively undertook responsibility for proclaiming the “Full Gospel.”<sup>81</sup> William Seymour has been described as serving as “pastor of an anomalous congregation” during this period of Jim Crow laws with its legally sanctioned racial segregation<sup>82</sup> and urban industrialization with its accompanying prosperity for some and hardship for others.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism and American Culture*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 56. See also “Azusa Street Revival,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, Eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 36.

<sup>80</sup> C. M. Robeck, Jr., “Azusa Street Revival,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, Eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 34, mentions that William Seymour, the pastor, Richard Asberry and James Alexander, two trustees, were black. Louis Osterberg, a trustee, George E. Berg, the secretary, Glenn Cook, the business manager, and R.J. Scott, the camp meeting organizer were white. Jennie Evans Moore, Lucy Farrow and Ophelia Wiley, all black, shared public leadership roles with Clara E. Lum and Florence Crawford, both white. Brumback, 50, has a picture of the “leaders of the Azusa Street Mission, Los Angeles, 1907” which shows seven women and one girl, a daughter of one of the seven women, among the thirteen leaders. Together they led worship, published the mission’s newspapers, visited, evangelized and exhorted the congregation. See Brumback, Carl. *A Sound From Heaven: The Dramatic Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pentecostal Revival*. (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1961,1977).

<sup>81</sup> In fact women’s involvement as ordained ministers in the early years of the Pentecostal movement and in the earlier Holiness movement was so great that, even though their numbers declined significantly after 1920, in 1995 more than fifty per cent of all women from all denominations who had ever been ordained came from these two groups. Barbara Brown Zikmundk, “Women and Ordination,” *In Our Own Voices: Four Centuries of American Women’s Religious Writing*, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1995), 299.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 346-347.

<sup>83</sup> Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited*, 28-31.

The *Los Angeles Daily Times*, under such banners as “Weird Babel of Tongues; New Sect of Fanatics Is Breaking Loose: Wild Scene Last Night on Azusa Street”<sup>84</sup> declared Azusa Street to be a “... ‘colored’ congregation that met in a ‘tumble-down shack’ and made the night ‘hideous’ through the ‘howlings of the worshippers.’” The congregation itself, consisting of a small group of poor people from various ethnic groups including “whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asians and others” considered the “color-line” “virtually non-existent.” Leadership included both men and women who together led worship, exhorted the congregation, visited, published the mission’s newspaper and evangelized. As one eyewitness of the event stated it,<sup>85</sup>

All classes began to flock to the meetings ... we had no pope or hierarchy ... no priest class ... We did not even have a platform or pulpit in the beginning. All were on a level ... The rich and educated were the same as the poor and ignorant ... All were equal...In honor we ‘preferred one another’ ... Someone finally would get up anointed for the message. All seemed to recognize this and give way. It might be a child, a woman or a man. It might be from the back seat, or from the front. It made no difference.

“(E)veryone sensed a form of equality as sisters and brothers seeking God together.”<sup>86</sup> While not intending to fight people or churches but rather seeking to prod the other churches into a type of ecumenical unity whereby all were known as simply

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<sup>84</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 56.

<sup>85</sup> Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: An Eyewitness Account: The Centennial Edition, 1906-2006*. Introduction by Vinson Synan (Gainesville, Florida: Bridge-Logos, 1925, 1980, 2006), 55-66.

<sup>86</sup> C. M. Robeck, Jr., “Azusa Street Revival,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 34-36.

“Christians,”<sup>87</sup> these early Pentecostals were, nevertheless, "seeking to displace dead forms and creeds and wild fanaticisms with living, practical Christianity. 'Love, Faith, Unity'" were their "watchwords."<sup>88</sup> Carl Brumback, one of the first official historians of the Assemblies of God in the United States, in describing “Azusa Street,” claims that the word “Azusa” is a misspelling of the third person singular of the Spanish verb, “*azuzar*” meaning “to provoke, to irritate, to stimulate, to incite, to stir up, to put one against another, to cause conflict.” He then goes on to explain that, misspelled or not, the word is significant because the Pentecostal movement since Azusa Street has “provoked, irritated, stimulated, incited, stirred up, put one against another, and caused conflict.” “Azusa (or Azuza) sparked a twentieth century reformation against formalized religion.”<sup>89</sup> In short, the early Pentecostal movement both in its preaching and practice was a rather radical, counter-cultural and prophetic, egalitarian, reformation movement.

Unfortunately, significantly betraying its beginnings, Pentecostalism not only failed to develop a theology of racial reconciliation for both Caucasians and people of colour, it also eventually split into predominately male-dominated, African-American and Caucasian groups.<sup>90</sup> Caucasian Pentecostalism, as embodied by the Assemblies of God, has acknowledged its racism in the Memphis Dialogue of October 17-19, 1994. As the

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<sup>87</sup> Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith*, 60.

<sup>88</sup> *Apostolic Faith* 1. no. 1 (Sept. 1906): 2.

<sup>89</sup> Brumback, *A Sound From Heaven*, 39-40.

<sup>90</sup> Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2001), 227-235.

only female among the 200 participants, Bishop Barbara Amos forcefully criticized the gathering for the sexism inherent within that "dialogue."<sup>91</sup>

A commentary on the current condition of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada appears in an article by Randall Holm regarding the move towards organization within this particular Pentecostal group,<sup>92</sup>

... Threatened on the endangered species list within the PAOC, is the ragamuffin genius which so characterized early Pentecostal history. It is questionable whether even a resurrected William Seymour would find a receptive home. If forced to choose between the sometimes subversive prophetic display of the Spirit, and a generally closed cognitive ideology, it would appear that PAOC clergy would be hard-pressed to know which one to court.

Where once Pentecostals were often the poor, the dispossessed and the marginalized, they have recently become more middle class, educated, materialistic and elitist. As Randall Holm observes,<sup>93</sup>

... Pentecostals now reside in suburbs. They display the most modern churches. Plexiglass pulpits adorn their altars. Powerful amplifiers fill the air with sound. Padded pews await the faithful. In the minds of these Pentecostals, success constitutes simultaneously both their proudest achievement and greatest dread. They can finally point to their achievements - the largest churches, the greatest percentage growth - but at the same time they have a gnawing feeling that

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<sup>91</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "From Azusa to Memphis: Evaluating the Racial Reconciliation Dialogue Among Pentecostals," *PNEUMA* Volume 17, Number 2, Fall 1995: 203-218, 213. See also Barbara M. Amos, "Race, Gender, and Justice," *PNEUMA* Volume 18, Number 1, Spring 1996: 132-135. And Bishop Barbara Amos, "Faith Deliverance Christian Center" *Memory & Hope: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers. (March 7-9, 1996), Wycliffe College, Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>92</sup>Randall Holm, *Organizational Blues: The Struggle of One Pentecostal Denomination with the Bugbear of Institutionalism*, paper presented to the Society of Pentecostal Studies at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Wheaton, Illinois, November 10-12, 1994, 18.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

wonders if they have become too respectable?

A visit to many Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada churches lead by men in business suits, parishioners finely dressed and magazine racks filled with slick periodicals demonstrates the upward mobility of this group. The attention to the potential of the media and advertising has not gone unnoticed by Pentecostals in promoting their product. The poor and powerless are found in decreasing numbers in Pentecostal churches. As Holm continues,<sup>94</sup>

... Contrary to third-world Pentecostalism which made its home in the world of marginalized peoples, North American Pentecostals have gradually immigrated to the suburbs where salary and prestige often serve as trophies. Testimony to this tension, ministers are usually upwardly mobile - church-hopping until attaining a comfortable plateau by North American standards. Rarely does a minister leave a larger church to pastor a smaller one.

Also, within Canada the issues of race and colonialism are noticeable within the ongoing tensions between the Anglo and French Canadian segments of the country. Interestingly enough, when it comes to ministering women within the PAOC, the traditional hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church within the province of Quebec, where the largest French population is found, may be working in favour of these women. As Holm explains, Pentecostal people often rebel against the power and authority which the Catholic Church still exercises within Quebec including its “paternal authority” thereby opening up a “place” of ministry for women which traditionally has been banned. Added to this rebellion are the pragmatic considerations of a relatively younger, Pentecostal movement with smaller churches. Pentecostalism requires the services of all,

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<sup>94</sup>*Ibid*, 23-24.

including women, to survive within Quebec. Therefore, the attitudes to women in leadership are relatively inclusive.<sup>95</sup>

Beyond Quebec, even while Canada is “officially” a multicultural mosaic, the question remains open as to the acceptance of French Canadian, ordained woman serving as pastor within a predominately Anglo congregation. Conversely the acceptance of Anglo women clergy within a predominately French Canadian congregation also remains unanswered as there are still relatively few women in ministry within the PAOC.

### **Conclusion**

William J. Seymour’s Azusa Street mission provides Pentecostal women with a significant egalitarian example and model of leadership and a community holding to the ideal of freedom from racism, sexism, classism and ageism. As, according to Schüssler Fiorenza, “feminist liberation theology begins with a systemic exploration of women’s oppression and its ideological legitimization” within concrete, historical contexts, the next chapter will begin there, with a recovery of the actual history of ministering women within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in the hopes of discerning an emancipatory strain there as well.

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<sup>95</sup> Holm, *A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism*, 252.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE NATURE AND POWER OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

#### Introduction

In an article entitled “The Redemptive Power of Memory: Walter Benjamin and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza,” Hewitt links memory with emancipation and forgetting with enslavement, particularly as implicated in a “feminist critical theory of liberation.”<sup>1</sup> Memory and the recovery of history becomes part of a “struggle against domination” whereas “human beings bereft of the capacity for remembrance are helpless in the face of domination in any of its forms.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, in the chapter entitled “Memory, Revolution, and Redemption” in *Feminist Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis*, she analyzes memory through a discussion of “the philosophical and theological perspectives” of the historical materialist, Benjamin, and the feminist biblical scholar, Schüssler Fiorenza in order to suggest the possibilities for a just and humane future for

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<sup>1</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory: Walter Benjamin and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 10 No. 1 Spr 1994: 73-89, 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

women both past and present.<sup>3</sup> Somewhat ironically, as Hewitt points out, Fiorenza, in her dealings with specific women and situations reflects materialism more concretely, particularly in its concern for the wellbeing of human beings than does Benjamin with his abstract reflections on historical cultural objects as they intersect through memory with present generations.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Benjamin's view of women was abysmal.<sup>5</sup>

Nonetheless, according to Hewitt, for both Benjamin and Schüssler Fiorenza, the past is not dead or even completed. Rather, it is open to the present in a manner which has the potential to not only transform the present but also to redeem the past. Both are "theorists of emancipation for whom memory is rich with redemptive and political potential oriented to a free and just world."<sup>6</sup>

### **Benjamin, History and Memory**

In common with the later critical theorists, Benjamin attempted his own revision of historical materialism. Benjamin was concerned with history in its specificity and its materiality along with the methodology, ethics and epistemology of its retrieval for use

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<sup>3</sup> Marsha Aileen Hewitt, *Feminist Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 148, 150.

<sup>4</sup> Marsha Hewitt, "The Redemptive Power of Memory," 4.

<sup>5</sup> Marsha Aileen Hewitt, *Feminist Critical Theory of Religion*, p. 148. See also Hewitt's "The Politics of Empowerment: Ethical Paradigms in a Feminist Critique of Critical Social Theory," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (November, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Marsha Hewitt, "The Redemptive Power of Memory," 73.

by the present. In opposition to Horkheimer who considered the past over and done with, Benjamin considered history to be...<sup>7</sup>

...not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance. What science has ‘determined’ remembrance can modify. Such mindfulness can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete. That is theology; but in remembrance we have an experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological, little as it may be granted us to try to write it with immediately theological concepts.

Expanding on this thinking shortly before his death in his densely written “Theses on the Philosophy of History,”<sup>8</sup> Benjamin outlines in fragmentary form his view of the relationship between materialism and theology even as he analyzes the approaches to history that were utilized during his time. He also maintained that the historical materialists must deal with specific people and events<sup>9</sup> thereby raising the question of the present’s responsibility to the dead, particularly those who have been the victims of injustice.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Walter Benjamin, “N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,” *The Arcades Project*, Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Prepared on the basis of the German Volume edited by Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999): 456-488, 471, [N8,1].

<sup>8</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Edited and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt, Translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969): 253-264.

<sup>9</sup> Cesar, Jasiel. *Walter Benjamin on Experience and History: Profane Illumination*. (Mellen Research University Press: San Francisco, 1992), 106. See also Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian,” *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*. A. Arato and E. Gebhardt, Eds. New York: Continuum, 1982, 2005): 225-253. 226-227.

<sup>10</sup>Including “historicism, empathy, bourgeois historiography, the idea of progress” and “universal history.” Cesar, Jasiel. *Walter Benjamin on Experience and History: Profane Illumination*. (Mellen Research University Press: San Francisco, 1992), 7.

Benjamin argued that human history has been a riotous and stormy catastrophe. He denounced any progressive idea of history as being epic or linear and continuous or somehow representing developments or reactions to an earlier stage and heading towards some future goal.<sup>11</sup> He also railed against seeing history as epic or as linear and continuous, thereby reifying it as some thing-like object. He analyzed the approaches to history that were utilized during his time including “historicism, empty, bourgeois historiography, the idea of progress” and “universal history.” Rather, he viewed the “concept of progress” itself to be an illusionary “dream”<sup>12</sup> “grounded in the idea of catastrophe. That things are ‘status quo’ *is* the catastrophe.”<sup>13</sup> As he further explains it,<sup>14</sup>

The concept of progress had to run counter to the critical theory of history from the moment it ceased to be applied as a criterion to specific historical developments and instead was required to measure the span between a legendary inception and a legendary end of history. In other words: as soon as it becomes the signature of historical process *as a whole*, the concept of progress bespeaks an uncritical hypostatization rather than a critical interrogation. This latter may be recognized, in the concrete exposition of history; from the fact that it outlines regression as least as sharply as it brings any progress into view.

In comparison, historical materialism’s “founding concept is not progress but actualization.”<sup>15</sup> It is in renouncing this illusion of progress, that the present has been “endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim ... which

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<sup>11</sup> Benjamin, “N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,” 474, [9a, 6].

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 464, [N4, 1].

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 473, [N9a, 1].

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 478, [N13, 1].

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 460, [N2, 2].

cannot be settled cheaply.”<sup>16</sup> This reference to the Messiah does not imply an external or otherworldly divine entity that would transform history. Rather, the “weak Messianic power” is thoroughly human<sup>17</sup> in that the present can, “through the awakening of a not-yet-conscious knowledge of what has been,”<sup>18</sup> interrupt the illusion of historical progression in order to “blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history” and “blasting a specific life out of an era.”<sup>19</sup>

Rather than empathizing or identifying with the past and thereby reinforcing the history of the oppressors<sup>20</sup> or contenting “itself with a causal connection between various moments in history,”<sup>21</sup> the present recognizes that history requires reinterpretation “in terms of its transmission” and “reception.” Time, as “jetztzeit,” “now-time” or “nunc stans” must be grasped in its Messianic quality through dialectical images bringing the present and past into conversation with each other in order that the past is re-experienced and redeemed.<sup>22</sup> It is not that “what is past casts its light on what is present” and vice versa. Instead, when past and present are constellated in a figural or imagistic rather than

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<sup>16</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 254.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin, *Reflections*, 312-313; cf. Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 78.

<sup>18</sup> Benjamin, “N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,” 458, [N1, 9].

<sup>19</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 263.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 256.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 263.

<sup>22</sup> Rolf Tiedemann, “Historical Materialism or Political Messianism? An Interpretation of the Theses ‘On the Concept of History’”. *The Philosophical Forum* 1-2): 71-104, 79).

temporal fashion, an image may flash up. “In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill.”<sup>23</sup> The image that is conjured Benjamin described as being like that moment when one first wakes up from a dream and recognizes that one has been dreaming, a “‘now of recognizability’ in which things put on their true ... face.”<sup>24</sup> In that sense, when “‘humanity, rubbing its eyes, recognizes just this particular dream image as such ... the historian takes up, with regard to that image, the task of dream interpretation.”<sup>25</sup> In fact, as far as Benjamin was concerned, “every presentation of history” must “begin with awakening.”<sup>26</sup> “The realization of dream elements in the course of waking up is the canon of dialectics. It is paradigmatic for the thinker and binding for the historian.”<sup>27</sup> The power of this approach Benjamin compares to “the process of splitting the atom” in that it “liberates the enormous energies of history that are bound up in the ‘once upon a time’ of classical historiography. The history that showed things ‘as they really were,’” which is a historical positivist illusion, “was the strongest narcotic of the century”<sup>28</sup> numbing people so that they did not seek the way things actually had been in history.

In Theses 5 Benjamin refutes the idea of historical knowledge or truth being certain as an historicist position might. Rather, it is a fleeting image which appears in a

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<sup>23</sup> Benjamin, “N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,” 462-463, [N3, 1].

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 463-464, [N3a, 3].

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 464, [N4, 1].

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 464, [N4, 3].

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 464, [N4, 4].

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 463, [N3, 4].

moment and may be lost forever if not grasped. As Hewitt has pointed out, it is theology that “prevents the suffering and injustice inflicted on humanity from being reduced to a mere record of so many links in a historiographical chain.” Rather, it “allows the historical materialist to grasp the truth of past ages in ‘dialectical images’ or ‘constellations’” thereby “releasing objects and events from the sterile and illusory continuity of history as progress.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Schüssler Fiorenza, History, Memory and Women**

According to Schüssler Fiorenza, one of the ways in which the “religious power of self-naming” is stolen is through “the loss of historical memory.” Feminists, along with their thinking and work, “...disappear from historical records and consciousness because the continuation of patriarchy requires that feminist challenges to elite male power remain invisible and nonexistent.” This includes “the emancipatory intellectual history and creative vision of women in biblical religions.”<sup>30</sup>

In her understanding, the word “history” has two primary meanings. One refers to the past events and those who peopled these events; the second refers to the writing of these events and people, or historiography. Moreover, history is considered normative only when it is done from and for an elite male’s perspective. When it is considered from and for women’s location, history is considered feminist and biased. Therefore,

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<sup>29</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 76.

<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cartography of Struggle,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994: 1-12, 3.

Schüssler Fiorenza maintains that history be understood “not as an accurate record or transcript of the past” but rather “as a perspectival discourse that seeks to articulate a living memory for the present and the future.” As she declares, “The memories that we keep reveal who we are.”<sup>31</sup> In the process, Schüssler Fiorenza maintains that, rather than assuming that women were not actively involved in a particular period of history, the onus must be on proving that they were not.<sup>32</sup>

According to Hewitt, Schüssler Fiorenza’s approach to history and memory is more promising for the liberation of women than Benjamin’s for several reasons. Schüssler Fiorenza does not mask women’s active historical agency with reference to Messianic meanings whether intended as political or otherworldly as does Benjamin.<sup>33</sup> In addition, rather than exploding history by “blasting” the past out of an illusionary continuum of events, Schüssler Fiorenza carefully examines historical accounts for evidence of women’s involvement as she sets about a reconstruction of history which includes women. Such a reconstruction challenges the traditional, androcentric account of Christianity and its beginnings.<sup>34</sup> As she explains,<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. Tenth Anniversary Edition With a New Introduction. (New York: Crossroads, 1983, 1993, 1998), xxii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, xx.

<sup>33</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 84.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 84-85.

<sup>35</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 111.

Like historians of other oppressed groups and peoples, feminist theologians seek to comb the androcentric records for feminist meaning, reappropriating the patriarchal past for those who have not only suffered its pain of oppression but also participated in its social transformation and development.

Schüssler Fiorenza also deals with the concrete contexts and situations of women including their “suffering in stories that emphasize their agency as historical actors who fought and struggled, and continue to do so, against the injustices that marginalize and exploit them, as well as rendering them historically invisible and silent.”<sup>36</sup> She does so by bringing specific questions to the task of recovering past histories. In this sense Schüssler Fiorenza is “more of a historical materialist” than Benjamin.<sup>37</sup> As she explains it, while feminist historians operate from their own locations and presuppositions, their work becomes “fruitful” not by denying their subjectivity but by bringing the “specific questions, concerns, insights, perspectives, and commitments” to their task of studying particular periods of history, drawing from its complexity the factors relevant to their task which allow them to “make the causal link between the past” and the present. “Not value-neutrality but public consciousness and discussion of one’s values, commitments, presuppositions, and sociopolitical location are required.”<sup>38</sup>

Similar to Benjamin, Schüssler Fiorenza “brushes against the grain” of history in her concern to uncover and utilize what might be considered utopian remnants within the Christian record that hold promise for the liberation of women. This remembering, like

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<sup>36</sup>Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 84.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>38</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 103.

Benjamin's, is careful to "distinguish between memory as a 'false consciousness' that functions as an 'opiate' of the present, and authentic" traces of history.<sup>39</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza views these authentic memories as potentially "dangerous." As she explains it, in her exploration of "women's historical agency in ancient Christianity in light of the theological and historical questions raised by feminist movements in church and society" as part of her "critical biblical studies,"<sup>40</sup>

... rather than *abandon* the memory of our fore sisters' sufferings and hopes in our common patriarchal Christian past, Christian feminists *reclaim* their sufferings and struggles in and through the subversive power of the "remembered past." If the enslavement and colonialization of people becomes total when their history is destroyed because solidarity with the faith and suffering of the dead is made impossible, then a feminist biblical hermeneutics has the task of becoming a "dangerous memory" that reclaims the religious suffering and engagement of the dead. Such a "subversive memory" not only keeps alive the suffering and hopes of Christian women in the past but also allows for a universal solidarity of sisterhood with all women of the past, present, and future who follow the same vision.

Hewitt also considers such memory "dangerous" in that it possesses "a subversive potential that threatens the historical privilege and hegemony of the rulers and oppressors who would have us believe that history stands 'on the shoulders of giants.'" Such rhetoric results in the legitimation and perpetuation of these elites "own power and narrow self-interest at the expense not only of women, but all those victimized by injustice."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Hewitt, "The Redemptive Power of Memory," 79.

<sup>40</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, xiv, 31.

<sup>41</sup> Hewitt, "The Redemptive Power of Memory," 84-85.

In the process of attempting to provide present day women with a “usable past,” Schüssler Fiorenza has developed “new conceptual frameworks.”<sup>42</sup> Echoing Benjamin’s concern, these new frameworks were not produced for the purposes of empathizing or identification with the past victims of patriarchal oppression in that such an approach would add legitimation to the status quo and the elites who benefit from it. Rather, the frameworks’ purpose was to provide an opportunity to stand in “anamnestic ‘solidarity’” with past victims.<sup>43</sup> Hewitt explains this word “anamnestic,”<sup>44</sup>

...derives from the Greek *anamnesis*, which is a form of knowledge not derived from direct experience, but occurs in acts of recollection, or remembrance. Remembrance allows later generations to enter into solidarity with the dead in acts of recollection that bring the sufferings experienced in the past to the light of contemporary knowledge.

Solidarity for women, according to Schüssler Fiorenza, “is not based on our biological differences from men but on our common historical experiences as an oppressed group struggling to become full historical subjects.”<sup>45</sup> In Hewitt’s opinion, “(a)cts of solidarity in remembrance not only help to redeem the past, they also provide the political and moral empowerment that is necessary to sustain women’s energy and courage in the process of transforming oppressive social relations and unjust political institutions.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p. 85. Quotes from Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, p. 84 and Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 85.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 77, n. 17.

<sup>45</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 110.

<sup>46</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 163.

The process of “historical remembrance” and recovery of the active agency of women, “the historical defeats and victories, sufferings and contributions, of our ... foremothers and foresisters” within Christianity’s texts and past for use by the present as “our own heritage and historical power,” is an “act of survival.” Such memory assists in the replacement of androcentric histories and the re-visioning of origins and theology in a manner which includes women, thereby resulting in an “increase in historical consciousness and biblical remembrance” even as it “encourages” contemporary women “in historical solidarity with them to commit ... to the continuing struggle against patriarchy in society and church.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Summary**

History, as it is commonly related, is kyriarchal in nature, involving only the deeds of elite men, illustrious individuals or major powers. Marginalized peoples or countries if mentioned at all are secondary to the main story. As such, it is not really history but an idealized version of it in that actual history includes the histories of women and marginalized peoples. The same is true of religious histories which tend to reflect kyriarchal perspectives and yet are deemed normative and true. Benjamin and Schüssler Fiorenza intentionally seek out traces of what might have actually occurred in history by “brushing against the grain” of the histories as told by those in positions of power and authority with their self serving “historical amnesia”, including the presence and participation of those past peoples who have been silenced by the elites with their “false

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<sup>47</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 113-115.

and falsifying perspective ... and ... accounts of the world”<sup>48</sup> in the hopes of releasing “a concept of memory laden with redemptive and emancipatory potentialities.”<sup>49</sup> In the process, utopian visions from the past may be recovered which hold the emancipatory and liberative potential both then and now in its subversion of the privileges and powers of the elite in order to stand in “anamnestic solidarity” with them.<sup>50</sup>

Pentecostalism equates “memory” with “hope”<sup>51</sup> and does not hesitate to draw upon its history.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, the following shall attempt to “brush against the grain” of the traditional history of Canadian Pentecostalism and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as “the way it really was.” Rather than emphasize the role of dominant men and the illusion of progression from a small, chaotic movement to a large, well organized

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<sup>48</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 75.

<sup>49</sup> Hewitt, *Feminist Critical Theory of Religion*, 150.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 158.

<sup>51</sup> “Memory and Hope” was the theme of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers. (March 7-9, 1996), Wycliffe College, Toronto, Ontario. Additionally, on April 25-29, 2006, the Pentecostal movement celebrated its one hundredth anniversary at a gathering entitled the “Azusa St. Centennial” in Los Angeles, California where the legacy of Azusa St. was explored. See for example, *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*. Harold D. Hunter & Cecil M. Robeck Jr., Editors (Pathway Press: Cleveland, Tennessee, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> As can be demonstrated by the themes of the 2006 Society for Pentecostal Studies held at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, March 23-25, “Memories of the Azusa Street Revival: Interrogations and Interpretations” and the 2005 meeting of the same society held at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia on March 10-12, “That Which We Have Received We Now Pass On: Spirit, Word, and Tradition in Pentecostalism.”

one<sup>53</sup> the following shall focus on the recovery of ministering women's active involvement as history makers<sup>54</sup> in ways that render them, and the unjust conditions within which they lived, visible."<sup>55</sup> The hope in this case is that such a Benjamin-like "blasting" of the historical involvement of ministering Pentecostal women within Canadian Pentecostalism out of the continuum of Canadian Pentecostal history as currently recorded will destroy the illusion of a movement built by men. The goal is to provide a theological, political and moral empowerment that will form part of the basis of a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation that may be of benefit to women, non-elite men and children within the movement.

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<sup>53</sup> See for instance, Gloria Grace Kulbeck, B.A. *What God Hath Wrought: A History of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, Rev. Walter E. McAlister and Rev. George R. Upton, eds. (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958); R.A.N. Kydd, "Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada." *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed. and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003): 961 and Thomas W. Miller, *Thomas Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Mississauga, Ontario: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> For further discussion see Pamela Holmes, "Chapter Nine: Ministering Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: A Feminist Exploration," *Canadian Pentecostals* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, Quebec, Kingston, Ontario), 2009; Pamela Holmes, "The 'Place' of Women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Ministry Since the Azusa Street Revival," *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, Harold D. Hunter & Cecil M. Robeck Jr., Eds. (Pathway Press: Cleveland, Tennessee, 2006).

<sup>55</sup>Hewitt, *Feminist Critical Theory of Religion*, 149.

### Ministering Women in Early Pentecostalism

“Women were conspicuously present at the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century events now considered to mark the beginnings of the modern Pentecostal movement” asserts the 2003 edition of the *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*.<sup>56</sup> Agnes Ozman has been credited with being the first to “receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost” as early as 1901.<sup>57</sup> A picture of the “leaders of the Azusa Street Mission, Los Angeles” from around 1906<sup>58</sup> or 1907<sup>59</sup> shows seven women and one girl, a daughter of one of the seven women, among the thirteen leaders.<sup>60</sup> These women included Phoebe Sargent, Jennie Evans Moore, Florence Louise Crawford, Sister Prince, Mrs. May Evans, Clara Lum and little Mildred Crawford.<sup>61</sup> Regarding the phrase “Sister Prince,” “Sister” and “Brother”, titles used by Pentecostals still today, indicates not a biological relationship, but an egalitarian and “spiritual” one. At the

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<sup>56</sup> R. M. Griffith and D. Robeck, “Women, Role Of,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003), 1203.

<sup>57</sup> Carl Brumback, *A Sound From Heaven: The Dramatic Beginning of the 20th Century Pentecostal Revival* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1961, 1977), 52.

<sup>58</sup> Robeck, Jr. dates the photo from mid-July to early August 1906 in *Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, 100.

<sup>59</sup> Brumback, 50.

<sup>60</sup> Brumback dates the photo from 1907 but mistakenly identifies Jennie Evans Moore as Jenny Moon, 50.

<sup>61</sup> Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, 100.

Azusa Street Mission, Phoebe Sargent and Jennie Evans Moore were “city” missionaries. Florence Crawford was “state director.”<sup>62</sup> Sister Prince was given the title of “Church Mother,” an African-American designation for someone who advises the Pastor. May Evans, an experienced minister, was involved in the leaders’ meetings and praying with people. Clara Lum, as the mission’s secretary, was the “second most important” person after William Seymour.<sup>63</sup> For a short time Mildred Crawford, daughter of Florence, along with two adults, were credited with being able to “write in tongues.”<sup>64</sup>

Even though their numbers declined significantly after 1920, women were also involved as ordained ministers in the early years of the Pentecostal movement perhaps following the precedent established by the Holiness movement which formed part of Pentecostalism’s roots.<sup>65</sup> Better known early male leaders such as Charles Parham, Thomas Barratt, Frank Bartleman and William Seymour affirmed and supported many of these women as co-labourers as together they established the fledgling Pentecostal movement. Working alongside men who not only made a “place” for them but also learned from and depended upon them, ministering women, whether ordained or not, functioned as pastors, evangelists, educators, Bible teachers, theologians, missionaries,

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 96.

<sup>63</sup> Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, 101-104.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Brown Zikmund, “Women and Ordination,” *In Our Own Voices: Four Centuries of American Women’s Religious Writing*, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds. (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1995), 299.

church planters, publishers and editors of periodicals and books and founders of congregations and denominations.<sup>66</sup>

Today, throughout the world, whether in Canada, the United States, Latin America, Europe or Asia, when the “(P)entecostal fire breaks through” and “the Spirit’s gender impartiality” is not undercut, “women shine” as they take their “place” alongside men and participate fully as teachers and preachers, prophets and healers, pastors and “principal bearers of the Pentecostal gospel to the four corners of the earth.”<sup>67</sup>

### **The “Canadian Azusa”<sup>68</sup>**

Many Pentecostals within Canada also point to Azusa Street as an egalitarian story of beginnings. According to Canadian Pentecostal author, Gloria Kulbeck, who wrote one of the first histories of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), the “Pentecostal revival of 1906” as a new “non-Conformist sect” was designed to illustrate once more that God is “no respecter (sic) of persons.”<sup>69</sup> Kulbeck credits “the first signs

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<sup>66</sup> See Barbara Cavaness, *How First-Generation Pentecostal Leaders Viewed Women in Ministry*. Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Papers, 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Regent University (March 10-12, 2005): 1-20.

<sup>67</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 125.

<sup>68</sup> See Pamela Holmes, “Chapter Nine: Ministering Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: A Feminist Exploration,” *Canadian Pentecostals* (McGill-Queen’s University Press: Montreal, Quebec, Kingston, Ontario), 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Gloria Grace Kulbeck, B.A. *What God Hath Wrought: A History of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, Rev. Walter E. McAlister and Rev. George R. Upton, eds. (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958), 27.

of the renewal of Pentecost in North America” to “a little coloured lady from Los Angeles” who was visiting Houston, Texas” where “Elder W. J. Seymour”, a “Spirit-filled man” was ministering. This woman invited Seymour to come to Los Angeles which he did in 1906.<sup>70</sup>

Canada also had its own version of Azusa Street in the form of the East End or Hebden Mission. Opening on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1906 at 651 Queen Street East in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, this “faith” style mission was led by Ellen Hebden, a British born immigrant who was supported by her contractor husband, James.<sup>71</sup> At first the work was slow going. Even so, seemingly without any knowledge of the Azusa Street revival, Ellen Hebden was baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues on November 17, 1906, an experience upon which she reported in both her own periodical, *The Promise* and in Seymour’s *Apostolic Faith*, once she became aware of its existence at the end of 1906.<sup>72</sup> Five months later, approximately eighty others including her husband had prayed in tongues. Shortly thereafter, six other congregations were established in Toronto<sup>73</sup> and it was reported in William Seymour’s publication *The*

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<sup>70</sup> Kulbeck, 25.

<sup>71</sup> Ellen Hebden, “How Pentecostal Came to Toronto,” *The Promise*, Number 1 (May 1907): 1-3, 1. See also Thomas William Miller, “The Canadian ‘Azusa’: The Hebden Mission in Toronto,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Volume 8:1 (Spring 1986): 5-29, 6.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1. See also *The Apostolic Faith* 1:6 (February-March, 1907), p. 4. Miller, “The Canadian ‘Azusa,’” 6-7.

<sup>73</sup> Miller, 39-40, 42.

*Apostolic Faith* that Pentecost had come to Toronto.<sup>74</sup> By the end of 1910, there were fourteen new congregations in Canada, most of which were associated with the Hebdens. As well, of the fifteen overseas missionaries mentioned in a list compiled by George Chambers shortly before the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada became organized, all had been at least briefly connected with the Hebden Mission. Significantly for this discussion, seven of them were women.<sup>75</sup> Toronto had become the “Canadian Jerusalem” in the sense that many early Pentecostal leaders considered the city a key location that must be visited with the Hebden Mission the foundation for the city’s ministries.<sup>76</sup>

Many prominent “gospel workers” were involved in the Hebden Mission including several eventual leaders and founders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.<sup>77</sup> “Gospel Workers,” the term Hebden preferred for ministering peoples, was common in Ontario at the time. Even before Hebden established her mission, a “Gospel Workers Church in Canada”, with roots in the earlier Holiness movement, had been established in 1902 with one third of its leaders Spirit-led women.<sup>78</sup> Women establishing

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<sup>74</sup> William Seymour, ed., *The Apostolic Faith*, 1:6 (January 1907), p. 1. as reported by Miller, 67, n.3.

<sup>75</sup> Nelson Rogers, “And Your Daughters Shall Prophecy: The Impact of Dominant Ideology of Canadian Society on the Role of Women in the PAOC.” (Ottawa: Independent Inquiry, School of Social Work, Carlton University, 1992), 21.

<sup>76</sup> Miller, 43-44, 41.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

<sup>78</sup> Helen G. Hobbs, “‘What She Could’: Women in the Gospel Workers Church, 1902-1955,” *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*, Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, eds. (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1995): 201-218, 201, 202, 206.

“faith” missions were also common. One such mission was located in Trenton, Ontario, the small city from which I am writing, founded and led by Mary Gainforth. Fortunately Gainforth has published her account of some of her Faith Mission’s exploits in a small book entitled *The Life and Healing of Mrs. Mary Gainforth*.<sup>79</sup>

### **Ministering Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: A Focused, Historical Overview**

#### **The Early Years**

Other women also played key roles. While the following is far from being comprehensive, it is intended to illustrate that, similar to the situation in other parts of the world, women were actively involved within the early years of the Pentecostal movement within Canada.

One well-known woman was Aimee Semple McPherson, a remarkably talented and flamboyant Canadian farm girl from Southwestern Ontario.<sup>80</sup> Born in 1890 near Ingersoll, Ontario to a Methodist father and a Salvation Army mother,<sup>81</sup> McPherson was active in the early years of Pentecostalism in Canada. In December 1920, the first edition of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony (Testimony)* reported McPherson’s evangelistic

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<sup>79</sup> Mrs. Mary Gainforth, *The Life and Healing of Mrs. Mary Gainforth* (Trenton Ontario: The Jarrett Printing and Publishing Co., n.d.)

<sup>80</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody’s Sister* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 3.

<sup>81</sup> Aimee Semple McPherson, *This Is That* (Los Angeles: Echo Park Evangelistic Association, 1923), 13, 26-27.

efforts in Lethbridge Alberta.<sup>82</sup> She also worked in Montreal and Winnipeg<sup>83</sup> as well as in Toronto where, according to the January 1921 issue, a 2000 seat building was too small to house those in attendance.<sup>84</sup> The eventual founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and Angelus Temple in Los Angeles popularized Pentecostalism with her creative productions at the Temple. Even after McPherson had focused her attention on the establishment of her Foursquare ministry within the United States, she still continued to receive significant support from Canadians.<sup>85</sup>

Another woman was Mabel Cunningham. The November 1980 issue of the *Pentecostal Testimony* notes the passing of Mabel Cunningham, “pastor and evangelist - a well-known Pentecostal pioneer saint” described as a “gifted and anointed handmaiden of God who had dedicated her life, her ministry, and her family and made our Pentecostal work a better work because she worked in service with us.”<sup>86</sup> Born in 1885, educated in a Roman Catholic convent, baptized, confirmed and married in the Anglican Church, she grew hungry for more of God after three “near death” experiences. She married in 1909, was “converted” to a Pentecostal form of Christianity and baptized by immersion in

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<sup>82</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 1 (December 1920), 1.

<sup>83</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 6 (February 1921), 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 2 (January 1921), 2.

<sup>85</sup> Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister*, 232-280, 325-326.

<sup>86</sup> *The Pentecostal Testimony* (November 1980), 20.

1917.<sup>87</sup> In 1921, in Mabel's own words, she "received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2:4 and thereafter ... began to really live in God."<sup>88</sup>

At first, Cunningham ministered with her husband in St. Catharines and Parry Sound, Ontario. After her husband's death in 1925, she was left to raise four daughters on her own. She agreed when asked to assume the duties of pastor in Parry Sound and later other assemblies, along with her parenting responsibilities. In July of 1925, she was "set apart" for ministry by "the brethren" at the London gathering of the leadership of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.<sup>89</sup> Cunningham also served as an evangelistic worker with Evangelists Ray and Joyce Watson in the Maritimes. In time, one of her daughters, Jean, joined her in evangelistic ministry<sup>90</sup> earning Cunningham the title of "the Aimee Semple McPherson of Canada."<sup>91</sup> Reportedly, it was Cunningham's "pioneer spirit that possessed her, drove her on and enabled her to accomplish great things for God" even going to the point of crossing frozen lakes in terrible weather in order to arrive where she was ministering. That "spirit" seems to have been active until the end. At age 95, she preached a Mother's Day service at Queensway Cathedral.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> "Canadian Workers You Should Know: Two Inspired Evangelists," *The Pentecostal Testimony* (September 1938), 19.

<sup>88</sup> Typed notes on Mabel Cunningham, PAOC Archives, Mississauga, Ontario.

<sup>89</sup> R. E. Sternall, "When God's Fire Brought the Fire Dept. to Church," *The Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 37, No. 5 (May 1956), 8.

<sup>90</sup> *The Pentecostal Testimony* (September 1938), 19, 20.

<sup>91</sup> Sternall, "When God's Fire Brought the Fire Dept. to Church," 8.

<sup>92</sup> Typed notes on Mabel Cunningham, PAOC Archives, Toronto, ON.

McPherson and Cunningham were only two women among many. Women ministered as pastors, often pioneering new works. For example, in 1911, Alice Belle Garrigus from Boston started the Bethesda Mission in St. John's, Newfoundland. From there the work expanded, eventually forming the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland.<sup>93</sup> The Davis sisters, Carro and Susan, first started a work in Fredericton, New Brunswick in 1923 before moving on to found works in Saint John and Moncton. From the Saint John church several other assemblies were established throughout New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.<sup>94</sup> Mrs. F. Reavley is listed as being in charge of the Port Colborne Assembly in Ontario in the September 1921 "Directory of Canadian Pentecostal Assemblies in Co-operative Fellowship."<sup>95</sup> In the October 1921 issue of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, John McAlister mentions the "splendid little church Sister Beck built on her farm about five miles from Mawer, Saskatchewan." McAlister somewhat patronizingly states,<sup>96</sup>

This church is a monument of what God can do through us if we only let Him. God spoke to her heart as she prayed at this spot and asked her to build a church there. After some time she said, 'Lord, if you provide the means I will.' And so the Lord provided the means and she had the church built ... May God bless dear old Sister Beck.

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<sup>93</sup> For her story, see Burton K. Janes, *The Lady Who Stayed: The Biography of Alice Belle Garrigus, Newfoundland's First Pentecostal Pioneer*, Vol. 2 (St. Johns, Newfoundland: Good Tidings Press, 1983).

<sup>94</sup> Fred H. Parlee, "Carro and Susie Davis," *The Pentecostal Testimony* (December 1987), 16-17.

<sup>95</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 8 (September 1921), 4.

<sup>96</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 9 (October 1921), 1.

In January 1923, H.M. Cadwalder reports on the ministries of Sisters Winnie Smith and Madge Black from Winnipeg who went into a new work “forty some miles from the railroad”, which was going well.<sup>97</sup>

Lay women were sometimes instrumental in starting new works and getting them established, at which point a male pastor or pastoral couple was called. For example, by 1909, Mrs. Martha Perry and her daughter, Mrs. Olive Peterkin, were reported as faithfully and successfully witnessing to the Pentecostal expression of the faith in Parry Sound. Later, Rev. and Mrs. George Will were called as pastors and a building erected by 1912.<sup>98</sup> Mrs. Henry Snyder and Mrs. George Stewart, who were expelled from their church in Vineland in the Niagara Peninsula after visiting Toronto and returning home Spirit baptized, held meetings in local homes and an unused school building. This became the nucleus of one of the earliest Canadian Pentecostal churches pastored by A.G. Ward (1908-1909).<sup>99</sup> While in January 1923, H.M. Cadwalder mentions that “Sister Lee is still laboring at Wetaskawin, Alberta,”<sup>100</sup> Brother and Sister J.W. Knights are reported to have “accepted the Pastorate of this Assembly” in Wetaskawin in May 1925 after a series of “special meetings” was held by “Bro. and Sister C. Fred Willis and Sister

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<sup>97</sup> H. M. Cadwalder, “Report From the West,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 13 (Jan.1923), 2.

<sup>98</sup> Miller, 51.

<sup>99</sup> “Memories: The Story of 75 Years in Vineland,” Anniversary Brochure, Vineland Pentecostal Church, 1983, PAOC Archives, Mississauga, ON.

<sup>100</sup> H. M. Cadwalder, “Report From the West,” 2.

Gladys Halliday.”<sup>101</sup> The same year, in November, Brother and Sister J.W. Knights took charge, supposedly temporarily, of the work in Biggar, Saskatchewan which was described as having been stabilized by the Sisters Winnifred Kerr and Pearl McAlister through its establishment in a “little Hall located right on the Main Street” and was “growing steadily.” The Sisters were reported to have taken a “leave of absence” for a rest. Nevertheless, the Sisters Kerr and McAlister “received a call to the Canwood Assembly, and while the Biggar Assembly was sorry to lose them, the will of the Lord came first.” Bro. J. W. Knights was then reported to have “received a call to the pastorate of the Assembly.”<sup>102</sup> Occasionally women were called upon to fulfill pastoral responsibilities when a man was not available. Miss Laura Arnold is reported in the March 1921 as filling in for Brother Sternall in Kingston upon his absence.<sup>103</sup>

Several women ministered as evangelists. Some of these evangelists were single such as Evangelist Miss Ethel Lee who advertised her services in the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*.<sup>104</sup> One particularly well known evangelist was Zelma Argue, whose ministry helped to establish the fledgling Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Argue was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba to Pentecostal leaders A. H. and Eva Argue. Although in 1920 she was ordained as an evangelist with the Assemblies of God in the

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<sup>101</sup> “Western Canada Section,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. IV, No. 5 (May 1925), 6.

<sup>102</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. IV, No. 11 (November 1925), 8.

<sup>103</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 6 (March 1921), 1.

<sup>104</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2 No. 13 (January 1923), 3.

States and eventually pastored in the 1950s in Los Angeles, California, in her earlier years she was active in the Canadian movement.<sup>105</sup> During those early years, Zelma Argue often traveled with and assisted her evangelist father. In December 1920 she was publicly acknowledged in the first published issue of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*<sup>106</sup> and by the March 1921 edition of the same periodical she was recognized as an Evangelist in her own rite reporting that the “ministry of Zelma was especially blessed to the children and young people...” and lists her among the names of “Evangelists in the Field.”<sup>107</sup> Her preaching and her musical abilities - she played a slide trombone - were greatly appreciated by the crowds. Several articles by Zelma Argue were printed in that same magazine.

Many, many women ministered as overseas missionaries and their activities were mentioned in various issues of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*.<sup>108</sup> It soon becomes obvious that the early Pentecostal movement in Canada was extremely mission-minded, to the point of missionary work being somewhat idealized<sup>109</sup> with many women actively participating in this area of ministry. For examples, by 1921, Martha Hisey writes of her

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<sup>105</sup> P. D. Hocken, “Argue, Zelma” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds., Patrick H. Alexander, assoc. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988). 22.

<sup>106</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 1 (December 1920), 1.

<sup>107</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 4 (March 1921), 1, 4.

<sup>108</sup> “Do You Love the Lord’s Appearing,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1922), 1.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, the article “If You Cannot Go Send a Substitute,” in *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No 10 (November 1921), 2.

work in Africa with Miss Kirsch among the Beabo tribe in eleven towns in Liberia. Apparently a rampaging leopard had carried off, killed and devoured a young girl. The people asked Hisey if she could bring a gun next time she came. She doesn't say whether or not she complied. Meanwhile, Miss Kirsch had been shown the bones and a bag made out of the cheek of a leader of some soldiers that the Beabo people had killed and eaten. When she asked why they hadn't eaten all of the soldiers instead of only the leader, the Beabo replied "this man was strong to make the others fight us, so we eat him ..."<sup>110</sup> Such were the conditions under which these two women ministered. Facing challenges seems to have part of the missionary package. Miss Ethel Bingeman was reported to have been ministering in West Africa overseeing a "mission station" that included 23 boys and 20 girls and a "little Mission Town with five families." Sister Cora Haist went to China where she was reported to have been ill with "the fever" but was recovering. Lettie Ward, also in China, "taught a class of Bible Women."<sup>111</sup> Elsie Fearery reported from Caracas, Venezuela that a new chapel had been opened. Florence Stock in North China claimed that there were "over 27 single women missionaries in Chihle and Shansi provinces" alone. Still, there were "only two young men and a few married couples."<sup>112</sup> Miss Brown attempted to make a difference in an overcrowded Jerusalem where over a thousand immigrants a month were arriving.<sup>113</sup> Anna Sanders in Mexico seemed to think

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<sup>110</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 5 (April 1921), 2.

<sup>111</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 8 (September 1921), 4, 1.

<sup>112</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 11 (December 1921), 3.

<sup>113</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 6 (May 1921), 3.

that the Catholic priests were warning the people against getting involved with Pentecostalism,<sup>114</sup> Sister C. McCloud,<sup>115</sup> Miss Katie Builder<sup>116</sup> and Miss H. Lockheart<sup>117</sup> worked in India; Blanche A. Appleby in South China;<sup>118</sup> and Miss Gollan with Miss Kirsch in Liberia, W. Africa.<sup>119</sup> The list could go on and on and contain names such as Sarah Hughes, Mrs. V. Schoonmaker, Miss B. D. Pottorff, Sarah Kuglar, Mrs. Jaycock, Miss L. Morrison, Miss W.B. Lowther.<sup>120</sup>

By May 1922, the above-mentioned Martha Hisey was back home in Canada and involved in a “Missionary House” in Toronto with Miss Inda Mason. The house was intended for the use of “God’s true workers” while home on furlough, “especially Pentecostal Missionaries.” Other ministers and workers were also welcome.<sup>121</sup> By July 31, 1924, Hisey was able to give a “very encouraging report” regarding the Toronto Rest Home at the Third Eastern District Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

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<sup>114</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (June 1922), 4.

<sup>115</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 8 (September 1921), 4.

<sup>116</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (June 1922), 1.

<sup>117</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 10 (October 1922), 4.

<sup>118</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (December 1922), 1.

<sup>119</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2 No. 13 (January 1923), 5.

<sup>120</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 11 (December 1921), 3, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1922), 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (June 1922), 3.

One woman who must be mentioned was Sarah Weller, from Parry Sound, who went as a missionary to India in 1911, where she died from malaria and was buried in 1918 before the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was organized.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to varying ministries after returning home from the mission field, some women were involved in the Canadian scene before becoming missionaries. One such woman was Annie Cressman who first was a “student pastor” in “a small country church in Mennisino, Manitoba” while studying in the Bible School in Winnipeg. After graduation, she worked with “Miss Sadie Bolman, now Baycroft, in Melville, Saskatchewan” ministering at “four preaching points besides.” Later she worked with “Miss Annie Reynolds, now Stuckey” in MacTier, Ontario before heading for Liberia with Ruth LePers.<sup>123</sup>

Some women, like Sister Black, ministered alongside their husbands as evangelists. Sister and Brother Black were reported to have been a great blessing to the Montreal, Quebec church. While “Bro. Black’s Sunday morning talks were very practical and uplifting to all the Saints ...” Sister Black’s musical ministry among the young people was also appreciated. Her solos and duets “...being sung right from the heart, were a great uplift to the services and seemed to give us a waft heavenward...”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Miller, 51.

<sup>123</sup> Annie Cressman, *Biological Information. Annie Cressman. For National Office Archives*. October 1987. PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario.

<sup>124</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 9 (October 1921), 2.

Many women worked alongside their husbands as pastors. For examples, Brother and Sister Lockhart enjoyed a successful ministry in Spruce Lake where they were reported as having “a good church and parsonage.”<sup>125</sup> Arthur and Jessie Atter of Abingdon, who, after returning from the mission field in China, together pioneered several new works in Ontario.<sup>126</sup> Ella Sunshine Hostetler Sternall and Reuben Eby Sternall, one of the seven leaders who applied in 1919 for the charter of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, together pioneered and pastored many assemblies. Pastor and Mrs. Lamb in Canwood, Saskatchewan, together helped provide leadership to a congregation which constructed a new Pentecostal church and a parsonage in 1919.<sup>127</sup>

Another partner in ministry was Lillie Myrtle McAlister, wife of R. E. McAlister who was himself a prominent leader instrumental in the establishment of the PAOC. In the February 1921 issue of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, published and edited by R. E. McAlister, is found a memorial article for Myrtle. In it she is described as being “actively engaged in the work” for about ten years, nine of them as a co-labourer with her husband. “She took an active part in the meetings, chiefly as leader of the song service, and also in the altar work, occasionally giving forth the Word of God.” At her memorial service, Pastor Wm. Draffin testified, “it was a message given by Sister McAlister that

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>126</sup> “A Trip to Abingdon,” *The Promise*, 12 (February 1901), p. 3; Mrs. J. Atter, “Reminiscences of Pioneer Days,” *Western Ontario Full Gospel Advocate*, 1:4 (February 1, 1944) as reported by Miller, 68, n. 11.

<sup>127</sup> Miller, 54, 89.

sent conviction to his heart and caused him to repent and turn to God.”<sup>128</sup> From 1931, Marion Parkinson worked alongside her husband in the Rainy River area of Winnipeg where it is reported they were so poor that “they lived in a 2-room, non-insulated shack in 60 [Fahrenheit] degree weather” and “could not afford a car” so “often walked 40 miles a week to minister to people.” Her husband later perished in 1942 when the ship that was carrying them to the West Indies as missionaries “was torpedoed by enemy fire and Robert was lost at sea”. After being rescued, she carried on without him ministering in Trinidad and Antigua for twenty-three years.<sup>129</sup>

Still other women ministered alongside their husbands on the mission field. For example, the July 1921 issue of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* includes a letter from Marion Wittick Keller of British East Africa. She claimed that the work there is trying but going well as she laboured with her husband. The *Testimony* adds that “(t)hey are very worthy missionaries of the cross and we solicit for them the prayers and co-operation of God’s people.” In addition, Dr. and Mrs. C. M. Wortman from London worked together in the “Rest Home and the anticipated Maternity Home” in Argentina as well as in a proposed Bible school.<sup>130</sup> C. W. Doney writes from Egypt that Mrs. Doney had been “very ill with tumor” but had been “wonderfully healed.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 2 (February 1921), 1.

<sup>129</sup> *Marion Parkinson*. Biographic Data. PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario.

<sup>130</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 7 (July 1921), 1, 2.

<sup>131</sup> “News Items,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2. No. 1 (January 1922), 1.

Brother and Sister Taylor were to be found in Africa.<sup>132</sup> Brother and Sister James in China, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Andersen in Partabgarh, Oudh, India.<sup>133</sup> Brother Bailey and his wife in Venezuela.<sup>134</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Joseph K. Blakeney, missionaries to the Belgian Congo, Central Africa<sup>135</sup> where their “little daughter, Faith” died.<sup>136</sup> Marion and Otto Keller in Africa.<sup>137</sup> Geo. C. and Abbie Slager in China.<sup>138</sup> Brother and Sister Watt in India.<sup>139</sup> Again the list could go on and on.

Even though women oftentimes worked alongside of their spouses as ministering partner, it was not unusual for the women to be ignored. Such is the case in the following example. Brother H. M. Cadwalder and his wife are reported by Walter E. McAlister, to be in charge of an Assembly in Edmonton in the first edition of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* in a short article on page three. Still, not only does McAlister not bother to mention the name of “his wife,” the last line of the article gives the “Pastor’s” address in a singular sense and the “Directory of Canadian Pentecostal Assemblies In Co-Operative

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<sup>132</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 8 (September 1921), 4.

<sup>133</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 8 (September 1921), 4.

<sup>134</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (December 1922), 1, 3.

<sup>135</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 3 (February 1921), 3.

<sup>136</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (March 1922), 1.

<sup>137</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 13 (January 1923), 3.

<sup>138</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (December 1922), 4.

<sup>139</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (November 1922), 1.

Fellowship” on page two only lists H.M. Cadwalder, Pastor.<sup>140</sup> While both spouses may have been in charge, only the man was named, granted a title and given credit for the work.

Even with this brief survey gleaned from copies of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* and other historical sources, it is apparent that from the very first days of the Pentecostal movement in Canada, women were not only deeply committed, often sacrificially so, but were also actively involved in various areas of public ministry and made significant contributions in the pioneering and establishing of the Pentecostal movement generally and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada specifically.

### **Organization of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada**

In spite of this involvement, when the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was originally chartered on May 17, 1919, the “first or provisional directors” of the corporation were all male.<sup>141</sup> In their “Memorandum of Agreement” dated April 26, 1919 these men decided, among other matters, that,<sup>142</sup>

5.All the Pastors in any of the local Assemblies shall be deemed to be and be known as Elders providing only that such Pastor has been duly ordained and is a duly registered member of this Corporation.

6.No Layman shall be recommended for membership in the Corporation unless and until he has been examined by a committee of at least three Elders and they shall have approved such recommendation.

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<sup>140</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 1 (December 1920), 2-3.

<sup>141</sup> See the first page of the *Charter issued to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, May 17, 1919. PAOC Archives.

<sup>142</sup> “Memorandum of Agreement,” April 26, 1919 forming part of the Original Charter issued to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, May 17, 1919, 1-3. PAOC Archives.

22. Individual congregations presided over by Pastors who are members of this Corporation shall be called Local Assemblies, and the affairs of each Local Assembly shall be administered by the Pastor for the time being and a Trustee Board of Three (3), the same to be elected by a majority-vote of such persons as the Pastor for the time being shall certify to be in good standing and fellowship.

23. The power of ordination shall remain with the General Assembly and when a candidate has passed such examinations as may be imposed from time to time by the Assembly and has proved his gift and calling by actual success, rather than by expectations the rites and ceremony or ordination shall be performed by two duly ordained ministers in good standing, by the imposition of hands and with prayer.

Clearly the PAOC was to be an organization primarily consisting of, and controlled by, ordained men. As article 5 above states, only those Pastors who were ordained could be known as Elders. Thomas Miller in his history of the PAOC states that this first constitution explicitly declared that “women may act as Evangelists, Missionaries, or Deaconesses, but not as Pastors or Elders.”<sup>143</sup>

Women were present in at least some of the early organizational meetings. The *Minutes of the General Meeting of the General Assembly of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* held at Kitchener, Ontario from November 25 through 28, 1919 indicate that there was “a good representative of ministers and lay delegates present” including fourteen male “Elders,” one “Evangelist,” eight other named men and eight women as well as “a number of others from the Kitchener Assembly, and nearby districts.” In this document “By-Law Number 23” states,<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Miller, p. 360 citing the Combined Minutes of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Ltd., District Council of the General Council, Assemblies of God, U.S.A., 1919-1922, PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario, 3.

<sup>144</sup> *Minutes of the General Meeting of the General Assembly of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* held at Kitchener, ON., Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 1919, 1, 2-3. PAOC Archives.

Resolved that two or more regular ordained ministers in good standing shall have authority to ordain by the imposition of hands and prayer such as have a call to the ministry and have proved their gifts and calling by actual success rather than the hopes of what they may be. This ordination shall be in conjunction with the pastor and Local Assembly of which he is in good standing and fellowship.

This same document indicates that Elder Bruce Freeborn and Harry Law were recommended for ordination, while Miss L. Arnold and Mrs. A. Lindsay were recommended for Missionary credentials. Mrs. Parker was recommended for a Deaconess Certificate, and Wm. Parker and Brother and Sister L. Lowen were recommended for fellowship certificates. If the women had any objections or comments regarding their omission from ordained ministry or from leadership positions within the new institution they were not recorded in the early Minutes.

In October of 1922 when the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada separated into “Eastern” and “Western” districts,<sup>145</sup> the Minutes of the “Eastern District” indicates that all leadership and all ordinands were male.<sup>146</sup> While all of the leaders and ordinands in the July 29 to August 1, 1924 Minutes continued to be male, it was “resolved that after talking with Sister Horner we would gladly receiver (sic) her into our fellowship” and Martha Hisey's "Toronto Rest Home" expressed its “appreciation of the recognition of the

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<sup>145</sup> *Minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the General Assembly, of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, held at 15 Scott St., Kitchener, ON, Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 1922, PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario, 2.

<sup>146</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Eastern District Council, of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, held at 15 Scott St., Kitchener, ON., Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 1922, PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario, 1-2.

Conference.”<sup>147</sup> Women’s ministries within the new organization were seemingly still welcome and affirmed.

By August 1925 in the “Western District” when the conference was deciding to “become definitely affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies” the leadership was all male. When it was decided that the Western Council would be dissolved “with the view of bringing all Canada into one body” it was decided that “Provincial Districts with equal representation in the general body” would be established. The leaders of these Provincial Districts elected at this conference were also all male. Four women were granted Deaconesses’ certificates.<sup>148</sup> When it was noted at this same conference that “the majority of missionaries already on the foreign fields are women and sufficient funds are not yet forthcoming to send all those who offer themselves to the field” it was resolved that “when new recruits offer themselves, *men have first consideration...*” (*emphasis mine*). With the large percentage of women involved in missionary work, this was a significant and restricting shift in strategy. Again, there is no recorded objection by women to this shift.

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<sup>147</sup> *Minutes of the Third Eastern District Conference* held at Toronto, ON, July 29 to August 1, 1924, PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario, 3-4.

<sup>148</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Western District Council of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* held at Wesley Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba. August 12<sup>th</sup> to August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1925, PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario, 2, 4-5.

By 1931, the title “Reverend” appeared for the first time in the Minutes of the General Conference as a title for Pastors rather than “Elder” or “Brother.”<sup>149</sup> This change represented a significant move away from the relatively egalitarian ideal which had been assumed to exist between the ordained men and the laity among which they served. If ordained, many men were called “Brother So-and-so” with a minority referred to as “Elder.” Laity were “Brother and Sister So-and-so.”<sup>150</sup> Now all ordained men could refer to themselves as “Reverend,” although many chose to continue to use “Brother.” Referring to both ordered persons and laity as “Brother” or “Sister” continues to the present.<sup>151</sup> Again, this is significant in that it expresses a relatively egalitarian impulse seeking expression within Canadian Pentecostalism.

However, other changes were countering this egalitarian impulse. Also in 1931, it was decided that men were no longer to be ordained in a small ceremony by two already ordained ministers. Rather, the local Districts were granted the responsibility to ordain and assign preaching positions.<sup>152</sup> Further hierarchical practices were being established.

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<sup>149</sup> Randal Holm, *Organizational Blues: The Struggle of One Pentecostal Denomination with the Bugbear of Institutionalism*, Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers, November 10 - 12, 1994. Wheaton, Illinois, 8.

<sup>150</sup> As can be demonstrated by reference to issues of *The Pentecostal Testimony* published during the 1920-1930.

<sup>151</sup> As can be demonstrated by reference to issues of *The Pentecostal Testimony* published during the 1930-Present.

<sup>152</sup> Randal Holm, *Organizational Blues*, 8.

In 1938 the General Conference formally ratified that all credentialed ministers must speak in tongues as evidence that they were baptized in the Spirit.<sup>153</sup>

A “place” may have been created for women in public ministry but, particularly obvious once institutionalization began, women’s ministry involvement had definite parameters placed on it. As soon as the PAOC set about the task of organizing, a patriarchal hierarchy was established whereby men were institutionally awarded senior positions of leadership and authority over women. The women appeared to co-operate with the establishment of this hierarchy with no formal protest recorded.

By the late 20s the issuing of “Deaconess Certificates” for women was standard practice. Nevertheless, the qualifications for a “Deaconess Certificate” seemed to be unclear. In the notice for renewal of Deaconess Certificate for 1930, it was explained that, “(s)ome are holding Deaconess Certificates who according to the understanding of the Passenger Association are not entitled to the reduced rates as they do not meet the qualifications of Deaconess.” The question regarding qualifications seems to have arisen as a practical concern involving reduced railway fares. The notice went on to explain,<sup>154</sup>

The Railway or Passenger Association regard Deaconesses as those who are not engaged in secular work, but are devoting all their time to the work of the Church, such as visiting from house to house, visiting jails, hospitals, and taking services or, in other words, a general helper in connection with the congregation.

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<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

<sup>154</sup>R. E. McAlister, “Notice to Deaconesses.” 1930. PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario. In 1978 at the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference of PAOC, the “Reduced Railroad Fares” was rescinded as “the Railroad Companies no longer grant special fare concessions to ministers. *Minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, August 14<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 1978, 17.*

Not only had the railway brought the question to the forefront but the railway also seemed to establish the standard for recognition as a Deaconess. The same notice cautioned that certain Pastors' wives who did not meet the qualifications as outlined by the railway were not entitled to the Deaconess Certificate. It was left up to women's individual consciences as to whether or not they deserved the "Deaconess rates."<sup>155</sup>

By 1934, qualified Deaconesses could have their Deaconess credentials upgraded to that of "Lady Preacher" to further facilitate their relationship with the railroad. As such they would be "set apart" in a specific ceremony and given a clergy book.<sup>156</sup> This designation was later changed to "Ministerial License for Women."<sup>157</sup> Still, in 1946, for those women who chose to remain Deaconesses, it appears that the PAOC's definition of a Deaconess didn't satisfy the railway so further amendments were made to their job description.<sup>158</sup> It would appear that the railway found the status of these ministering women rather ambiguous and certainly did its part in attempting to clarify the situation.

In spite of the issuing of "Deaconess Certificates" or "Lady Workers" credentials, confusion still seemed to remain regarding the role of women in ministry, and not only with the railroad. In 1949, Rev. J. Roswell Flower from Springfield Missouri wrote to

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<sup>155</sup>R. E. McAlister, "Notice to Deaconesses."

<sup>156</sup> *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 1934, 94.

<sup>157</sup> *Report of General Conference Committee, Re: Ordination*, Mississauga, Ontario, 1978, PAOC Archives. This report calls the 1934 designation "Lady Worker."

<sup>158</sup> "Resolution #28," *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 1946, 19.

Dr. C. M. Wortman, General Secretary of the PAOC regarding the ordination of Mrs. Hazel Argue, Richard Fleming May and Margaret C. May. Rev. Flower was inquiring as to clarification of the dates of these ordinations - not whether or not the women had been ordained. As Flowers explained in a later letter, thanking Dr. Wortman for the clarification given:<sup>159</sup>

Here in this country we grant ordination to some women on practically the same basis as ordination is granted to men. However, they are admonished to permit men to go ahead with the administration of the ordinances whenever possible and only to assume these duties when a man is not available.

Dr. Wortman informed Flowers that Rev. Richard Fleming May was ordained on Feb. 15, 1938 while Mrs. Margaret C. May and Hazel Argue were granted the credentials called a "Ministerial License for Women" (May on Aug. 1, 1945; Argue on Apr. 28, 1949). Dr. Wortman went on to explain,<sup>160</sup>

...we have two grades of credentials for women. One is a Deaconess and more or less corresponds to a probationer minister, the other is the status of Ministerial License for women which corresponds in qualification to the standing of an ordained minister although we do not have a regular ordination service when these credentials are granted. We do not refer to this grade of minister as "an ordained minister" but the qualifications are very similar. A woman must have Bible School training and several years of independent proven ministry before she becomes eligible to apply for these credentials.

One of our problems here is in regard to women who hold a Ministerial License and then are married and in their married life do not actually carry on an independent ministry. As a rule however, *they are jealous of their status and are unwilling to be classed in any other way than as a Licensed Minister (emphasis mine)* even though they may only help their husbands to a small degree in the work.

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<sup>159</sup> Copy of letter to Dr. C. M. Wortman, General Sec.-Treas., PAOC from Rev. J. Roswell Flower, General Secretary, Assemblies of God, June 6, 1949, PAOC Archives.

<sup>160</sup> Copy of letter to Rev. J. Roswell Flower, General Secretary, Assemblies of God from Dr. C. M. Wortman, General Secretary, PAOC, June 22, 1949, PAOC Archives.

I am not sure in my own mind whether your ordination for women is exactly the same as for men or not. However, I believe it would be quite in order if you wished to recognize our grade of Ministerial License for Women as the equivalent of a man's ordination.

In the past we have sometimes laid hands upon the women in a special service at the time of their receiving their credentials but it is not understood as a general thing that they are formally ordained as the men are. Then too, in their ministry if they are engaged independently they usually refer the matter of ordinances of the church to men if possible.

Then again, our governments do not recognize these women as eligible to perform marriage ceremonies as ordained ministers ...

Although it's not certain how Flowers sorted this out, Wortman seems to be saying that this Ministerial License for Women is closer to that of men's ordination, in fact could be viewed as the same as the men's ordination except that women can't legally officiate at weddings and women were encouraged to step aside and allow a qualified man to preside for the ordinances. No wonder the women jealously guarded this status considering the effort that went into attaining it and the ambiguity in practice surrounding it! It is interesting to note in the quote above that here is an instance of women actually objecting to being "demoted."<sup>161</sup>

In 1950 women who held the Ministerial License for Women were allowed to vote in the General Conferences.<sup>162</sup> By 1960, they were allowed to officiate at weddings within their own pastoral charge.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1950.*

<sup>163</sup> *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1960.*

### Ordination Battles

By the mid 1970s the PAOC started to question more intentionally the role of women within its ranks. By then it was obvious that the number of women involved in ministry in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was in serious decline. Also in 1974 the General Conference of the PAOC published its first Resolution to ordain women. Motions were put forth to return the Resolution to the Resolutions Committee for re-wording, to refer the Resolution to a Study Committee appointed by the General Executive which would report to the next General Conference and to refer the Resolution to a Study Committee appointed by the General Executive to investigate the matter and report to the current Conference at a later date. All were defeated. After the “Chairman ruled on closure of debate in seven minutes” a secret ballot was held. Three hundred and eight votes were cast. One hundred and forty-nine votes were for the resolution. One hundred and forty-three votes were against. Three were spoiled and 13 were blank. Even so, the Resolution was defeated by failing to receive the required two-thirds majority vote,<sup>164</sup> although it was not clear to all the delegates where such a requirement originated. In 1983, Dwight King reported that Grace Brown had indicated to him “this vote was not legal as there is nothing in the constitution saying this type of item requires a two-third majority.” King also reports that Matilda and Margaret McTaggart agreed, “some back

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<sup>164</sup> For details on this proceeding see *Minutes of the 29<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, August 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 1974, 5–6.

stage shenanigans were played.”<sup>165</sup> However, in 1932, during the “organizational phase of the PAOC,” it was “ruled that a two-thirds General Conference vote was needed to add to or amend the official constitution and by-laws.”<sup>166</sup>

In a “Submission to The National Committee Investigating The Ministry of Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada” in June 1975, Gordon R. Upton, a long time leader in the PAOC, highlighted concerns gleaned from Minutes of the “National Bible College Committee,” “the “Standing Home Missions Committee” and the “General Executive.” Bible colleges were questioning how to educate women due to the uncertainty of women “finding meaningful ministries” upon graduation. The Home Missions Committee and General Executive weren’t certain “of what opportunities there are for women in the Pentecostal ministry” and requested a study be conducted. Upton claimed that “(u)p until twenty-five or thirty years ago a great many more women were involved in pastoral, evangelistic or other leadership ministries ... Most were single women, either never married or widowed. If they married they often switched to a more supportive role” as would be “noted on the church sign: ‘Rev. and Mrs. John Doe - Pastors.’” Upton explained that in the dozen or so years before the 1975 meeting there were no applications for “Ministerial License for Women” in the Eastern Ontario and Quebec District, although many Deaconess Certificates were issued. Upton suggested

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<sup>165</sup> Dwight King, “Personal Interviews – Grace Brown (Jan. 20, 1983), McTaggart (Feb. 2, 1983), in *Women in the Ministry Within the P.A.O.C.: A Requirement for Church in Canada*, Instructor R. Kydd, Central Pentecostal College, Saskatoon, Sask., Feb. 17, 1983, p. 9, Unpublished Paper, PAOC Archives.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas William Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, William A. Griffin, ed. (Full Gospel Publishing House: Mississauga, ON, 1994), 199.

that part of this changing dynamic may have been due to a changing historical context, that is, the earlier loss of life of young men in the two wars who otherwise might have been called had lead to a temporary situation where the ministry of women was required to fill in the gap. Now that men weren't being killed, women were no longer being called. Regardless of the explanation, in Upton's opinion, it was beyond dispute that in all the districts the number of women involved in ministry, both pastoral and evangelistic, had declined.<sup>167</sup>

The Report of this Committee on Ministry of Women, chaired by R. M. Argue, reported its findings to the General Conference in 1976. After having surveyed the present status of women within the PAOC, past policies and practices of various departments, the policies and experiences of other denominations, the future prospects for PAOC women and the divergent Biblical positions, that committee concluded that "that there does not presently appear to be an expanding opportunity for the ministry of women within the P.A.O.C." Therefore it recommended that, along with theology and Bible courses, PAOC Bible Colleges offer courses "specifically designed for supportive ministry ... such as bookkeeping, typing, music, Christian Education, counselling, supportive roles of 'Women in Ministry,' P.A.O.C. department programs and policies." In addition, it was recommended that "apart from Bible College our girls be encouraged to prepare themselves for school teaching, nursing, full business training, and music

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<sup>167</sup> Gordon Upton, *Submission to the National Committee Investigating 'The Ministry of Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,'* June 1975, PAOC Archives, 1, 4.

teaching.” The acceptance of the report was moved, seconded and carried without further discussion.<sup>168</sup>

When a motion again was placed before the General Conference in 1976 regarding the ordination of women, it was promptly defeated by a show of hands. Discussion continued afterward, including a summation from the chair of the Study Committee, a motion to return the Resolution to the Resolutions Committee for restructuring and a motion that the session be adjourned. All were defeated. A motion to extend the time to allow for a secret ballot vote was carried. The Resolution was voted upon and defeated. A motion to establish a Special Committee to study “the role of women in the Pentecostal ministry ... specifically the Biblical position” was carried. A motion to establish a Committee “to discuss the categories of credentials as related to both men and women, and to discuss the types of ministry of both men and women” was amended to include that the “MOTION be REFERRED to the Resolutions Committee for further study and consideration, to be brought back to the floor” before it was carried. A motion to “appoint a committee to study the Bible and historical positions on the practice of ordination” in order to “clarify the meaning of the term ‘ordination,’ as it relates “to the ministries of both men and women” was carried.<sup>169</sup>

In 1978, the Resolution regarding the ordination of women was not addressed as “the one-page report distributed recently in the Pastor’s Packet” regarding the topic was

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<sup>168</sup> *Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, August 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 1976, p. 4, 17-19, 23. PAOC Archives.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

deemed “inadequate.” Therefore the General Executive was mandated to appoint another committee to study the matter in more detail. In addition, it was “RESOLVED that the General Executive appoint a committee to prepare a resolution which would allow the Conference to have a direct vote on the subject of ordination of women at the 1980 General Conference.”<sup>170</sup> The resulting Resolution was defeated in 1980.<sup>171</sup>

### **Ordination for Women and Beyond**

It wasn't until 1984 that the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada voted “overwhelming in favour” of ordaining women by a “90 per cent majority” after a great deal of discussion including a “Motion on closure of debate” which was defeated.<sup>172</sup> Even so, ordained women were not eligible to serve at the district or national leadership level. The Executive Officers and Members of the General Executive were to continue to be filled by “men of mature experience and ability ... ordained” which was made clear at the next General Conference when the “Chairman” responded to a question regarding the election of “Members at Large to the General Executive” that “a man meant a male.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *Minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial General Conference*, pp. 21-22. PAOC Archives.

<sup>171</sup> For details see the *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 1978, 1980. PAOC Archives.

<sup>172</sup> *Minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1984, pp. 10-20 and photocopied note overlaid on page 20. PAOC Archives. See also Randy Holm, “Ordination of Women,” in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (May 1992), 2.

<sup>173</sup> *Minutes of the 35<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1986, pp. 5, 29. See also the *PAOC General Constitution*, By-law 3, election of officers, Section 1, Qualifications a) Executive officers, By-law 14, District Conference, Section 9, Elections (a) Qualifications, 3, PAOC Archives.

Women who had served the church for years were almost immediately ordained. In the West, Grace Brown, who had taught for thirty years in the Bible College in Saskatoon and Margaret and Matilda McTaggart who had pastored for twenty-eight years were ordained by the District of Saskatchewan.<sup>174</sup> In the Eastern Ontario and Quebec District, Hannah (Price) Richardson, Maud Ellis and Janet Rodgers, who had ministered for many years as evangelists and pastors, were ordained.<sup>175</sup> Maud Ellis was born in 1924. She became a “Deaconess” in 1949, received a Ministerial Certificate for Women in 1953 and was finally ordained in Belleville, Ontario on December 31, 1984. In her years of ministry with the PAOC she served as an evangelist and pastored in Bannockburn and Norwood.<sup>176</sup> Samuel M. Buick, National Director of Evangelism, says of her in a reference letter, “in 1978 alone, at least 260 have found Christ, and more than 454 hungry saints have been gloriously filled with the Holy Spirit. The supernatural plays a most important role in her ministry, a fact that is emphasized by the significant number of miracles of healing that occur in her meetings.” Rev. Ellis died on September 27, 1992. Serving with Rev. Ellis in Norwood was Janet Rodgers. Rev. Rodgers had been born in Scotland and had intended on becoming a school teacher. However, when her father died she had been forced into a coal mine to work. Converted through the ministry of the Salvation Army, Rodgers immigrated to Toronto, Canada. It was in

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<sup>174</sup> Miller, 360.

<sup>175</sup> Copies of *Clergy Record* PAOC Archives. See also “Women Ordained to the Ministry” in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (February 1985), 27.

<sup>176</sup> *The Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 96, No. 77 (November 1996), 23.

Toronto that she was introduced to Pentecostalism by a Mrs. Mayhew. During an evangelistic meeting led by Mabel and Jean Cunningham, Rodgers was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Rodgers pastored in Ontario at Battersea and Bannockburn and with Maud Ellis in Norwood as well as serving as the Director of Women's Ministries for Eastern Ontario and Quebec. Rev. Rodgers passed away on August 10, 1996 in Belleville, Ontario.<sup>177</sup>

The grassroots response to this 1984 decision to ordain women was mixed. Some enthusiastically endorsed the decision while others vehemently opposed it.<sup>178</sup> In 1986, another "Committee on 'Women in Ministry'" presented a report to the "1986 Conference, Western Ontario District." It started out, "(f)ollowing the 1985 District Conference, the District Executive placed upon us a rather nebulous and thankless responsibility, 'To research the meaning of Ordination of women and the role of women in ministry, based upon Scripture.'" The committee decided that certain "questions needed to be answered and terms defined" including the definition of "Ordination - Scripturally and by convention." They concluded,<sup>179</sup>

WHEREAS the 1984 General Conference authorized the blanket "Ordination of women" to the Christian ministry without adequate definition or limitation or explanation, and

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<sup>177</sup> Copies of *Clergy Record* PAOC Archives. See also "Women Ordained to the Ministry" in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (February 1985), 27.

<sup>178</sup> See for example Bob Skinner's article, "An Idea Whose Time Has Come," in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (December 1984), pp. 1ff. and the "Reader's Response" in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (March 1985), 8.

<sup>179</sup> Rev. Jack Ozard, Chairman, *Committee on 'Women in Ministry' - Report to the 1986 Conference, Western Ontario District, PAOC*, PAOC Archives, 1, 4.

WHEREAS the issue has seemingly polarized much of our Fellowship and remains a valid concern in many minds as to its basis in Scripture, and  
 WHEREAS our present definition of Ordination in our General Constitution and By-Laws is a source of confusion and contention within our Fellowship because it has not been adequately defined and explained,  
 BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that we recommend to the General Conference,  
 1. That a committee be established on a National level...

This committee was to research “Ordination” and how it pertained to men and women.

At the General Conference in 1988, four years after the General Conference’s decision to ordain women, a private member’s resolution was presented to rescind the decision on the grounds that it “violates our belief in the authority, supremacy and sufficiency of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice.” It was defeated.<sup>180</sup>

### **Organizational Restructuring and Its Effects on Women**

At the same 1988 conference a motion was introduced to change the words “men” in the statement regarding the composition of the local congregational board to “members” and “persons.” While not without opposition, the motion was eventually carried.<sup>181</sup> Regardless of the change in institutional policy, the actual involvement of women in ministry remained complex and ambiguous. Randal Holm illustrated this fact with the following information. In 1974, ten years before the decision to ordain was made, 193 women held a Ministerial License for Women. In 1992, eight years after the decision to ordain, 66 women held the Ministerial License for Women, 57 were

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<sup>180</sup> *Minutes of the 36<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1988, p. 42, 15, 16, 31, 32, 7. PAOC Archives. See also Holm, “Ordination of Women, 2. A Sociological Profile of Current Attitudes,” 6.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, 1988, 42, 15, 16, 31, 32, 7.

credentialed as Licensed Ministers and 59 were ordained, for a total of 182. Although women were now eligible for ordination, the actual numbers involved in ministry declined slightly. As late as 1994, Holm stated that, in his knowledge, there were no married women in senior positions in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Ordained women were either single or ministered as a team with their husbands.<sup>182</sup>

In 1994, a delegate at the General Conference “expressed her concerns regarding the fact that the ordination of women have (sic) been approved in 1984 but since that time there” had “been no enabling legislation to allow women to be candidates for certain elected offices.” The Minutes stated that “it was noted that there would need to be proper notice if such constitution and by-law topics were to be discussed.”<sup>183</sup>

In 1996, in recognition of the fact of the classification “Deaconess” being phased out, those who held such credentials were eligible to apply for reclassification to a “Recognition of Ministry Certificate.”<sup>184</sup> It was also noted that since the “Ministerial License for Women” had not been issued since 1985, those women who wished to continue such a designation would have to renew it annually to continue with attendant privileges and benefits.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Holm, *Organization Blues: The Struggle of One Pentecostal Denomination with the Bugbear of Institutionalism*, 22, n.54.

<sup>183</sup> *Minutes of the 41<sup>st</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1994, 41. PAOC Archives.

<sup>184</sup> *Minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1996, 34. PAOC Archives.

<sup>185</sup> “Proposed By-Law #10 Amendments,” *Minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1996, 1, 4. PAOC Archives.

In 1998, as part of the “International Office Redesign,” representation on the General Executive was opened up to women but perhaps not completely intentionally by the gathering of the credential holders. Resolution #1 in the Minutes of the Conference did not mention the qualifications for officers or specify “men” but rather “ordained credential holders” and “lay persons” as officers. A motion to reconsider the resolution by secret ballot was defeated.<sup>186</sup> To facilitate the application of the motion, “the pre-conference nomination procedure for four executive officer positions” which would have proceeded under the “male only” basis was “disregarded for this conference in order to facilitate nominations and elections of the three executive officer positions.”<sup>187</sup> At stake was Resolution #7 of the “Resolutions Agenda” appended to the Minutes which were “Subject to Review and Presentation by the General Conference Resolutions Committee.” This Resolution could have limited women once again as it continued to list the qualifications of “Executive Officers” and “Members of the General Executive” as “men of mature experience....” Rather than bring this resolution forward, the Minutes noted that this resolution, along with several others, were included in the “redesign which has now been approved, and therefore would not need to be dealt with individually.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> “36 Resolutions,” appended to the *Minutes of the 1998<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 1998, pp. 4-5 as compared with the *Minutes of the 1998<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1998, 5, 7. PAOC Archives.

<sup>187</sup> *Minutes of the 1998<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1998, 3-4. PAOC Archives.

<sup>188</sup> “36 Resolutions,” pp. 4-5 as compared with the *Minutes of the 1998<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1998, 5, 7.

In addition, a resolution on “gender inclusivity” was brought forward by the “BC/Yukon District Conference” and received approval. This resolution stated explicitly that “The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada provide for gender inclusivity in all matters relating to the credentialing process and qualifications of candidates for the elected offices of District and General Executives, and that to implement this the General Constitution and By-Laws be reworded where necessary by the General Executive to provide for such.” Given previous motions, this one couldn’t have been defeated. Women were finally and officially deemed eligible for leadership positions at the district and national levels.<sup>189</sup>

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Conference in 2000 started off on a new note with the announcement that a woman, Maureen Patrick had been added to the Resolutions Committee. While there were no women in the list of “Pastoral Members of General Executive,” the “First Election Ballot” for “Lay Members of General Executive” included Lillian Douglas from Alberta and Northwest Territories Mackenzie and Enid Pierce from Saskatchewan. Lillian Douglas was elected on the second ballot along with two men. Gender inclusivity was also approved for local church constitutions.<sup>190</sup>

The 2000 “Proposed Amendments” spell out clearly what changes had occurred. No longer were the “Qualifications” for “Executive Officers” and “General Executive

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<sup>189</sup> *Minutes of the 1998<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1998, 16-17.

<sup>190</sup> *Minutes of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 2000, 4, 21, 27, 23. PAOC Archives.

Members” as found in By-Law #3 “men” but “persons.”<sup>191</sup> After a long, drawn out battle, women were finally and officially occupying the leadership positions they had long been denied. The news of the latest advances by women into leadership within the General Executive was accepted with a noticeable lack of fanfare or fuss. The September 2000 issue of the *Testimony* said nothing. A short, 2 line paragraph in the “Editorial” of the October 2000 *Testimony* coupled with a picture “Introducing the General Executive” near the end of the same edition, announced the event to the constituency.<sup>192</sup> Two months later in the December issue, Lillian Douglas, “the first woman elected to service on the general executive” was again mentioned within the context of her appointment to the “Premier’s Advisory Council on Health.”<sup>193</sup>

By 2004, of the 852 women in ministry on the PAOC’s rolls only 20 occupied senior pastoral positions.<sup>194</sup> Not surprisingly, as of 2007, no woman has yet held the position of General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

### **Comments and Conclusion**

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in her work of reconstructing early Christian origins in a fashion which includes women may have to at times work from the “historical

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<sup>191</sup> “Proposed Amendments” appended to the *Minutes of the 44<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 2000, 7. PAOC Archives.

<sup>192</sup> *Testimony*, Vol. 81, Number 10 (October 2000), 3, 26.

<sup>193</sup> *Testimony*, Vol. 81, Number 12 (December 2000), 17.

<sup>194</sup> “PAOC Credential Men and Women in Ministry,” *Vital Statistics: Pentecostal of Canada Fellowship Data for 2004*, PAOC website, August 2005.

silences,” “rhetorical clues and allusions,” “scant references to” and “faint echoes of ‘women and their voices’ in her “imaginative reconstruction” of their activity.<sup>195</sup> Yet, the same is *not* true for the recovery of women’s involvement as ministers and leaders within the early years of Pentecostalism up to the present. The references are concrete, numerous and available to anyone who cares to look for them.

According to Schüssler Fiorenza, “the lack of a written history is a crucial sign of oppression.”<sup>196</sup> The degree to which a lack of an *official*, written history validated by the PAOC and the oppression of women is linked is disturbingly illustrated in the fact that the 1984 affirmative vote to ordain women was “Carried” as approved but was not included in the original Minutes! An attached memo by a “Margaret” and “Hilda” with an initialled “o.k.” pointed out this omission and asked “Should this not be added in the typed and signed Minutes in the book in the safe?” This note was added to the Minutes but the actual Minutes have not been altered to reflect the decision.<sup>197</sup> Whether intentional or not, this crucial decision to lessen the domination of ministering women by leading men was almost completely written out of history. The only record of the decision is this note. What might have occurred if this omission was not noted may never be clear.

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<sup>195</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 111-112.

<sup>196</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophiology,” in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, xxxv.

<sup>197</sup> *Minutes of the 34th Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. 1984, 10-20 and photocopied note overlaid on page 20.

Based on the above focused, historical overview of ministering women within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, a feminist critique of Pentecostalism is necessary for the full flourishing of women. The fact that it has taken a hundred years and a feminist Pentecostal to start the process of recovering the above history of ministering women is itself an indication of this need. As Schüssler Fiorenza has argued, reconstructing history “is not just an academic affair”<sup>198</sup> but rather a “‘dangerous memory’ of wo/men’s religious agency as prophets, teachers and wise women” who “have shaped and defined” religions, including Pentecostalism, even though the “historical records either do not mention them or refer to them as marginal figures.” Pentecostal women “always have been religious leaders, teachers, and theologians.”<sup>199</sup> By recovering their active participation and their ongoing destiny as history makers,<sup>200</sup> Pentecostal women may be empowered.

Nevertheless, such reconstructions are “political” in that they “shape ... present historical consciousness” even as they argue for “a *different* historical consciousness and imagination.”<sup>201</sup> As Schüssler Fiorenza’s recovery of women’s active participation in early Christianity demonstrates, a “nonpatriarchal Christian ethos” existed at the “root of

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<sup>198</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 111-112.

<sup>199</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophialogy,” in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, xxxv.

<sup>200</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 93.

<sup>201</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Justified by All Her Children: Struggle, Memory, and Vision,” in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, 354.

Christian belief and practice.” Therefore, “the ‘patriarchalization process is not inherent in Christian revelation and community but progressed slowly and with difficulty over a long period of time.”<sup>202</sup> The same can be said, based on the above recovery, of the early Pentecostal ethos.

Furthermore, as Hewitt has pointed out, the “paradigmatic remembrance” which Schüssler Fiorenza has reconstructed of Jesus’ relationship with the world of women during his ministry and afterwards, provides a strong example for contemporary women to emulate. Not only did Jesus minister among and alongside of women, many of his parables and illustrations were drawn from women’s lives, women were the first witnesses to the resurrection stories, women were among the first Gentiles to become Christian and women were actively involved in the founding and leading of early Christianity.<sup>203</sup> As Hewitt has declared, these are indeed dangerous memories. These memories empower “women in the present both politically and theologically in their struggle for change” even as they pose a “scandal to the present situation of many Christian women,” including Pentecostal women, “who continue to suffer the repression and subordination inflicted upon them in the name of a false Christian consciousness that betrays our Christian origins.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” p. 87 referring to Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 279, 65.

<sup>203</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” p. 88 referring to Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 102, 121, 124, 137-138.

<sup>204</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 87.

Canadian Pentecostalism has such a “paradigmatic remembrance.” As already noted, although the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have arisen in various contexts and in a variety of ways throughout the last century, for many members of the modern day Pentecostal and Charismatic movement Azusa Street functions as a sort of “corporate mythology” of beginnings. As such, the themes and visions of Azusa Street exert a paradigmatic influence for many Pentecostals and Charismatics as examples of both the problems and potentialities of the ongoing Spirit focused movements. As one scholar has stated, one of the important aspects of Azusa Street “is that it continues to serve as an example for its outreach to the marginalized – the poor, women, and people of color.”<sup>205</sup> Along with the men, Jennie Evans Moore, Lucy Farrow and Ophelia Wiley, all African American women, shared “public leadership” roles with Clara E. Lum and Florence Crawford, both Caucasian women. These women “led in singing, read written testimonies, aided in the publication of the mission’s newspaper and in visitation and outreach evangelism, and sometimes they ‘exhorted’ the congregation.”<sup>206</sup> Early Canadian Pentecostalism followed this paradigm. Even today, the memory remains and can have a transformative influence. As Hewitt further explains,<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., *Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2006), 13.

<sup>206</sup> C. M. Robeck, Jr. “Azusa Street Revival,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003), 347.

<sup>207</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 88-89.

In reclaiming and restoring these and other dangerous memories to Christian women's history, Schüssler Fiorenza shatters not only the false memories that expel women to the margins and silences of history, but also the ideological interests that distort our theological traditions and rob them of their political power by directing them toward an accommodation with the status quo of sexist society and patriarchal culture. The liberation of women from patriarchal oppression within Christianity is requisite to the process of the restoration of Christianity to its own original emancipatory and inclusive intent; without the liberation of women, this restorative process cannot take place.

Furthermore, as Walter Benjamin has asserted,<sup>208</sup>

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" ... It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it. The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of Antichrist. Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

Although they may not be considered "enemies," R.E. McAlister and the other men who organized the institution of the Pentecostal Assemblies, designating themselves as its head, leaders and authority wielders while relegating the women and non-elite men to secondary positions in submission to them, were not the only leading or ministry figures within Canadian Pentecostalism. What has been demonstrated above is that women were actively involved, exercising their gifts and authority in spite of the dominating behaviours of the leading men who refused to fully recognize them as ordained ministers with their own contributions. The leading men also continued to oppress them throughout the history of the movement and even failed to include the women's

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<sup>208</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 255.

contributions and leadership. Nonetheless, now that women's active agency has been blasted out of that illusory continuum of false history, a more accurate account reflecting women's agency demands to be written. As Benjamin explains it,<sup>209</sup>

The destructive or critical momentum of materialist historiography is registered in that blasting of historical continuity with which the historical object first constitutes itself. In fact, an object of history cannot be targeted at all within the continuous elapse of history. And so, from time immemorial, historical narration has simply picked out an object from this continuous succession. But it has done so without foundation, as an expedient; and its first thought was then always to reinsert the object into the continuum, which it would create anew through empathy. Materialist historiography does not choose its objects arbitrarily. It does not fasten on them but rather springs them loose from the order of succession. Its provisions are more extensive, its occurrences more essential.

[For] the destructive momentum in materialist historiography is to be conceived as the reaction to a constellation of dangers, which threatens both the burden of tradition and those who receive it. It is this constellation of dangers, which the materialist presentation of history comes to engage. In this constellation is comprised its actuality; against its threat, it must prove its presence of mind. Such a presentation of history has as goal to pass, as Engels puts it, "beyond the spheres of thought."

To thinking belongs the movement as well as the arrest of thoughts. Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions – there the dialectical image appears. It is the caesura in the movement of thought. Its position is naturally not an arbitrary one. It is to be found, in a word, where the tension between dialectical opposites is greatest. Hence, the object constructed in the materialist presentation of history is itself the dialectical image. The later is identical with the historical object; it justifies its violent expulsion from the continuum of historical process.

No longer can the Pentecostal continuum of history continue, expedient or not.

The dialectical image that has been expelled is that of women's involvement which demands recognition of its actualization.

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<sup>209</sup> Benjamin, "N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress," 475, [N10a, 1], [N10a, 2] and [N10a, 3].

Benjamin continues,<sup>210</sup>

A Klee painting named “Angelus Novus” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, and his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he seems one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Benjamin is speaking explicitly of the illusion of historical progress in this passage. This illusion will be discussed in further detail in the chapters which follow. However, as Hewitt has pointed out, while the angel of history may be powerless to do anything about the catastrophe history, human beings are not. Pentecostalism need not continue with an illusory history which oppresses women. Human beings, including Pentecostal ones, are capable of wresting “tradition from the thrall” of those who would exploit it “by bringing it to a halt. This ‘Messianic cessation’ that blasts history apart is ‘characteristic of the revolutionary classes at the moment of their action’ as they seek to complete “the task of liberation in the name of generations of the downtrodden.”<sup>211</sup> As Hewitt refers to Tiedemann’s explanation, the only way to “get beyond the history of the oppressors” is by “holding on to ‘the history of the oppressed’ against the historical hegemony of the rulers who want to obliterate it” thereby subverting “history from the perspective of the oppressors and the privileged ... by the authentic history of the victims, whose suffering

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<sup>210</sup> Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 257-258.

<sup>211</sup> Hewitt, “The Redemptive Power of Memory,” 78.

and labor are the unseen condition of the very possibility of culture.”<sup>212</sup> Or as Benjamin explains it, any cultural history “owes its existence not just to the efforts of the great geniuses who fashioned it, but also in greater or lesser degree to the anonymous drudgery of their contemporaries. There is no cultural document that is not at the same time a record of barbarism. No history of culture has yet done justice to this fundamental fact, or can well hope to do so.”<sup>213</sup>

Pentecostalism could choose to take responsibility for what has occurred and respond accordingly. As Benjamin has pointed out, “Being a dialectician means having the wind of history in one’s sails. The sails are the concepts. It is not enough, however, to have sails at one’s disposal. What is decisive is knowing the art of setting them.”<sup>214</sup> With Pentecostalism’s interest in the wind, the breath, the Spirit of God,<sup>215</sup> Benjamin’s words could have particular meaning.

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 92.

<sup>213</sup> Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian,” *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, Trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: New Left Books, 1979), 359-360.

<sup>214</sup> Benjamin, “N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,” 473, [N9, 8].

<sup>215</sup> See for examples the following works by various Pentecostal scholars, Susan C. Hyatt, In *The Spirit We’re Equal: The Spirit, The Bible, and Women, A Revival Perspective*. (Dallas, Texas: Revival & Renewal Resources by Hyatt Press, 1998); Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002); Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006); Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*. Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 7. John Christopher Thomas, Rickie D. Moore, Steven J. Land, Eds. (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Jean-Jacques Surmond, *Word and Spirit at Play: Towards a Charismatic Theology*, Trans. John Bowden (Uitgeverij

Still, a caution is in order. As Schüssler Fiorenza argues, “the significance of women’s ordination” is neither simply part of a demand for “female emancipation” nor a consideration of “the historical side of the problem” nor even an examination of “practical opportunities.” Rather, “the question of women’s ordination ... must be articulated primarily in terms of its significance for the theological self-understanding of the church...”<sup>216</sup> As she explains in a 1967 essay dealing with the ordination of women to diaconal ministry within the Roman Catholic church,<sup>217</sup>

Not cultic priesthood but the “gifts” of the Spirit are decisive for ministry in the church. All members of the Christian community are called to exercise their “spiritual gifts” for the building up of the “body of Christ,” the Christian community. Since the gifts of the Spirit are not restricted to a certain group within the community, everyone is able and authorized in the power of the Spirit to preach, to prophesy, to forgive sins, and to participate actively in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Thus all members of the people of God, by virtue of their baptismal “priesthood,” have the capability and right to exercise liturgical and ecclesial leadership functions. The arguments against the ordination of women are theologically invalid insofar as they are founded on the misconception of church as “cultically” divided into hierarchical classes. At the same time it becomes equally clear that women’s demand for cultic ordination could repeat the same misconception if it is not accompanied by a radical critique of present church structures. Again, the ordination of a few women into a sacralized cultic class must lead to the further exclusion of most women as “cultically” inferior. Instead, women must insist on the desacralization of ministry if “the priesthood of all the baptized” is not to remain an empty cliché. All the privileges and distinguishing characteristics of clerical rank must cease...

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Ten Have bv, Baran, The Netherlands: SCM Press Ltd., 1994); Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, Paternoster Press, 2003); Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005).

<sup>216</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Should Women Aim for Ordination to the Lowest Rung?” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesi -logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994: 23-38, 25-26.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

The New Testament writings do not know of a fixed and exclusive catalogue of ministry. Instead, a great number of ecclesial leadership functions are mentioned, such as preaching, prophesying and speaking in tongues, healing and exorcism, community building, pastoral care, and administrative facilitation. Theologically and practically, the distinction between the sexes is insignificant in such a multiform exercise of ministry. The apostolic and prophetic ministry has always been exercised in the church by women. Historically, the spiritual emancipation of women was acknowledged primarily by those churches that knew themselves to be governed by the Holy Spirit. A close connection seems to exist between a Spirit ecclesiology and women's equal participation in the ministries of the church. Women ministers in the church must therefore be especially concerned with teaching, preaching, spiritual counseling, and theology...

In short, I argue, if the further clericalization and hierarchical monopolization of ecclesial ministries is to be avoided, women must insist that as baptized and confirmed members of the church they are entitled to hold responsible leading positions in the church ...

... True vocation to ministry must be recognized whenever and wherever it is exercised in the church. Petitions of resolutions to the Holy See will not lead to the ecclesial emancipation of women. Such emancipation depends on effective and "gifted" ministerial engagement.

Additionally, in her opinion, "a hermeneutic that merely attempts to *understand* the Christian tradition and texts in their historical settings, or a Christian theology that defines itself as 'the actualizing continuation of the Christian history of interpretation'" is not sufficient. It does not "take into account that tradition is a source not only of truth but also of untruth, repression and domination."<sup>218</sup> While Pentecostalism is one of those groups with an emphasis on the Spirit, accompanied in the early years by an increase in the involvement of ministering women, this emancipatory trajectory was thwarted. Therefore, this project will continue to explore the factors at work that contributed to the present situation whereas women's involvement in the founding, organizing, leading and

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<sup>218</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation," *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994: 53-79, 62.

continuing development of Pentecostalism has been ignored, denied or presumed of little significance. Based on these actual experiences of women, women have been involved in varying degrees in many ministry areas of Pentecostalism in Canada from its beginnings. In spite of this, their involvement has been co-opted, dismissed and displaced at least symbolically and has oftentimes in practice been dominated by men. Patriarchy and kyriarchy are well entrenched within human cultures and societies including those within Pentecostalism. Until they are no more, the presence and “place” of women will remain prophetic and ambiguous. A feminist critique attempting to deal with the multi-dimensional and many layered nature of patriarchy and kyriarchy and its effect on Pentecostalism will need to be multi-dimensional and many layered as well.

The next chapter will seek to examine why this might be through an examination of typical reasons given for the ambiguities regarding the status of ministry women within Pentecostalism.

## CHAPTER 4

### TYPICAL EXPLANATIONS

The involvement of ministering women in the early years of Pentecostalism followed by the subsequent decline in their numbers has been explained in various ways.

#### **General Explanations<sup>1</sup>**

Walter Hollenweger, a leading scholar on global Pentecostalism, points to the oral liturgy, narrative theologizing and testifying along with the acceptance of dreams and visions<sup>2</sup> all of which held the potential for anyone to be involved in worship, a potential which many ministering woman actualized through their creative and empowering use of call narratives. In spite of this, according to Hollenweger, Pentecostalism's involvement

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussion of these explanations see Pamela Holmes, "Chapter Nine: Ministering Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: A Feminist Exploration," *Canadian Pentecostals* (McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, Quebec, Kingston, Ontario), 2009; Pamela Holmes, "The 'Place' of Women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Ministry Since the Azusa Street Revival," *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, Harold D. Hunter & Cecil M. Robeck Jr., Eds. (Pathway Press: Cleveland, Tennessee, 2006) and Pamela Holmes, "From Azusa into all the World: Racing, Running, Winners and Womanism," Presented at the conference, *Into All the World: Black Pentecostalism in Global Contexts*, Harvard University, March 18, 2005, Unpublished paper.

<sup>2</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 18ff.

with Evangelicalism, with its assumption of male supremacy worked against this potential<sup>3</sup> creating an ambiguous and conflicted “place” for women.

Edith Blumhofer, an historian who has studied American Pentecostalism, attributes the significant involvement of women within early Pentecostalism to its nature as a loosely organized lay movement that considered ordination unimportant. Second, economic factors were involved, in that poorly paid women often served where men would not.<sup>4</sup> Third, Pentecostalism’s pragmatic emphasis upon evangelism insisted that every means possible be utilized to achieve the goal of winning the world including the extensive involvement of women within the early years.<sup>5</sup> Later on, as some branches of the movement started to read Scriptures in a literal, fundamentalistic fashion, women’s influence and sphere of ministry were limited.<sup>6</sup>

Harvey Cox points to Pentecostalism’s emphasis on Acts 2 and Joel 2 coupled with belief in direct-from-God, personal calls to ministry as reasons for women’s early ministering and leadership. Unfortunately, in his opinion, “theological alliances with

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 267-268.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Edith Blumhofer, in *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, Volume 1 - To 1941* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 15, 356 – 361.

<sup>5</sup> Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 164-165.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 164-165.

fundamentalists” with their “flame-extinguishing literalist theology” often quenched the experiential flame of the Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

Michele Jacques Early, who focuses on the involvement of African American women in early Pentecostalism, offers two explanations for the pattern of women’s early involvement in relatively great numbers followed by decline. First, it was an attempt on the part of these women to preserve African influences within their religious expressions. Pentecostalism included these influences. Second, many women may have made an intentional decision to take advantage of the possibilities of attaining prestigious and powerful positions for themselves.<sup>8</sup> Such a decision may be viewed as self interested and/or practical and/or simply the way it should be.

Cheryl Sanders, an African-American scholar, mentions some of the African influences more specifically, particularly prophetic preaching and a holistic worldview which included a pervasive presence of religion and spirituality. The way in which Azusa Street prophetically proclaimed various Christian and non-Christian themes and impulses as the “full gospel” may have resonated with African American women thus encouraging their active participation. Additionally, interlocking systems of religious

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<sup>7</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 131.

<sup>8</sup> Michele Jacques Early, “‘Into the world, but not of it’: the Socio-theological Framework of Womanhood in the church of God in Christ,” (PhD diss., Emory University, 2003), 50 quoting Felton O. Best, “Breaking the Gender Barrier,” in *Black Religious Leadership From the Slave Community to the Million Man March Flames of Fire*, edited by Felton O. Best, Black Studies, Vol. 3 (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, Ltd, 1998), 153-168. 153.

marginalization, racism, classism and sexism experienced by African-American women complicated the choice between African or Western styles of worship. This conflict was particularly noticeable within African-American Methodist and African-American Baptist churches which eventually adopted the more formal and liturgical Western approach. African-American Pentecostalism, including Azusa Street, with its retention and affirmation of African ways of worshipping, at least in part, appears to have been a response to the tendency to adopt Western ways.<sup>9</sup>

### **A Closer Look at the Canadian Scene**

#### **Prophetic to Priestly**

Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, American Pentecostal scholars, suggest that the “shift from a prophetic to a priestly ministry made it difficult for women to achieve ordination.” In the early years women were able to exercise a certain degree of independence as they appealed to their charismatic anointing to live out a prophetic style of informal, itinerant and evangelistic ministry which took them from place to place. Still, a shift occurred to a congregational and institutional style of priestly ministry limiting this earlier independence as ministering women succumbed to the expectations and assumptions of congregations and institutions for male “priests.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cheryl J. Sanders, Editor, “Introduction,” Kelly Brown Douglas and Cheryl J. Sanders, *Living the Intersection: Womanism and Afrocentrism in Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 11. *Ibid*, 59-64.

<sup>10</sup> Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, “Prophetic Vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches,” *Review of Religious Research* 22:1 (1980): 2-17, 3-4.

Within Barfoot and Sheppard's explanation, the concept of a "personal call" becomes the "decisive element" which distinguishes a prophet from a priest. A prophet appeals to direct, personal revelation and charisma in defining and legitimating both calling and authority. In contrast, a priest is defined by and has authority legitimated based on allegiance to a particular religious tradition. The early classical Pentecostal movement demonstrates evidence of this shift occurring. In the early years evidence of Spirit empowerment and gifting when claiming to have a "call" was essential. In fact, the only distinction between clergy and laity was this calling. As the movement organized, however, the "priestly" aspects of calling took precedence and ministries became graded with men holding the most prestigious positions. This pattern is particularly noted within the religion of the lower classes which initially recognized equality for women because of their prophetic and supernatural powers given by God. Nonetheless, the apparent equality of the sexes is overshadowed by the monopoly of men in religious functions, especially the administration of sacraments or in the case of many Pentecostals, ordinances. As a result, the early freedom of gifted women was quickly eclipsed by the coexisting patriarchal assumptions and practices.<sup>11</sup>

That these patriarchal assumptions and practices coexisted alongside egalitarian impulses within the early Canadian Pentecostal movement is readily illustrated. Even though women did not hesitate to exercise their right to live out their calls to ministry, they still deferred to available, qualified men. For example, in March 1921 Miss Ethel Bingeman reported on the "Christmas Convention and Annual Meeting" held in Liberia

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

that among the twelve missionaries present, there were two couples, one man and seven single women. After the four-day convention where “several were saved and filled with the Holy Ghost,” Brother Garlick, who was reported as only having recently arrived with his wife, was the one to baptize the new converts.<sup>12</sup>

Sheppard and Barfoot also state, quoting Weber:<sup>13</sup>

Only in very rare cases does this practice continue beyond the first stage of a religious community’s formation, when the pneumatic manifestations of charisma are valued as hallmarks of specifically religious exaltation. Thereafter, as routinization and regimentation of community relationships set in, a reaction takes place against pneumatic manifestations among women, which come to be regarded as dishonourable.

As previously mentioned, Ellen Hebden, the influential and foundational figure in the emergence and initial spread of Pentecostalism particularly within central Canada was against organization of any kind.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, when it came to the organization of the PAOC, the Hebdens absented themselves. Ellen Hebden’s prophetic ministry whereby she directed individuals – many of whom later became leaders in the organized PAOC – to particular areas of ministries under the influence of the Spirit came under scrutiny and was deemed suspicious. In the process, “Sister” Hebden was disempowered and sidelined.<sup>15</sup> A patriarchal, hierarchical, priestly organization had firmly supplanted any earlier egalitarian, Spirit empowered prophetic impulse. As the above mentioned

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<sup>12</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, 6 (March 1921), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Barfoot and Sheppard, 3-4 referring to the work of Weber.

<sup>14</sup> Ellen Hebden, *The Promise*, 14 (Oct. 1909), 1 and 15 (March 1910), 1.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas W. Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Mississauga, Ontario: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994), 44.

“routinization and regimentation of community relationships” took place, the rest of the early ministering women within the PAOC were also systematically disempowered as was demonstrated above in the recovery of ministering women’s history. There may not be any written records of the women objecting to being prohibited from being ordained or attaining leadership positions within the new institution, nevertheless, the continued presence of ministering women indicates they were, in practice, enlarging the “social script” that they had received as women.<sup>16</sup>

### **Selective, Cultural Conservatism**

David G. Roebuck, also an American Pentecostal scholar, has claimed that “anti-culturalism”<sup>17</sup> is partly to blame for the declining numbers of ministering women within Pentecostalism. What Roebuck labels “anti-cultural” might better be described as a “selective cultural conservatism.” According to Roebuck, early Pentecostals were in agreement with the “biblical correct,” “cultural ideology” of a “separate sphere” for women which limited their involvement. Yet, they disagreed with the expansion of women’s roles throughout the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s and “fiercely” opposed the “contemporary women’s movement” and the “age of feminism” during the 1960s and

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<sup>16</sup> Elaine J. Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 67, see also 57-86.

<sup>17</sup> David G. Roebuck, “Go and Tell My Brothers”?: The Waning of Women’s Voices in American Pentecostalism,” paper presented at the Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting (1990), F1 - F19, 13-19.

70s.<sup>18</sup> They selectively, although perhaps unconsciously, chose which cultural ideologies to embrace and which to resist.

Roebuck maintains that what he calls “anti-culturalism” was coupled with what he calls “limitations on authority that are inherent in the doctrine of Spirit baptism” operating in such a manner that restricted women’s involvement. Charles Parham had taught that the authoritative Spirit controlled human beings when acting in and through them. Human beings were simply instruments or vessels whom the Spirit used with no authority of their own apart from the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, women had no authority of their own. When it was not clear what the Spirit was doing, other qualifications for ministry were sought and the teachings limiting women’s involvements were selected. As Roebuck acknowledges, while the Pentecostal movement could have drawn upon the teachings and examples of such forerunners as Phoebe Palmer, they chose instead to follow Parham. Palmer had insisted in her work *The Promise of the Father: Or, A Neglected Speciality of the Last Days* that “Spirit baptism qualified women to preach,”<sup>20</sup> Parham’s teaching was more in keeping with the “separate sphere” ideology.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 13-15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 3-9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 9-10 referring to Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father: Or, A Neglected Speciality of the Last Days* (Boston: H. V. Dega, 1859; reprint Salem, Ohio: Schmul Publishers, 1981), 1, 9.

Nevertheless, according to Roebuck, these “anti-cultural” tendencies increased with a growing relationship with Evangelicalism and its promotion of patriarchal order.<sup>21</sup> As society began to expand roles for women during the 1920s, culminating in the rise of feminism by the 1960s, Pentecostal churches reacted strongly against such expansion. Women were often soundly reminded where their scripturally based place was – in the home and in submission to men. Many women would find it difficult to reconcile their call to ministry with the institutional restriction on that call, further compounded by the corresponding battle between traditionalists and feminists within church and society generally. As a result, the number of women found in ministry within Pentecostal churches has declined.<sup>22</sup>

That a selective, cultural conservative stance was operative within the early PAOC is evident in an article by Zelma Argue in the July 1922 *Pentecostal Testimony* entitled “Two Types of Women Described in the Bible.” Argue argues that “Young women of ‘Pentecost,’ Spirit-filled and consecrated to God” should obtain their standards and ideals from the “unchanging Word of God” rather than from “the world” which was

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1 referring to the work of Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Susan Setta, “Women in Evangelical, Holiness, and Pentecostal Traditions,” *Women and Religion in America, Volume 3: 1900-1968*, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, Eds. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986): 229-233 and C. M. Robeck, “National Association of Evangelicals,” *Dictionary of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, Eds. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1988): 634-636.

<sup>22</sup> Roebuck, ““Go and Tell My Brothers’?: The Waning of Women’s Voices in American Pentecostalism,” paper presented at the Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting (1990), F1 - F19, 1, 2, 13-19.

understood to be “ripening for Anti-Christ.”<sup>23</sup> The writing of such an article demonstrates that early PAOC members were aware of and negatively concerned with the changing behaviour of women in their time even while many women were ministering and exercising leadership within its midst.<sup>24</sup>

This selective, cultural conservative stance, particularly as it involved women, continued to be manifest. In 1975, Gordon Upton mentioned the “paradox which exists between our fellowship and the world in general” regarding the declining numbers of women in congregational ministry. He wrote:

The Women’s Liberation Movement is focusing attention upon the role of women in business, politics, and society in general and has been eminently successful in engendering wide-spread acceptance of female leadership in these areas. In spite of this, the trend has been moving in the opposite direction in The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as far as lady preachers and evangelists are concerned.<sup>25</sup>

Women in the PAOC were moving “opposite” to the cultural “trend.” As late as 1991, Shirley Flewitt, a retired minister, wrote in an article “Mentors to Many” of the many women who had influenced her life and thanked *The Pentecostal Testimony* for “highlighting women’s place in the ministry.” Then she added “I am not a women’s lib

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<sup>23</sup> Zelma Argue, “A Personal Talk to Pentecostal Young Women: Two Types of Women Described in the Bible,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, 2:7 (July 1922), 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> H.M. Cadwalder, “Report From the West,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, 2:13 (January 1923), 2. “Western Canada Section,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, 9:5 (May 1925), 6. *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, 9:11 (November 1925), 8.

<sup>25</sup> Gordon Upton, “Submission To the National Committee Investigating The Ministry of Women In the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,” June 1975, as found in PAOC Archives, Mississauga, ON, 5.

advocate and do not feel any need to protest, go on the march or whatever to secure a place. God does have a place in His program for women ... And He doesn't need extremists to promote His plan."<sup>26</sup>

### **The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada**

Canadian Pentecostal scholar Randall Holm echoes many of the explanations from the American scene in his work dealing with the influence of pragmatism on the question of the ordination of women within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. To list them, Holm mentions the lack of bureaucracy, a theology centered in experience, a theology which "favors the optimism of grace (New Testament) over the pessimism of nature (Old Testament)," a "laissez faire attitude" to ordination, the "burgeoning movement for women's rights," an apocalyptic eschatology which stressed the need for all to be involved in evangelizing the world before the Lord's imminent return, the stress on listening to the Spirit, the earlier example of ministering Methodist women, the need for both paid and volunteer ministers, women's willingness to go and do without remuneration and pragmatism as reasons for a "place" being created for ministering women within the early years of Canadian Pentecostalism. Once the PAOC institutionalized, the necessity for order, limited finances now under the control of the institution, a professional understanding of ordination along with its formal requirements for education and ministry experience, the availability of more men and the reemphasizing of a "separate sphere" ideology for men and women restricted women's

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<sup>26</sup> Shirley Flewitt, "Mentors to Many," in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (October 1991), 21.

options.<sup>27</sup> Holm credits “prophetic pragmatism”<sup>28</sup> for women’s active involvement in the early years of the PAOC. An “accommodationist pragmatism” to a “patriarchal” society as the PAOC institutionalized was blamed for the restrictions placed on women.<sup>29</sup> The early “prophetic pragmatism” allowed Scriptures to be interpreted in such a manner that a “latter rain” emphasis pre-empted patriarchal “social norms and freed *men and women* to actualize their potential.”<sup>30</sup> The diminishment of the earlier “counter-cultural zeal” coupled with an accommodation to “conservative Christianity” with its “Victorian gender roles” and “separate spheres ideology” limited the involvement of ministering women as it insisted that “preaching, teaching and pastoring were best suited for men.”<sup>31</sup> This separate sphere ideology held such sway that, even when a woman felt called to ministry, her obligations to home and family coupled with the need to be in submission to men often mitigated against that call.

An article in 1955 explains the reasoning for men teaching as “the great influence they can wield in their community – particularly to men” and “they are best able to reach the boys of our generation who are the potential church leaders of tomorrow...”<sup>32</sup> In

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<sup>27</sup> Randall Holm, “Chapter 7: Ordination of Women,” *A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism* (PhD diss., Laval University, 1995), 251-257.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 256.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 256-257.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 256.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 251.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 256-257 quoting G. R. Upton, “Why Men Should Teach,” *Pentecostal Testimony* (Sept. 1955).

short, because society is patriarchal and men are patriarchal the PAOC should be patriarchal in order to “maximize their numerical results.”<sup>33</sup>

Nelson Rogers has explored the impact of the dominant Canadian ideology on the role of ministering women within Pentecostalism as it exercises control over not only the Canadian government but also the thinking of independent groups including churches.<sup>34</sup> Rogers examines the ideology dictating the dominant roles for women during three different periods of time as it is reflected within the lives and ministries of Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada women. From 1900-1929 when Pentecostalism emerged in Canada and the PAOC was being formed, the dominant ideology which directly affected women was that of “maternal feminism.” Such “maternal feminism” affirmed women’s involvement in any area of public life designated as being in line with the “uplifting” quality of “maternal instincts.” Therefore healthcare, childcare and advocating and caring for those deemed weak and prohibition were deemed worthy of women’s attention. However, at no time should women’s work “challenge men’s positions, nor expect the same pay and prestige” nor lead to the neglect of their families.<sup>35</sup> For instance,

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<sup>33</sup> Holm, “Chapter 7: Ordination of Women,” 257.

<sup>34</sup> Nelson Rogers, “...And Shall Your Daughters Prophecy?” *The Impact of the Dominant Ideology of Canadian Society on the Role of Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, (MSW: Carleton University, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

a 1947 article in the *Pentecostal Testimony* ridicules the call to preach of a “young married woman” as follows:<sup>36</sup>

Her main qualification was ability to sing a few hymns to the accompaniment of a guitar. Her knowledge of the Bible was negligible, but she could exhort a little. Her husband felt no leadings in that direction and their only child had to be neglected if she were to go. In considering the matter, one could not help but feel that the woman was ambitious for public life. She was willing to neglect the training of her son so that she could go out holding meetings.

According to Rogers, this ideology was reflected in the ministries of PAOC women when they served in faith based rescue missions, as evangelists, or as missionaries to other ethnic groups. It also was reflected when they chose to minister alongside of their husbands or fathers. At the same time, women were excluded from ordained clergy roles once it was professionalized so as to not challenge the power and prestige of their male counterparts. According to Rogers, this adherence to the dominant ideology as expressed in the adoption of a male, professional ministry was important for the continued existence of the PAOC. Some of the reasons given included “the coordination and oversight of missionary and publishing work, the preserving of the revival, and the prevention of false doctrines and unscrupulous preachers” and “*to obtain from the government the same privileges as other Christian ministers.*” (emphasis mine).<sup>37</sup> Ellen Hebden, doctrinally similar, had not adhered and her prominence faded within the PAOC. In Rogers' view, it was an adaptation to mainstream churches' practice

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<sup>36</sup> C. B. Smith, “From the Editor’s Chair,” *Pentecostal Testimony* Vol. 28, No. 8 (June 1, 1947): 1, 17, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Rogers, 73-75.

of professional ministry rather than Pentecostal practice or some adaptation to fundamentalism that led to women being sidelined.<sup>38</sup>

During the Second World War and afterwards, when women were required to work, it was explained as being “temporary wartime measures.” Therefore, women’s work related activities did not interfere with the view of women’s femininity or men’s “superior status.” PAOC women filled in for little or no pay when men were not available, were involved in home and foreign missions work in keeping with their “maternal” nature and held positions in Bible Colleges that reflected “feminine” areas such as “English, Sunday School Work, and First Aid.” In contrast, men led as members of the PAOC executive and administration. Then by the 1950s, women in both Canadian society and the PAOC were channelled or pushed once again into being homemakers by both government and church policies and ideology.<sup>39</sup>

With the renewal of women’s groups by the late 1960’s and 70’s changes were made to policy but not practice in both church and government.<sup>40</sup> Rogers concludes his work by stressing the importance of becoming aware of the existence of, understanding the nature of and controlling the processes of ideology in order to “counteract the whole system of domination and marginalization”<sup>41</sup> which both serves and legitimates the interests of the privileged.

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 76.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 77-78.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 78.

## Conclusion

While all of these explanations seek to elucidate the reasons why a “place” was made for women during the early years of the Pentecostal movement followed by the subsequent restrictions, none of them attempt to analyze *why it was actually necessary to make a “place” for women* at all. All assume that it was unusual for women to be in a leadership position within the churches and society, which it was. The “woman question”<sup>42</sup> is still a topic of discussion within Pentecostalism one hundred years after Azusa Street. Therefore, not only is a critical feminist analysis leading to a theology of liberation warranted, one that can get at the roots of what may be creating both liberative and oppressive ideas and practices and allowing both to co-exist within Pentecostalism is in order. The next chapter will explore an explanation for such a contradictory situation.

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<sup>42</sup> Pentecostalism continues to wrestle with the “Woman Question.” as can be illustrated by the year long emphasis in 2005-2006 on Women within Pentecostalism sponsored by Regent University, Virginia. The results of this focus can be found in *Philip’s Daughters: Women In Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Yong, Amos & Alexander, Estrela, Eds., Princeton Theological Monographs, (Eugene, Oregon Pickwick Press, 2008).

## CHAPTER 5

### THE NATURE AND POWER OF ENLIGHTENMENT RATIONALITY

#### Introduction

This chapter will explore what has been termed the “dialectic of enlightenment” by constellating the insights of Horkheimer and Adorno, Schüssler Fiorenza, Radford Ruether and Hewitt in order to demonstrate that the problem of patriarchy and the domination of women within Pentecostalism is part of a much deeper problem embedded within Western, enlightenment thinking. Once demonstrated, an exploration of Pentecostalism’s own “dialectic of enlightenment” will follow.

#### *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s interest in the role of enlightenment rationality in both liberating and dominating humanity as it sought to differentiate and free humanity from the contingencies of nature was discussed in detail by them in their 1944 book, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. After the events of the Second World War, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno moved beyond their earlier focus on economic matters to a broader and more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between humanity and nature within modern Western societies with its emphasis on enlightened forms of reason. In the

process, the differences between their theory and orthodox Marxism became striking. No longer was class conflict the “motor of history.” Nor did the problem begin with the rise of capitalism. Nor was there any solution in sight. At this point, their tone is indeed very pessimistic. As Jay explains it,<sup>1</sup>

Disillusioned with the Soviet Union, no longer even marginally sanguine about the working classes of the West, appalled by the integrative power of mass culture, the Frankfurt School traveled the last leg of its long march away from orthodox Marxism ... The capitalist mode of exploitation was now seen in a larger context as the specific, historical form of domination characteristic of the bourgeois era of Western history. State capitalism and the authoritarian state spelled the end, or at least the radical transformation, of that epoch. Domination ... was now more direct and virulent without the mediations characteristic of bourgeois society.

### **Enlightenment as Domination**

Adorno and Horkheimer insisted that the Enlightenment as a process of rationalization was part of the civilizing of humanity. In their argument, “the Enlightenment” refers to a particular mode of enlightened thought, rather than the Enlightenment as an historical era. This mode of thought involves, not simply abstract cognitive ideas but “the actual movement of civil society as a whole” including forms of life and social phenomena.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 254-256, quote 256.

<sup>2</sup> Max Adorno and Theodor W. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, Trans. (New York: Continuum, 1944, 1998), xiv.

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the Enlightenment and enlightened thinking was understood to have freed humanity from primitive, earlier ways of being involving magic and myths that were used to control the aspects of life and nature over which humanity seemingly had little control. Yet, in the critical theorists' opinion, that understanding was wrong. Rather than civilizing humanity, freeing them from the dangerous aspects of nature, and allowing for a "truly human condition" to emerge, enlightenment had led to self-destruction and disaster as humanity sunk "into a new kind of barbarism."<sup>3</sup> In reality, myth and enlightenment were intertwined<sup>4</sup>, in that magic and myth were already evidences of enlightened thinking. They were part of humanity's first step towards separating itself from nature. Nature had been disenchanting. As the opening words of the first chapter of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* states,

In the most general sense of progress thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant. The program of the Enlightenment was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy.<sup>5</sup>

In Adorno and Horkheimer's view, as humanity started to differentiate itself from the rest of the natural world as a species that could consciously reason in a cause and effect manner and reflect upon its own existence and, thus, attempted to free itself from the uncertainties and dangers of nature, humanity was already using enlightened thinking.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, xi.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 11-12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

Progressing from magical rituals and myths, humanity ended up viewing nature as an impersonal object that could be exploited. As Horkheimer poignantly explained in his follow-up book *Eclipse of Reason*, which bears the marks of his collaboration with Adorno,<sup>6</sup>

The story of the boy who looked up at the sky and asked, ‘Daddy, what is the moon supposed to advertise?’ is an allegory of what has happened to the relation between man and nature in the era of formalized reason. On the one hand, nature has been stripped of all intrinsic value or meaning. On the other, man has been stripped of all aims except self-preservation. He tries to transform everything within reach into a means to that end ... Though people may not ask what the moon is supposed to advertise, they tend to think of it in terms of ballistics or aerial mileage.

Consequently, and ironically, Horkheimer and Adorno argued that while enlightened thought, even today, assumes that it has destroyed myth from some “outside” position, it was from an inside stance that humanity attempted to master nature.<sup>7</sup> As a result, while enlightenment thinkers may believe themselves to have transcended myths with rational thought, they had simply adopted a new myth, that is, that enlightened thought transcends myth and is indeed rational.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, Horkheimer and Adorno insisted that enlightenment thinking was guilty of making ultimate truth claims much in the same manner as myth. As they

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<sup>6</sup> See Jay, *The Dialectic Imagination*, pp. 254. Quote from Horkheimer, “The Revolt of Nature,” *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1947, 1974): 92-127, 101-102.

<sup>7</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 10-12, 27, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Wiggershaus, Rolf. *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance* (Michael Robertson, Trans. Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1994), 329.

explained it, “the world as a gigantic analytic judgment, the only one left over from all the dreams of science, is of the same mould as the cosmic myth which associated the cycle of spring and autumn with the kidnapping of Persephone.”<sup>9</sup> Enlightenment rationality was enamoured with mathematics and formal logic with their abstract methodology involving calculation, equivalence and substitution to the point of claiming that such processes produced objective, hard evidence that could be universalized. In comparison, an animal sacrificial process reasoned that substituting an animal in place of a man and then sacrificing that animal would appease any divinity which might have been offended by man without doing any harm to man.<sup>10</sup> The animal’s well-being is not considered. As Adorno and Horkheimer explained,<sup>11</sup>

Mythology itself set off the unending process of enlightenment in which ever and again, with the inevitability of necessity, every specific theoretic view succumbs to the destructive criticism that it is only a belief - until even the very notions of spirit, of truth and, indeed, enlightenment itself, have become animistic magic. The principle of fatal necessity, which brings low the heroes of myth and derives as a logical consequence from the pronouncement of the oracle, does not merely, when refined to the stringency of formal logic, rule in every rationalistic system of Western philosophy, but itself dominates the series of systems which begins with the hierarchy of the gods and in, in a permanent twilight of the idols, hands down an identical content: anger against insufficient righteousness. Just as the myths already realize enlightenment, so enlightenment with every step becomes more deeply engulfed in mythology. It receives all its matter from the myths, in order to destroy them; and even as a judge it comes under the mythic curse.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 6-10, 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 11-12.

Logic, understood by Adorno and Horkheimer, first originated in human sacrifices, then animal sacrifices and more recently totems, rituals and prayers, eventually evolving into the abstract thinking and cultural practices that alienated humanity from the very nature they attempted to exercise power over.<sup>12</sup>

Frances Bacon, the “father of experimental philosophy,” was credited with having defined the enlightenment’s motives and immediately criticized with the words, “What men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order wholly to dominate it and other men. That is the only aim.” Adorno and Horkheimer considered Bacon’s view of the relationship between “the mind of men and the nature of things” to be patriarchal.<sup>13</sup> As since the time of Bacon, science has been thought of in terms of attaining power over nature, those methods of verification and forms of thinking, whether rationalist or empiricist, that were deemed most effective, useful, efficient or successful in the domination of nature received both intellectual and practical legitimation. Thinking that involved myths, religions, critical or speculative philosophy was increasingly defined as being irrational or useless in the struggle to dominate nature.<sup>14</sup> “Power and knowledge” became “synonymous.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 10ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 4-7, 25-26, 71-72, 248.

<sup>15</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 4.

Sadly, while even animism, which supposedly lacked critical self-consciousness, demonstrated an awareness of the interpenetration of nature and humanity as well as myth and rationality, enlightened rationality, which had “extinguished any trace of its own self-consciousness,” viewed the world outside of humanity as separate, “lifeless, fungible atoms.”<sup>16</sup> Ironically, in Adorno and Horkheimer’s opinion, “believing that without strict limitation to the verification of facts and probability theory, the cognitive spirit” had become “all too susceptible to charlatanism and superstition.” As Hewitt explains, while the modern Enlightenment held high hopes for the potential of reason to realize the goals of “justice, freedom and happiness within history,” “instrumental and technical” reason which properly functions within the fields of “science and technology” had “submerged” through “hegemonic pervasiveness” “emphatic, substantive notions of reason” which normally would ground such notions of “justice, freedom, and happiness” within the “world of social praxis and ethics.”<sup>17</sup> The dependence and predominance of such rationality being utilized for the accomplishment of pre-specified goals resulted in only the instrumental use of those goals being recognized and valued. Abstraction, in Horkheimer and Adorno’s opinion, had become a tool of totalitarian domination as deeply embedded, instrumentalized, enlightened rationality served the interests of domination even as it nullified other less dominating ways of thinking and being.

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<sup>16</sup> Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 260 quoting *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 20.

With the more recent advances in technology and governmental administration, domination has only increased.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, it seems that the more “devices we invent for dominating nature, the more must we serve them if we are to survive.”<sup>19</sup> As Horkheimer explained it,<sup>20</sup>

The complete transformation of the world into a world of means rather than of the ends is itself the consequence of the historical development of the methods of production. As material production, and social organization grow more complicated and reified, recognition of means as such becomes increasingly difficult, since they assume the appearance of autonomous entities ... the kinds of weapons or machines that man uses at the various stages of his evolution call for certain forms of command and obedience, or co-operation and subordination, and thus are effective also in bringing into being certain legal, artistic, and religious forms.

### **Christianity’s Legitimation of Domination**

The role of Christian religious thinking was brought into the discussion with the mention of Martin Luther, the so-called Father of the Protestant Reformation, who was implicated in the process of domination and along with him the Protestant church.<sup>21</sup> Within Protestantism, the attempt to find some “transcendental principle of truth” within the written biblical scriptures that was granted some sort of “symbolic power” has resulted in “obedience to the word, and not to the sacred.” Adorno and Horkheimer cautioned that connecting faith with knowledge in this manner undermined faith itself and

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<sup>18</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 6, 9, 11-13, 26-31.

<sup>19</sup> Horkheimer, “The Revolt of Nature,” *Eclipse of Reason*, 97.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 3-5, 19-20.

resulted in faith degenerating “into a swindle” and becoming “an instrument of rational administration by the wholly enlightened as they steer society toward barbarism.”<sup>22</sup> Horkheimer further insisted in his essay, “The Revolt of Nature,” the “mentality of man as the master can be traced back to the first chapters of Genesis.” Such “outstanding religious thinkers” as “Paul, Thomas Aquinas, and Luther,” interpreted these early chapters as “pertaining only to the moral education of man, and in no wise to any obligation of man toward other creatures” as only “man’s soul can be saved.” Even Pope Pius IX was cited for refusing to allow a “society for the prevention of cruelty to animals to be founded in Rome because ... theology teaches that man owes no duty to any animal.” Moreover, “British churchman,” Edward Westermarck was quoted as insisting that if Christ could “suffer and die” on Calvary “for the life, the welfare, the happiness of others ... Why should animals be exempted...?”<sup>23</sup>

In Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s understanding, supposedly enlightened human culture operates from a secularized religious core belief which legitimates men viewing the realm of nature as an “inferior, external” other composed of lifeless atoms which could be exploited.<sup>24</sup> The religious core belief is that God controls and dominates the world for “His” own purposes. The secularized version is that man controls and

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 19-20.

<sup>23</sup> Horkheimer, “The Revolt of Nature,” *The Eclipse of Reason*. 104-105.

<sup>24</sup> Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, 260.

dominates nature for “his” own purposes. Sadly, there is an ironic twist to such a man-centered worldview. As Horkheimer and Adorno explained,<sup>25</sup>

It is doubtful whether a genuine “next-higher” race can arise after men. Anthropomorphism contains a measure of truth in that natural history did not reckon with the play of chance which led to the development of men. Their destructive capacity risks becoming so great that a clean sweep will be made if the race is ever exhausted. Either men will tear each other to pieces or they will take all the flora and fauna of the earth with them; and if the earth is then still young enough, the whole thing will have to be started again at a much lower stage.

### **Schüssler Fiorenza, Radford Ruether, Nature and Women**

Adorno and Horkheimer linked the domination of nature and the domination of women. In their view, “as a representative of nature, woman in bourgeois society has become the enigmatic image of irresistibility and powerlessness. In this way she reflects for domination the pure lie that posits the subjection rather than the redemption of nature.”<sup>26</sup> Hewitt claims that,<sup>27</sup>

A major source of women’s oppression resides in this enforced identity between woman and nature, with the result that women, by virtue of the association with nature historically thrust on them, represent the antithesis of civilization and the potential negation of its achievements. They therefore must be contained as a dangerous threat to that which Man has struggled to create in intellectual and physical labor.

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<sup>25</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 224.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 71-72.

<sup>27</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis*, 18.

Not only has a male dominated society encouraged and profited from such a connection but so has the Church.<sup>28</sup> While their view of women is sadly in need of a feminist critique,<sup>29</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno's point is well taken – women, in being identified with nature, are understood by both church and society to be naturally inferior to men. The Church adds a divinely ordained legitimacy to this domination.<sup>30</sup>

The Church, which throughout the ages has missed scarcely an opportunity of exerting its telling influence on popular institutions – whether in slavery, crusades, or plain pogroms – has sided, despite the Ave Maria, with Plato's assessment of woman. The image of the Mother of God stricken with sorrow was merely a sop to the last traces of the matriarchate. The Church set the seal of its authority on that very doctrine of female inferiority which that same image was intended to redeem. De Maistre, the true son of the Church if ever there was one, gave a warning: 'We have only to weaken in some degree the influence of the divine Law in a Christian country by countenancing the freedom of women that stemmed from it, to see freedom, noble and moving though it be, degenerating soon enough into utter shamelessness. Women would become the baneful instruments of a general decline which would not be long in infecting the vital organs of the State. This would fall into decay and, in its gangrenous decomposition, spread abroad ignominy and terror.'

Furthermore, the implications of this linkage did not go far enough as it did not make explicit the connection between Christian theology and the domination of nature and women. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Rosemary Radford Ruether do just that.

### **Schüssler Fiorenza**

Schüssler Fiorenza claims that throughout history churches and societies have promoted kyriarchal systems and relationships. The result has been the pervasive denial

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 109-111.

<sup>29</sup> See Hewitt's *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis*, for such a critique.

<sup>30</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 248.

of the full personhood of women along with children and marginalized males. In her book *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet* Schüssler Fiorenza argues, using Brian Wren's categories, that the "metaphorical system that undergirds Christian imagination, worship, and hymnody is that of KINGAFAP - the King-God-Almighty-Father-All-Powerful-Protector."<sup>31</sup> She continues,

In this frame of reference G\*d is pictured and worshipped as a powerful king enthroned in splendor who receives homage and atonement for offenses against his majesty, rules by word of command, and stabilizes the cosmic order. This Almighty, All-powerful, and often terrifying King is also called Father. He is the creator, merciful Lord, and Father who is the sole (male) parent of the crown prince, his Son, Jesus Christ ... the Father-King and Son-Prince send their Spirit down to earth to help their followers and to teach only them the revelation of KINGAFAP ... This Christian symbol system of Kingly Father, Princely Son, and Exclusive Spirit has no room for a female figure, be it mother, consort, sister, or daughter, nor for a female personification like Shekinah or Sophia. It envisions the Divine in terms of control and rule and images divine transcendence as absolute, distant, and completely foreign to the world. Hence, this kyriarchal symbolic system cannot but function to bolster kyriarchal society and church. Since it is deeply ingrained in Christian consciousness, it has become "common sense" ... Consequently, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reimagine and reconstruct this central Christian myth differently. It claims the authority of orthodoxy although it seems to cohere completely with what we know about the account of the world historically articulated in Gnostic speculation.<sup>32</sup>

### **A Concern**

In recent years, as Schüssler Fiorenza continues to refine and develop her thinking, she seems to be more concerned with developing the concept of "Wisdom" rather than "Spirit" as her name for God's divine Presence. For example, in *But She Said*

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<sup>31</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 106.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 107.

published in 1992, Fiorenza develops more fully the idea that since all are “enlivened and empowered by the life-giving breath of Sophia-Spirit” authority is rightly exercised within the *ekklésia* of wo/men through “discerning the presence of the Spirit.”<sup>33</sup> She uses as her examples of such practice various prophetic traditions and the struggles of the “sisters of the Spirit” whom she also calls “sisters of Wisdom.”<sup>34</sup> By chapter 7 of *Sharing Her Word* published in 1998, the expression “sisters of the Spirit” is now clearly called in the title “The Sisters of Wisdom-Sophia: Justified for All Her Children.” Perhaps a partial explanation for that shift can be found in the passage from the book above published in 1995. In this passage Schüssler Fiorenza seems to have decided to solidly locate the “Spirit” within the patriarchal trinity. Schüssler Fiorenza turns to the image of divine Wisdom in an attempt to deconstruct and reconstruct this kyriarchal Christian myth.<sup>35</sup> Her assessment raises several serious questions such as the following: Is the Spirit exclusive and part of a kyriarchal, all male trinity? How is humanity, made in the image of such a God, and the relationships between people then to be understood?

Although these difficult questions demand attention, Schüssler Fiorenza's move away from the use of the term “Spirit” is not necessary in order to overcome the kyriarchal assumptions and practices within the churches. In fact, her move is evidence

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<sup>33</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 156.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 156ff.

<sup>35</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 160ff.

of yet another serious problem, that is, the ongoing tendency to marginalize the Spirit within Christian theology and practice.<sup>36</sup> As Elizabeth Johnson has argued, there is a direct correlation between the marginalization of the Spirit and the marginalization of women. In Johnson's book *Women, Earth and Creator Spirit*, she examines the thesis that the exploitation of the earth, the marginalization of women and the lack of attention to the Spirit in many churches are linked.<sup>37</sup> It is possible that the marginalization of Spirit focused groups with a significant number of women in leadership by the other Christian churches could also be correlated. For instance, while much of the current Spirit-focused Pentecostal movement is patriarchal and kyriarchal, women always have been and still are actively involved although admittedly in decreasing numbers in leadership roles. As Pentecostal college instructor Janet Everts Powers points out, even though the numbers of women being ordained within Pentecostalism declined after 1920, in 1995 when a study was undertaken of ordained women in all churches, "over 50 percent of all women who had ever been ordained were from Pentecostal and Holiness backgrounds. Only 17 percent of all women ever ordained came from other major Protestant denominations." "In

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<sup>36</sup> This marginalization of the Spirit as the "Cinderella of the trinity" has been duly noted by many theologians from different churches resulting in a proliferation of works on the Spirit in recent years. See for instance, Jürgen Moltmann's *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, *Women, Earth and Creator Spirit* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).

the 1990 report of the National Council of Churches it was noted that the Assemblies of God ... had led the way in affirming the ministries of women.”<sup>38</sup>

Spirit-focused Pentecostals and Charismatics now number one out of every four Christians<sup>39</sup> and this number continues to grow at a phenomenal rate, finding committed membership among the dislocated poor of urban centers as well as privileged folks.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, even with Schüssler Fiorenza’s concern for the liberation of women, other than a brief discussion of “African-American ‘sisters of the Spirit’” of the nineteenth century,”<sup>41</sup> she does not explore this phenomena. My concern is that Schüssler Fiorenza’s movement away from the Spirit to Wisdom categories both results from, and feeds into, the marginalization of which Elizabeth Johnson wrote which may also be expanded to include Spirit-focused groups.

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<sup>38</sup> Janet Everts Powers, “‘Your Daughters Shall Prophesy:’ Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women,” *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Dempster, Murray W., Klaus, Byron D., & Peterson, Douglas, eds., (UK, USA, Ghana, Argentina, India: Regnum Books International, 1999), 313-314.

<sup>39</sup>Pentecostalism now involves almost 523 million members around the world, making it the second only to Roman Catholicism in numbers of adherents according to D. B. Barrett; T. M. Johnson, “Global Statistics” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed., and Eduard M. van der Maas, Associate Editor (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, 2003), 284. See also Editors, “Did You Know? Little-known or remarkable facts about early Pentecostalism,” *Christian History*, Issue 58, Vol. XVII, No. 2, 1998: 3-4, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Of about 13 million a year or 35,000 a day according to Editors, “Did You Know? Little-known or remarkable facts about early Pentecostalism,” *Christian History*, Issue 58, Vol. XVII, No. 2, 1998, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 156.

The Spirit has been imaged as an intricate part of a patriarchal trinity all three of whose members are referred to as "he." This is indeed problematic with far ranging implications. However, the Spirit has had a tendency to moderate the kyriarchal assumptions and practices of the Christian churches and allowed a "place" for ministering women.

### **Radford Ruether**

Rosemary Radford Ruether claims that one of the reasons why sexism maintains its power is the deep, ancient roots of patriarchy within our culture. As she noted, while the "subjugation of women as the first oppressor-oppressed relation" is "the foundation of all other class and property relations," the "Woman Question" is typically the last one to be addressed.<sup>42</sup> She would agree with Horkheimer, Adorno and Schüssler Fiorenza that women have been uniquely identified with nature, an identification that furthers their domination by men. Echoing the theories of Horkheimer and Adorno, Radford Ruether states,

The male ideology of the 'feminine' that we have inherited in the West seems to be rooted in a self-alienated experience of the body and the world, projecting upon the sexual other the lower half of these dualisms. As Simone de Beauvoir pointed out many years ago in her class study, *The Second Sex*, in male-dominated societies, it is always woman who is the "other," the antithesis over against which one defines "authentic" (male) selfhood. But a repressive view of the alien female was also the model for the inferiorization of other subjugated groups, lowered classes, and conquered races. Subjugated groups are perceived through similar stereotypes, not because they are alike, but because the same dominant group (ruling-class males) is doing the perceiving. All oppressed peoples tend then to be seen as lacking in rationality, volition, and capacity for

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<sup>42</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruther, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies & Human Liberation* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 3.

autonomy. The characteristics of repressed bodiliness are attributed to them: passivity, sensuality, irrationality, and dependence. The dominant race, class and sexual caste, on the other hand, model their self-image after ego or consciousness. They are the true humanity or selfhood, possessing intrinsically the qualities of initiative, reason, capacity for autonomy and higher virtues. These myths are still with us ... To examine the stereotypes of the feminine, therefore, is to open up the basic points of social tension and their ideological rationalization.

More than other liberation movement women are still plagued with the aetiological question: how did it all begin? Behind this question is the supposition that anything so ancient must be “natural” and therefore “just.” Women are thrown into the defensive posture of trying to prove that they have the capacity for full humanity because “once upon a time...”<sup>43</sup>

In her book *Gaia and God*, Radford Ruether calls for and utilizes ecofeminism to evaluate western culture. She thinks of the earth as a “living system, of which humans are an inextricable part.” Sadly, humanity has constructed its concept of itself “as humans over against all that is nonhuman” resulting in the construction of the “concept of ‘nature’ as both the nonhuman and the non-divine.”<sup>44</sup> Similar to Adorno and Horkheimer, she claims that relationships that dominate nature are interconnected with other types of domination including that of women. Therefore, the cultural and ideological roots of such domination must be recognized and changed.<sup>45</sup> Still, while rethinking the relationship between “man” and “nature” may be part of this project, it is, nonetheless, problematic as the terms themselves are ambiguous. While the “male generic ‘man’ conceals the Western ruling-class context of the problem,” the word

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>44</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 2.

“nature” is used in at least four distinct ways including, “(1) as that which is ‘essential’ to a being; (2) as the sum total of physical reality, including humans; (3) as the sum total of physical reality apart from humans; and (4) the ‘created’ world apart from God and divine grace.”<sup>46</sup> All four usages are found within the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Rather than considering such usage problematic, the conceptual ambiguity is a reflection of reality and the pervasiveness of domination.

Radford Ruether claims that creation stories “reflect the assumptions about how the divine and the mortal, the mental and the physical, humans and other humans, male and female, humans, plants, animals, land, water and stars are related to each other.” Descriptively, creation stories “reflect the worldview of the culture” while at the same time prescriptively mandating “that worldview to its ongoing heirs.”<sup>47</sup> She explains Christianity’s involvement in justifying and sacralising relationships of domination which have resulted in such ways of relating as being viewed as natural or God’s will in the following way,

In particular, the way these cultures have construed the idea of the male monotheistic God, and the relation of this God to the cosmos as its Creator, have reinforced symbolically the relations of domination of men over women, masters over slaves, and (male ruling-class) humans over animals and over the earth. *Domination of women has provided a key link, both socially and symbolically, to the domination of earth*, hence the tendency in patriarchal cultures to link women with earth, matter, and nature, while identifying males with sky, intellect, and transcendent spirit (emphasis mine)<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 3.

Radford Ruether also claims that instrumental, calculative reason associated with modern science and instrumentalism has increased the system of domination to a global basis even as humanity's interdependence with nature has been further masked.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, her goal is “theological and psychic-spiritual process” of “earth healing, a healed relationship between men and women, between classes and nations, and between humans and the earth.” While a complex and difficult goal, she claims that this healing “is possible only through recognition and transformation of the way in which Western culture, enshrined in part in Christianity, has justified such domination.”<sup>50</sup> This is an important first step for anyone involved in the Christian churches.

### **Man's Inner Nature Dominated and Repressed**

As Horkheimer and Adorno continued their critique, they insisted that not only has nature been dominated but also man's inner nature. Domination over nature resulted in alienation from self<sup>51</sup> through the “development of the abstract subject, the ego ... by which man makes himself a tool of that same nature which he subjugates ... a destructive force exploited by the most radical systems of social domination.”<sup>52</sup> The Darwinian concept of survival of the fittest has been modified to become “survival – or, let us say, success” by means of which an individual adapts “to the pressures that society brings to

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 1, 4.

<sup>51</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 26.

<sup>52</sup> Horkheimer, “The Revolt of Nature,” *Eclipse of Reason*, 94.

bear on him. To survive, man transforms himself into an apparatus that responds at every moment with just the appropriate reaction to the baffling and difficult situations that make up his life.” For the sake of self-preservation, individuals must adjust “to the requirements for the preservation of the system.” His fate is dependent upon it.<sup>53</sup>

Ironically, as Hewitt has pointed out, self-preservation is purchased “with the currency of ruthless repression and denial of the very self it seems to preserve.”<sup>54</sup> Reason attained through the domination of nature is self-mutilating self-domination.

As Horkheimer and Adorno deepened their analysis even further, they drew upon what they considered a classic work within Western cultural history, the *Odyssey*. Through this Homeric epic and the adventures of Odysseus they illustrated how man overcomes both threats from the natural world and from within his own nature on his voyage towards being the master of himself, his own house and domain. This, they insisted, is the fundamental principle of all human culture with its enlightenment rationality up to the present - the domination of nature, both man’s inner nature, those parts of himself that he associated with animal instincts, and the outer natural environment. Both were rejected and repressed as “other” than man and as a threat to “man” in the sense of his identity formation.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 95-96.

<sup>54</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 43ff.

### **Alienation and the Division of Labour**

Not everyone embarked on this journey in the same way as Odysseus. Male servants and women were placed under the domination of the master, ruling male, Odysseus, rather than being granted the privilege of directly attempting to control themselves or their environment. With the division of labour and the division of the human psyche, the capacity for instinctual and spontaneous enjoyment was repressed resulting in even further domination of man. As Hewitt has suggested, the ongoing question of the relationship between theory and praxis is prefigured when Odysseus has his men tie him to the mast of his ship so that he can hear but not respond to the Sirens' songs while his men have their ears plugged so that they can row the boat without being distracted by the singing.<sup>56</sup>

Not only is a split between “work and enjoyment” so important within a capitalist context noted but also the division of labour into manual and mental components.<sup>57</sup> Marx has been particularly credited with expanding the concept of alienation to include labour, understanding alienated labour to be the cause of such miserable conditions that humanity creates illusions, such as religion, in order to survive. According to Marx, workers within a capitalist context only receive wages that ensure their survival while maximizing profits. This is in part due to the fact that the owners of the employment, “the property owners” from which the “propertyless” workers are receiving wages, are in a better

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<sup>56</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 21-22.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*

position to bargain. As a result, workers' labour, rather than being meaningful or of benefit to themselves, is in fact punishing. As the workforce becomes more complex, labour becomes more divided and repetitive, machine like, thereby enhancing its degradation and one-sidedness. As labour is bought and sold, it is a commodity. The result is that workers' lives under capitalism are controlled by forces alien to themselves.<sup>58</sup>

### **“Woman” Dominated and Repressed**

Through the examples of Odysseus' interaction with the Sirens and their songs,<sup>59</sup> with Circe and her sexuality and ability to turn men into animals,<sup>60</sup> and with Penelope his faithful wife and her riddle of the marriage bed carved out of a live tree,<sup>61</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno associated women with the weaker, seductive, sexual, and animal-like aspects of nature. It is these aspects within himself that Odysseus must dominate and control in order to rejoin the civilized world and take his rightful, ruling place within it. Significantly, as Hewitt delineates,<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Karl Marx, “The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company,): 68-125, 70ff.

<sup>59</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 32-36, 58-59.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 69ff.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 74-75.

<sup>62</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, p. 18 quoting Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex,” Rayna Reiter, ed., *Towards an Anthropology of Women* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 180.

Many feminists agree that socially constructed categories of gender, where maleness corresponds to the products of history while femaleness corresponds to nature, have no basis in “natural” sexual differences. Rather, the social repression and marginalization of women are rooted in the domination of nature, and, by association the repression of the feminine in the male self. The suppression of the feminine in the male, however, is not the suppression of what is alien or different from the male, although it is perceived as such. Rather exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities” – that is, *human* similarities. The suppression of the feminine as connected with the suppression of nature in the self leads to a much more disturbing insight that what is renounced and feared by patriarchal culture is the very humanity that men and women share.

The “promise of pleasure” is resisted; the “patriarchal order” is preserved.<sup>63</sup>

While the men are the victims of self-alienation and repression in this saga, Penelope and Circe in particular are also singled out to represent the “price” that “was paid for the establishment of systematized conditions of sexual reproduction” as follows:<sup>64</sup>

Prostitute and wife are the complements of female self-alienation in the patriarchal world: the wife denotes pleasure in the fixed order of life and property, whereas the prostitute takes what the wife’s right of possession leaves free and – as the wife’s secret collaborator – subjects it again to the order of possession: she sells pleasure ... If the courtesan makes the patriarchal world-order her own, the monogamous wife is not herself happy with it and does not rest until she has made herself equal with the male character. ... Marriage does not signify merely the order that requites in life but also solidarity in death.

While women were becoming alienated from themselves and other women, men were not faring much better. While Circe had to promise Odysseus that she would change his servants back into human beings, the servants themselves were not happy with the change even though they were younger and more attractive than before the whole episode. It seems they preferred the peaceful existence of swine that had occurred

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<sup>63</sup> Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 21.

<sup>64</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 73-75.

because of their “reversion” to their “basic impulse.” Odysseus himself, rather than chancing being returned to an “older form of life” as an animal, repressed his baser instincts until he had elicited an oath from Circe to not change him. Sex with him would not involve becoming an animal but rather dominating the woman and a “symbolic self-mutilation on the part of the man” in the form of a “permanent repression of instinct.”<sup>65</sup>

### **The Precarious Position of Women**

For Adorno and Horkheimer, patriarchy, as a form of domination, was not a family arrangement but rather societal,<sup>66</sup> one that both a male dominated culture and church have encouraged and from which both have profited through co-opting the work and efforts of women as their own.<sup>67</sup> As they state,<sup>68</sup>

For rational beings ... to feel concern about an irrational creature is a futile occupation. Western civilization has left this to women. Women have no personal part in the efficiency on which this civilization is based. It is man who has to go out into an unfriendly world, who has to struggle and produce. Woman is not a being in her own right, a subject. She produces nothing but looks after those who do; she is a living monument to a long-vanished era when the domestic economy was self-contained. The division of labor imposed upon her by man brought her little that was worthwhile. She became the embodiment of the biological function, the image of nature, the subjugation of which constituted that civilization's title to fame.

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 69-73.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 21, 71-72, 248.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 109-111.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 247-248.

Women were understood by Horkheimer and Adorno to be in a position whereby they are somewhat sheltered by the various other levels of domination within the larger work world. In being identified with nature, women also mediate between nature and enlightenment cultures. However, by placing themselves in a position to experience enlightenment society somewhat more directly than if they remained in the home, women's mediation of nature for and to man is also threatened. Adorno's and Horkheimer's idealized woman is giving up a possible position from which domination may be resisted<sup>69</sup> although such resistance appears to be more for man's sake than any woman's benefit.<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, Horkheimer and Adorno acknowledged the precarious position in which this identification with nature places women. Violence against women is a real possibility.<sup>71</sup>

For millennia men dreamed of acquiring absolute mastery over nature, of converting the cosmos into one immense hunting-ground. It was to this that the idea of man was geared in a male-dominated society. This was the significant of reason, his proudest boast. Woman was weaker and smaller. Between her and man there was a difference she could not bridge – a difference imposed by nature, the most humiliating that can exist in a male-dominated society. Where the mastery of nature is the true goal, biological inferiority remains a glaring stigma, the weakness imprinted by nature as a key stimulus to aggression ...

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<sup>69</sup> Horkheimer, "Authority and the Family," *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, Matthew J. O'Connell and others, Transl. (New York: Continuum, 1972), 114.

<sup>70</sup> See Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, pp. 93ff for further discussion of the benefits to male humans.

<sup>71</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 248.

Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of this domination of women is insulting to women.<sup>72</sup>

... Woman herself, on behalf of all exploited nature, gained admission to a male-dominated world, but only in a broken form. In her spontaneous submission she reflects for her vanquisher the glory of his victory, substituting devotion for defeat, nobility of soul for despair, and a loving breast for a ravished heart ... Ever since the stunted jester, to whose gamboling and cap-and-bells the melancholy lot of broken nature once clung, made his escape from the service of kings, woman has been made the caretaker of all things beautiful. The modern female puritan eagerly took up the office. She identified herself fully with the status quo, with nature domesticated, not red in tooth and claw.

Regardless, they do have a point. Many women, including Pentecostal ones, have capitulated and identified with the status quo.

### **Summary**

In summary, in Horkheimer and Adorno's understanding, the crisis of contemporary culture is deeply embedded as enlightenment rationality or enlightened thinking has at its deepest core from time immemorial the principle of domination. This domination involves nature in all its various forms by ruling men like Odysseus. As a result, such dominating enlightened thinking, rather than civilizing humanity and freeing humanity from the vicissitudes of nature, has led to disaster. Humanity is now dominated both psychically and culturally,<sup>73</sup> and nature, which has been seriously damaged while being repressed and exploited, is noticeably responding in a manner oftentimes disastrous

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 250.

<sup>73</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, xi, 3, 31-32. See also Horkheimer, "The Revolt of Nature," *Eclipse of Reason*, 93-94.

to human life. While Mother Nature may be able to survive without humanity, humanity cannot survive without its Mother Nature and the Earth.

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, enlightenment, or at least enlightened thinking, does not have to be dominating.<sup>74</sup> While the goal of enlightened thinking had been the self-preservation of man, which was unfortunately pursued through attempts to dominate nature, within enlightenment thinking is also to be found another more liberative goal that opposes such domination and the misuse of power in any way. The implication is that, while the enlightenment has been destroying itself, truly enlightened thought could bring about a change. Unfortunately, as far as they were concerned in the 1940s, the predominate and most powerful model of enlightenment rationality was the dominating one which has been preventing the second, more liberative one from expressing itself.<sup>75</sup> “Blind domination” had won out and disaster could only result as men were not likely to change their way of being in the world until it was too late. Enlightenment, as they feared, was betraying men.<sup>76</sup> Even “revolts of nature,” whether in the form of community uprisings or individual behaviours declared deviant by society

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<sup>74</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer seem to waver between more radical breaks with Enlightenment rationality and an attempt to defend a form of critical reason against current forms of irrationalism. The very title of the book “Dialectic of Enlightenment” seems to indicate that Horkheimer and Adorno did not want to get rid completely of the idea of enlightenment but to shed light on the ambiguity of the idea of enlightenment.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, xv.

such as criminal or insane, have been integrated into “civilization as rationalized irrationality ... as another means or instrument.”<sup>77</sup>

The implications are significant, complex and deeply rooted. Horkheimer and Adorno were pessimistic that solutions could be found. Within a capitalistic context, the situation was dire and required radical approaches.

### **Pentecostalism and Enlightenment**

One place to start when determining whether the dominating heritage of the enlightenment described by Horkheimer and Adorno evidences itself in Pentecostalism would be to examine work of Pentecostals. A comparison of writings indicates that early on within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) both the destructive enlightenment dilemma and a more mutual, God, nature and humanity affirming understanding approach was evident. The PAOC seems to have its own “dialectic of enlightenment.” This critique is intended to be radical, as befits both critical theory and Pentecostalism, in the sense of getting to the roots of the problem.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Horkheimer, “The Revolt of Nature,” *Eclipse of Reason*, 94.

<sup>78</sup> See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 256 for this definition in relation to Adorno and Horkheimer’s work on the Enlightenment.

### The PAOC's "Dialectic of Enlightenment"

American Pentecostal scholar, Meyer Pearlman's *Knowing the Doctrines*, published in 1937, has been used as a standard text for the doctrinal training of Pentecostal pastors and lay leadership within Pentecostal Bible Colleges in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. PAOC pastor and teacher, Gordon Atter, in his book *The Third Force*, quickly dispenses with much of the previous two thousand years of classical theology with a quick reference to such figures as Myer Pearlman and his work *Knowing the Doctrines*, preferring to pick up the story of the Christian churches with the twentieth century Pentecostal movement with its emphasis on the Spirit and doctrinal difficulties.<sup>79</sup>

In his book, Pearlman maintains that doctrinal knowledge is important for four reasons. "Doctrinal knowledge supplies the need for an authoritative and systematic statement of truth ... is essential to the full development of Christian character ... is a safeguard against error ...." and is "a necessary part of the Christian teacher's equipment." Subsequently, Pearlman considers various topics under the headings "The Scriptures," "God," "Angels," "Man," "Sin," "The Lord Jesus Christ," "The Atonement," "Salvation," "The Holy Spirit," "The Church," and "The Last Things".<sup>80</sup> Under the heading "Man" Pearlman states,

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<sup>79</sup> See Gordon Atter, *The Third Force* (Peterborough, Ontario: The College Press, 1962, 1970), 122.

<sup>80</sup> Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1937), 9-11.

### 5. Dominion over the Earth.

Man was designed to be God's image in respect to lordship; and as no man can play the monarch without subjects and kingdom, God gave him both empire and people." And God blessed them, And God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish (literally, "fill") the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Compare Psalm 8:5-8. By virtue of the powers implied in his being formed in God's image, all living beings upon the earth are given into the hand of man. He was to be God's visible representative in relation to the surrounding creatures.

Man has filled the earth with his productions. It is his special privilege to subdue the power of nature unto himself. He has forced the lightning to be his messenger, has put a girdle round the globe, has climbed up to the clouds and penetrated to the depths of the sea. He has turned the forces of Nature against herself; commanding the winds to help him in braving the sea. And marvelous as is man's rule over the external, dead nature, more marvelous still is his rule over animate nature. To see the trained falcon strike down the quarry at the feet of his master and come back, when God's free heaven is before him; to see the hound use his speed in the service of his master, to take a prey not to be given to himself; to see the camel of the desert carrying man through his own home: all these show the creative ability of man and his resemblance to God the Creator.<sup>81</sup>

Pearlman's influence was also present at the congregation level. In a Sunday School *Adult Teacher* guide on the topic "The Christian Family" designed for use in the summer of 1982, immediately in Study 1, "Foundation for the Christian Family" is to be found the following words,

When God had completed the six days of creation, He set about the task of custom-making the man He would designate the custodian of his handiwork. From the dust of the earth God formed the body of man, the highest form of His creative genius ... Adam, the man created by God, lived for some time in the Garden of Eden. He tended the garden and classified all of the creatures that lived there... God had created man a social creature, and it was necessary for him to have someone with whom to share his life. So God met Adam's need for companionship by creating Eve... Woman was made to be the "completer" of man. She was designed to be a helper who would make him complete. Since loneliness was a primary need in Adam, Eve was designed to provide someone

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 117-118.

with whom he could communicate openly and intimately. This communication was to be both verbal and nonverbal. It involved intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of communication .... Years later *Myer Pearlman* (emphasis mine) observed that woman was taken from under the arm of man to be protected by him and from near his heart to be loved by him ... Adam named his wife Eve because she was to become the mother of all human beings ...<sup>82</sup>

The student copy of this same curriculum, *Insight for Young Adults: The Christian Family*, not only echoes the teacher's material above but also goes on to link God with the masculine and creation with the feminine in defining hierarchical roles between men and women within marriage. In answer to the question "In what ways are the sexes fundamentally different?" Elisabeth Elliot, answers,<sup>83</sup>

It's in Genesis 2 that we really get into the differences between men and women ... God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and He took a rib out of his side and made a woman ... From this, I find four truths that indicate the difference between men and women.

First of all, the woman was made for the man. Secondly, she was made from the man. Third, she was brought to the man, and fourth she was named by the man. The authority to name indicated the acceptance of responsibility....

Elliot claims that it is through the use of the "symbols of masculinity and femininity" that God described "His Husband/Wife relationship." For examples, God and Israel are oftentimes viewed as husband and wife in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures depict a Bridegroom and Bride relationship between Christ and the Church. Based on this imagery, Elliot argues, "sexuality is not merely a biological

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<sup>82</sup> Raymond T. Brock, Ronald G. Head, "Study 1: Foundation for the Christian Family," *Adult Teacher: The Christian Family* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1982), 6-12.

<sup>83</sup> Elisabeth Elliot, "Whose Am I?" Hardy W. Steinberg, Nation Director et al, *Insight for Young Adults: The Christian Family* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1982), 8-10.

difference but a theological one.” She then answers the question “What is the essence of femininity?” in the following manner:<sup>84</sup>

Response. Eve was made for Adam. Fit, suitable, adaptable. The fact that the female body is made to receive, to carry, to bear, to nurture, to go down into death to give life to another person all indicates the essence of response. C. S. Lewis said *God is so masculine that all creation is feminine by comparison.* (emphasis mine) Our role is to respond.

Later she explains,<sup>85</sup>

“The role of the husband is the gift of initiation. This is a gift, not earned, not achieved, not dependent on superior intelligence, virtue nor physical prowess, but assigned by God ... the wife’s role is a complementary one. For adapt herself to his needs, to respond to his initiation, to submit, to receive.”

She continues in regards to single women,<sup>86</sup>

Single women have only one place in which their full womanhood is demonstrated – the Church. A single woman doesn’t have a husband to whom she is to submit. And thus she doesn’t really enter into her full womanhood at home. But she may in the Church. Because the Church is also a local visible illustration of a heavenly mystery – the relationship between Christ and His body. And by women submitting to the authority of the man in the Church, we are playing out this heavenly mystery.

Thus, Meyer Pearlman and Gospel Publishing House unwittingly reproduced the dialectic of enlightenment in all its problematic implications and another generation of PAOC women and men has become indoctrinated. While realizing that Pearlman prayerfully and carefully constructed his book, within the passage quoted above is to be found a rather disturbing presupposition about the nature of man - a presupposition

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

common to Pearlman's time and context that he and others probably never questioned. Unfortunately his doctrinal interpretation of, not only man's nature, but God's as well, is offensive and violent. Such human assumptions and projections must be acknowledged for what they are - fallible human attempts at understanding the nature of God and humanity and, therefore, open to revision or rejection when found to be in error.

What is clearly represented in the passage quoted from Pearlman's book is a man dominate/nature submissive relationship between man and creation, justifying and affirming the domination of nature by men by referring to God's own presumed dominating nature. Nature in this passage is understood as female. While it might be argued that the word "man" in this passage refers to all humans, the use of the word indicates that the male human is understood as the norm by which humanity is being identified. Man here is male. God is understood to be lord of creation. Man, made in God's image, is also assumed to have the right to the lordship of nature "by virtue of the *powers* (emphasis mine) in being formed in God's image." The power of man's rule is such that various animals are said to ignore their own instincts and desires to serve man. This lordship has a disturbingly violent aspect to it. In filling "the earth with his productions" and subduing "the power of nature unto himself" man not only commands but is said to have "*forced* the lightning to be his messenger," "*penetrated* to the depths of the sea," and to have "turned the forces of Nature against herself." As this aggressive domination of man is understood to reflect his creative resemblance to God the Creator, God too is presented as being aggressively dominating. In this line of thinking, God affirms man's own dominating rule in that it was God who gave man "both empire and

people” so that man can “play the monarch.”<sup>87</sup> While in the Pearlman passage the dominated is nature, the principle of man’s lordship extends beyond nature to various relationships between human beings - man to women, powerful men to less powerful men and women, powerful nations to less powerful nations, etc. - and to psychic repression within individual human beings. The results of such a dominate image for God, which is understood to be reflected in man, has been social and ecological crisis.

### **Evidence of a Dialectic**

While Pearlman’s approach has clearly influenced Canadian Pentecostalism, a comparison of three different writings from three major periods indicate that within the movement both the destructive enlightenment dilemma and a more mutual, God, nature and humanity affirming understanding has been evidenced since the early years. The first example is from the early years when women were ministering in large numbers but relegated to a second-class position when the PAOC instituted itself and refused to allow women to be ordained or to vote. A sermon by Evangelist, Zelma Argue, recorded in Chapter XVI of her work *Contending for the Faith* in 1923 presents a striking image of God, nature and human beginnings. In Chapter XIII, Argue has argued that the “Word of God...” as a “sharp, two-edged,” “Sword of the Spirit” “...shall stand forever.”<sup>88</sup> The

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<sup>87</sup> Pearlman, 117-118.

<sup>88</sup> Zelma Argue, *Contending for the Faith* (Winnipeg, Canada: The Messenger of God Publishing House, 1951), 84-91.

Biblical images she draws upon reflect a somewhat mutual, inter-connected relationship between God, creation and humanity. She writes,<sup>89</sup>

From Eden to paradise!  
 From Genesis to Revelation!  
 From Eternity, to Eternity, the River of God flows on!

Throughout the pages of the wonderful Word there flows the river, crystal clear. Adam beheld its streams. Moses partook. Christ plunged beneath its flow at Jordan. Then He cried of the river that should flow from within believers, when the Spirit should come.

Life-giving current! The river of God.

Crystal-clear! Cleansing! Refreshing! Healing! Oh, every need may be met, to those who plunge into its stream.

Sin came, and with it expulsion from the Garden. They now tasted the waters. The river of Marah, it was. But the waters now were bitter. Moses cried to the Lord, saying, "What shall we drink?" God showed him a tree, which, when thrown into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

For the tree, the Old Rugged Cross, alone could sweeten that which sin had sullied...

AH! At the smiting of the rock the waters gushed forth. Abundant! Free! Ever flowing. They had but to partake. And the smitten Rock was Christ.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!"

At Jordan Christ insisted that He be plunged beneath the waters of the river at the hand of John, that all righteousness might be fulfilled in Him. Blessed river, where we may step in, leave our sins and sorrows, leave our old nature for ever, and rise to walk in the newness of life with Christ...

Sweet mystery! When we come for salvation we are drinking of the living waters. But when we partake of the Spirit, the living waters flow out from within our inmost souls carrying life to the parched ground around. Wherever the Spirit-filled child of God goes, an oasis is formed. New life springs up.

*Pour it out in floods, Lord,*

*On the parched ground.*

*'Til it reaches the earth around.*

In the beautiful Paradise of God it stills flows on.

Blessed River, life-giving stream – Flow on!

A second example was written in 1997, thirteen years after the decision to ordain women but one year before the decision to allow women to hold any position in the

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 100-102.

government of the organization including on the national elected General Executive.

Cecily Gillespie is the author of an article printed in *The Pentecostal Testimony* entitled “Getting Past our Prejudices: Can you be an environmentalist and Christian too?” In it, she attempts to persuade Pentecostal Christians to “set aside stereotypes” she has encountered in her own experiences including the following:<sup>90</sup>

... A commonly held belief in the environmental community places the blame on Christianity for the ecological crisis ... Christianity encouraged fear and domination of nature, establishing the reason why the Western world has embarked on exploiting the earth for all it has.

Although it appears that Christians are becoming more aware of environmental issues, prejudices about environmentalists remain. Many Christians think that all environmentalists worship the earth. All are New-Agers, Gaians, or pantheists, praying to “Nature” or “Mother Earth” instead of the God that created “her.”

Furthermore, based on her own interpretation of the Scriptures, Gillespie asserts that “If God loves this earth, then we cannot justify exploiting it for our own personal gain. Like Adam, God has called us to care for the earth....” She even goes so far as to state that,<sup>91</sup>

The present state of the world, with forest destruction, ozone depletion, smog warnings, and so on, is a reflection of how far we are from God. As we come to know the Lord, we can come to see the beauty of His creation, the importance of protecting it, and our place in it. So saving souls results in saving the creation.

Gillespie recommends that, like David, the prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, Celtic monastics and Franciscans, Pentecostal Christians should “spend time with God in

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<sup>90</sup> Cecily, Gillespie, “Getting Past Our Prejudices: Can you be an environmentalist and Christian too?” In *The Pentecostal Testimony* Vol. 78, No. 4 (April 1997): 13-15, 13-14.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 14-15.

nature” in order “for God to test our dependence upon Him, as well as the opportunity for spiritual growth and renewal.” Christians need to “learn how to relate lovingly to God’s creation.”<sup>92</sup>

Third, an article written by Karen Reed in April 2007 in *The Pentecostal Testimony* long after the dust over the roles and ministries of women has seemingly settled. In it, Reed speaks eloquently regarding “a number of helpful insights for evangelism in this postmodern culture” which she draws from “the Celtic revival of Ireland in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. These insights include the following:<sup>93</sup>

The Celtic movement emphasized the image of God in all humanity. Although sin distorts and blurs that image, the Celts acknowledged the noble efforts of all people groups as a way to affirm God’s image in *human nature*. Instead of a focus on human depravity, they encouraged the honouring of individuals who made achievements in science and culture, even if they were not Christian.

Celtic believers also stressed God’s immanence and dynamic activity, and sought ways for people to experience *God’s presence* and power. History shows that they also adapted well to each *culture*, not isolating themselves from it, but effectively engaging and serving humanity ...

They invited “outsiders” to belong to the community of faith *before* they believed. Also, all people were valued and freed to use their gifts and abilities regardless of ethnicity and gender. Women were given the same opportunities to lead a church as men. An atmosphere of inclusiveness, warmth and depth of community marked the movement...

The final insight from the Celts was their call to give attention to humanity’s kinship with *nature*, honouring the earth and creation... (emphasis hers).

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>93</sup> Karen Reed, “The Old Story in a New Era,” *The Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (April 2007): 18, 18.

Reed is suggesting that “humanity’s kinship with nature” be honoured, the image of God in human nature generally be recognized, all people including women be valued and God in our midst be experienced. Perhaps Adorno and Horkheimer were wrong. Perhaps the dominant form of enlightenment rationality has not had the last word or completely repressed and overpowered a more nature-affirming one.

While all three examples tended to reflect, perhaps even legitimate, the prevailing practices of their time in regards to the limitations and freedoms afforded women, the second example, written in the 1990s, not only echoes the concerns of critical theorists above, it also illustrates the PAOC’s dialectical dilemma quite clearly. Gillespie acknowledges that many Pentecostals, along with the rest of the Western world, believe, based on Christian teaching, that nature, often understood as “female,” is to be dominated. Nevertheless, Gillespie argues, based on her interpretation of the Scriptures that God loves creation. In fact, she claims that Pentecostals would benefit from spending more time in natural surroundings.

In comparison, the first example, Argue’s sermon from the early years of Canadian Pentecostalism, while clearly reflecting a patriarchal worldview in that it mentions only male figures from the Scriptures and omit the many female ones, nonetheless, presents the relationship between God, nature and humanity as relational and interconnected. As a sermon she was not bound by the prescriptions and limitations of enlightened rationality which prides itself on an insistence upon an assumption of “objectivity” and was able to side step much of that dominate and dominating ideology and practice through her own interpretation of readily available biblical images which

was both Christocentric and pneumatological. She drew upon more poetic ideas and themes within the Scriptures.

In comparison with the sample from the Sunday School curriculum mentioned in the section dealing with Pearlman which started with God and then proceeded hierarchically downward to man and then nature and women, Argue's work started on a more mutual note with "Eden," the Scriptures, Eternity and God's River and then major male figures from the Scriptures. No longer is there an oppositional and dominating relationship to be found. While God's provision in Christ was deemed necessary "For the tree, the Old Rugged Cross, alone could sweeten that which sin had sullied," it was offered to all, "every one that thirsteth," and offered abundantly and free of charge. As one of the early, great Evangelists of the Pentecostal movement, Argue's presentation of the Gospel was both non-dominating and effective. She introduced many people to Pentecostal Christianity.<sup>94</sup>

The third example, published most recently, illustrates that there also exist within Canadian Pentecostalism indications that some are moving beyond this dialectical way of thinking, in spite of the co-existence of hierarchical and dominating, as well as egalitarian and mutual assumptions about how God, nature, men and women relate to each other.

Pearlman's attempt to provide Pentecostalism with an academic articulation of the major doctrines of classical theology resorted unwittingly to drawing upon the dominant and dominating enlightenment rationality so scorned by Horkheimer and Adorno for its

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<sup>94</sup> Argue's name and articles are sprinkled throughout early copies of the Canadian *Pentecostal Testimony*.

devastating effects on women, men, nature and, I would add, creation including humanity's relationship to God and theologizing. Therefore, the continued use of this section of Pearlman's text and others like it must be challenged. Such continued use is irresponsible within these days of global warming and human-to-human atrocities. Dominating ideas, conscious or assumed, have exerted their power over Pentecostal people far too long. It is long past time that such harmful teaching be exposed for what it is. Before the construction of a Pentecostal theology of creation that adequately and respectfully deals with all of God's creation, the deception spun by such a teaching - that domination of nature by man is divinely ordained - must be exposed and rooted out. As Hegel has said, "just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence." Although for many, such a challenge may prove difficult, "it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained."<sup>95</sup> If Pentecostal people challenge the underlying presuppositions and accepted doctrines and envision a Spirit centered and directed way of being Pentecostal, perhaps the more egalitarian and nature-affirming doctrines and attitudes might emerge more strongly. Moreover, with them, the hope that some sort of emancipation for women, men, nature and their relationship with God might be achieved. Until that is accomplished, the "place" of women within Pentecostalism will continue to be debated and ambiguous.

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<sup>95</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, "Lordship and Bondage" in *Phenomenology of Mind*, J. B. Baillie, trans. (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1967), 233, 237.

### **The Problem**

While not so bold as to declare it a “motor of history,”<sup>96</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer’s critique can be used to expose at least one of the radical roots of the ongoing problems within Canadian Pentecostalism. This root manifests itself in many ways, including, but not limited to, the hierarchical domination of women within Pentecostalism’s midst by privileged Caucasian men once the movement organized and instituted itself for self-preservation purposes. Adopting dominating enlightened rationality, and enlightened and civilized ways of being, suppressed the operation of the Spirit, including the empowering of women to minister and lead. Pentecostalism succumbed to that which it denies. Recognizing that domination is part of Pentecostalism and has had an adverse effect on the women within its midst who continue to receive mixed messages concerning who they are and how they should respond to God’s calling and leadings is essential.

Although an important part of the project, analyzing the causes of this adverse effect must also go beyond recapturing and communicating the enormous and diverse contributions women have made to the Pentecostal movement both in Canada and throughout the world. Pentecostals must go back to the beginning and rethink their doctrines and assumptions of the relationship between God and creation including humanity, male and female, in order to deconstruct the concept of domination within its

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<sup>96</sup> Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 256.

midst. Until this “myth of man,” including a comprehensive analysis of the influence of enlightenment rationality on Pentecostalism has been undertaken, no ecologically aware theology or answer to the “woman question” will prove adequate. While there are several issues hindering the deconstruction of this “myth,” it is possible.

### **Possibilities and Conclusion**

Canadian Pentecostalism has within it the possibility of developing an integrative, engaged and nonhierarchical understanding of the relationship between God, creation, women and men. Pentecostalism generally has been described as a “submodern” movement, interested in orthopathy (right affections) as well as orthopraxy (right actions) and orthodoxy (right beliefs). Affections serve as the integrative center with actions and beliefs considered from there. This threefold approach collapses the false dichotomy between reason and feelings such as objective/subjective, content/form, body/soul, scholarly/confessional, etc. Pentecostal thinking, with its habit of considering and integrating the various aspects of life, tends to be less dualistic than has traditionally been the case in enlightenment rationality.<sup>97</sup> For Pentecostals knowing is not limited to the realm of reason. It is also understood as including deeply subjective, mystical, personal

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<sup>97</sup> With the significant proportions of early Pentecostals, while definitely not all, coming from the “lower classes” of Canadian and American society (Pentecostalism has also flourished among the urban and rural middle-class), Sheppard, using an insight from James Washington, labelled Pentecostalism a “submodern” movement in that, while it emerged within modernity, it nevertheless, was “not invited as equal partners into the modernist debate.” Gerald T. Sheppard, “Biblical Interpretation After Gadamer,” *Pneuma*, Volume 16 Number 1 (Spring 1994): 121-141, 127.

experiences. Knowing is also understood to be engaged, relational and embodied, similar to the way one knows one's covenanted partner. In this sense, Pentecostal epistemology is closer to the Hebrew concept expressed in the word *yada* than to empirical or rational thinking. Cheryl Bridges Johns, a Pentecostal Church of God pastor and theologian, explains the “Biblical Epistemology” of Pentecostalism as a “dynamic, experiential, relational knowledge” which stands in stark contrast to the supposedly objective approach of standing back from something in order to “know it.” *Yada*, “to know,” used both as a “euphemism for lovemaking” and for the relationship between a “good friend or confidant” is extremely intimate, willful and experiential. Someone who knows God is someone who has been encountered within history by the God who initiates covenant relationships. How well one knows God is not based on how much information one has about God but on “how one is living in response to God.” *Yada* is “a knowing more by the heart than by the mind, a knowing that arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by the active and intentional engagement in lived experience.”<sup>98</sup> This integrative approach is one reason why enlightenment rationality, with its far more rational worldview, is intuited by some Pentecostals to promote a deficient, fragmented view of reality. As Margaret Poloma states in her study *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas*,

The instrumental rational reasoning process so characteristic of science and bureaucracy are absorbed into a more dominant sacred *Weltanschauung* within the Pentecostal perspective. It is God who is credited with providing

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<sup>98</sup> Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy Among the Oppressed* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 35-36.

modern medicine, advanced technology, and higher education, as well as personal benefits of a particular job, safe travel, and even parking places. This sacred worldview attributes all things to God rather than relegating the sacred to a particular time slot on Sunday mornings! Such attribution makes adherents skeptical about the powers of pure reason and its cousin, bureaucratic authority.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, if Canadian Pentecostals would recognize that a “dialectic of enlightenment” exists and would acknowledge the dangers of their dominating thinking while deliberately striving to develop their integrative and egalitarian tendencies, a step would have been taken towards the liberation of women within its midst. In order to accomplish this task, a careful analysis of the power that enlightenment rationality has over and the authority it is exerting within Pentecostalism is warranted. To one aspect of this analysis, that of identity thinking, this project now turns.

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<sup>99</sup> Margaret Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 8.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE NATURE AND POWER OF IDENTITY THINKING

Pentecostals have been described as being in search of their own particular identity. Cheryl Bridges Johns noted in 1995 in her Presidential address to the Society for Pentecostal studies that this search is analogous to being in their "adolescence," and searching for a "legitimate, sectarian identity."<sup>1</sup> There are dangers in such identity searching. As Adorno has stated, "Identity is the primal form of ideology."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, the following will examine Adorno's concerns regarding identity and identity thinking along with Schüssler Fiorenza's thoughts in the same area before moving on to the topic of identity thinking within the context of the practices and beliefs of the PAOC as it pertains to ministering women within its midst. In the conclusion, recommendations for a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation will be suggested.

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<sup>1</sup> Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. Vol. 17 No 1 (Spring) 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectic* (E. B. Ashton, Trans. New York: Continuum, 1966, 1973), 148.

### Adorno and Identity Thinking

According to Adorno, identity thinking is a form of conceptual and technical domination that subsumes the particular under the universal for the purposes of mastery. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, he and Horkheimer argued that humankind's liberation from nature involved mastery through and then over myths which, in turn, had led to new myths and greater domination, particularly the "the myth of the one," which had infested modernity's thinking. This mythical rationality asserts that "that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion."<sup>3</sup> As Horkheimer and Adorno explain,<sup>4</sup>

The universality of ideas, as developed by discursive logic, domination in the conceptual sphere, is raised up on the actual basis of domination. The dissolution of the old magical heritage, of the old diffuse ideas, by conceptual unity, expresses the hierarchical constitution of life by those who are free. The individuality that learned order and subordination in the subjection of the world, soon wholly equated truth with the regulative thought without whose fixed distinctions truth cannot exist.

For the sake of self-preservation, nature both without and within as "other" was repressed, suppressed, and dominated as society, organized around a unity principle,<sup>5</sup> sought to annex "the alien" in a type of "philosophical imperialism."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, John Cumming, Trans. (New York: Continuum, 1944, 1998), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, xvi, 54.

<sup>6</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 191.

“Identity thinking” relates to this drive towards universalizing and unifying rationality. “Identity thinking” is “a conception of the world as a constellation of empirical objects which can be adequately grasped by means of appropriate concepts.”<sup>7</sup> In that sense, the “appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself” in that “to think is to identify.” As “truth” is sought, conceptual identification occurs as whatever is under consideration and what it is thought to be are assumed equivalent.<sup>8</sup> Subjects decide what objects are conceptually.<sup>9</sup>

Identity thinking, whether posited for “the needs of the self-preservation” or “merely due to irrational states of dominion,” utilizes universal concepts whereby particulars and individuals are viewed as simply one example of the group.<sup>10</sup> This universality “compresses the particular until it splinters, like a torture instrument.”<sup>11</sup> In its conceptual domination, the universal restricts reason by not only imposing “unity within diversity” but also an “attitude to reality.”<sup>12</sup> Whatever does not fit into the concept of the object as defined by the subject is rejected as irrational or some sort of “poison.” The “identity principle” will tolerate small amounts of “non-identity” by deeming the

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<sup>7</sup> Tom Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School, Key Sociologists*, Peter Hamilton, Series Ed. (London: Routledge, 1984), 31.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 315.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 344, 346.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 317.

nonidentical “accidental” and “thus abstract enough to adjust to the legality of identification.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Non-Identity Thinking<sup>14</sup>**

While himself guilty of “identity thinking” when it comes to the categories of “woman/women,” “gays and lesbians”<sup>15</sup> and “the masses,”<sup>16</sup> Adorno highlighted what he called the “excluded middle,” that is, that “objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder” and “concepts do not exhaust the thing conceived.” While this contradicted “the traditional norm of adequacy,” in his schema this “contradiction” is expected as concepts cannot completely capture objects. Non-identity is not the opposite of identity, as in the non-equivalence of something to its conceptual identity. To assume that non-identity was the opposite of identity would be to set up another set of equivalences that would also be untrue.<sup>17</sup> Rather, non-identity is these remaining fragments, the “contradictions.” Non-identity thinking is the recognition of multiple

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 347.

<sup>14</sup> While it might be expected that Adorno’s idea of “negative dialectics” be discussed here in conjunction with identity thinking, non-identity thinking and subject and object, it has been pulled from this constellation in order to place it within another in Chapter 8 entitled *Apocalyptic Eschatology, Negative Dialectics, Utopic Thinking and Liberative Transformation*.

<sup>15</sup> See Marsha Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 86-83.

<sup>16</sup> An expression he uses throughout his work to refer to the majority of people without reference to or seeming recognition of the diversity among them.

<sup>17</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

identities and particularities possessed by something that can never be completely taken in by conceptual thinking. While abstract thinking requires the consideration of universals, reflection on particularities is important if only to deduce that such particularities are not mere chance or accidental.<sup>18</sup>

It is these remaining aspects, these contradictions to identity, these non-identities which elude categorization and conceptualization that are not only particular and unique, but may also possess unrealized possibility.<sup>19</sup> While these particulars may be “other” than the concept identified, Adorno insisted that it was important to “be mindful of the Other.” In fact, recognizing and accepting “the object, the Other, the alien ... was the conclusion of *Negative Dialectics*.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Subject and Object**

In his analysis of identity thinking, Adorno carefully analyzed the philosophical concepts of “object” and “subject” in a manner that challenged any positions that posited that objects are determined strictly, or mastered by, subjectivity.<sup>21</sup> In fact, he insisted upon both the priority of the object and the recognition that thinking is “subjectivist even

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 347.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, Michael Robertson, trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994, 1995), 602.

<sup>21</sup> O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectics*, 8.

when it denies it is so.”<sup>22</sup> Stressing the social processes involved in the being and identities of subjects and objects,<sup>23</sup> Adorno rejected the tendency of modern rationality to manipulate subject-object processes and interactions.<sup>24</sup> Recognizing that objects are not the same as the conceptual ideas subjects have imposed on them has the potential to free objects from any attempts of control by the subjects who are conceptualizing them. As Adorno explains it, “... even when we merely limit the subject, we put an end to its power. Its own absoluteness is the measure by which the least threat of non-identity feels to the subject like an absolute threat. A minimum will do to spoil it as a whole, because it pretends to be a whole.”<sup>25</sup> The ideas, feelings and values of subjects cannot be understood as “truth” and imposed on the object. Nor can objects be reduced to the concepts of a subject. Rather, through an interdependent process, assumptions and preconceptions about an object are illuminated and corrected.<sup>26</sup> Adorno went so far as to refuse to define “subject” and “object” preferring instead to offer a multi-faceted

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<sup>22</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 183.

<sup>23</sup> Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978), 56.

<sup>24</sup> O’Connor, *Adorno’s Negative Dialectics*, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectic*, 183.

<sup>26</sup> Theodor Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” Benjamin Snow, Trans., *The Adorno Reader*, Brian O’Connor, Ed. (London, England: Blackwell, 2000), 24.

description of them, in order to avoid either collapsing them, unduly separating them or reverting to identity thinking himself.<sup>27</sup>

### **Schüssler Fiorenza, Women and Identity Thinking**

Schüssler Fiorenza expands on this topic of identity thinking and applies it to women and her own theorizing. In her work, she explicitly rejects any form of identity thinking which would equate women with nature or anything else other than the fully human, diverse, active agents they are. The “logic of identity” is understood as having derived from “the classical patriarchal discourses of Plato and Aristotle” as well as the “theories of Rousseau and Hegel” all of which understood the “civic public” as “expressing the ‘impartial and universal point of view of normatic reason.’” Conversely, “the private realm” encompassed “the family as the domain of women.” Stemming from these assumptions, “*Ratio* as the ‘logic of identity’ ‘consists in an unrelenting urge to think things together, in a unity,’ to formulate ‘an essence that brings concrete particulars into unity.’” Within the “logic of identity” with its “male-female gender-dualism,” not only is gender the primary category for the analysis of the domination of women by men to the exclusion of such other factors as age, class, race, culture, ethnicity, history,

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<sup>27</sup> Theodor Adorno, “Subject and Object,” *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Andrew Arato & Eike Gebhardt, Eds., Paul Piccone, Intro. (New York and London: Continuum, 1982, 2005), 497-503.

politics, religion and so on, but “the difference between male and female becomes the most *essential* difference of humanity.”<sup>28</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza seeks to “demystify” any cultural and theological constructs of femininity and masculinity that are “dualistic, heterosexist, and essentialist as ideological obfuscations of the multiplicative structures of patriarchal domination.”<sup>29</sup> As “man/male has exercised cultural, scientific, and institutional domination” for “thousands of years,” “woman” is understood within this “perspective of the dominant human-man-male framework.” Therefore, “woman’s nature” is explained “in relation to that of man.”<sup>30</sup> As a result it is women who suffer most in that “in Western kyriocentric language systems the lady/mistress/mother is the ‘other’ of the lord/master/father, whereas all other wo/men who are marked as ‘inferior’ by race, class, religion, or culture are the ‘others of the other.’”<sup>31</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza continues, “As long as women suffer the injustice and dehumanization of societal and religious patriarchy, a feminist theology must remain first and foremost a critical theology.”

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<sup>28</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Politics of Otherness: Biblical Interpretation as a Critical Praxis for Liberation,” in *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutierrez*, Marc H. Ellis and Otto Maduro, eds. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989): 311-325, 314.

<sup>29</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cartography of Struggle,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 1-12, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Professional Ministry of Women in the Church,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 13-15, 19.

<sup>31</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 93.

One of the results of such binary, dualistic theorizing is that “privileged, white Euro-American women” have generated a “universalizing critique of socio-political structures from the standpoint of *woman*” thereby repressing the diversity among women with their accompanying, interlocking, many layered aspects of oppression. Additionally, when women are defined according to some concept of an abstract, “eternal feminine” which seeks to replace “the theological assumption of women’s inferiority and sinfulness ... the all-pervasive cultural ideology of woman’s nature and biological/essential difference from man” is legitimated.<sup>32</sup> In order to avoid the idea of women as the universalized and unified, generic “other” of men, Schüssler Fiorenza critiques the “totalizing discourse of Western universalist feminism”<sup>33</sup> through the displacement of the “binary gender system as” a “frame of reference, in which ‘sexual difference constitutes the horizon’ ... of ... theorizing.” She reconceptualises “patriarchy as a key analytic category of feminist theory” in a manner which more accurately articulated “the interstructuring of the conflicting oppression of different groups of women” including the “shifting pyramidal political structure of dominance and subordination, stratified by gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, nation, culture, and other historical formations of domination.”<sup>34</sup> As she argues, the “meaning of being ‘woman’” in the Western world “does not so much depend on one’s sex but rather on

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<sup>32</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Professional Ministry of Women in the Church,” 15.

<sup>33</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Politics of Otherness,” 316.

<sup>34</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Ethics and Politics of Liberation: Theorizing the *Ekklēsia* of Women,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 332-352, 341.

one's location in the socio-symbolic kyriarchal system of multiform oppressions.”

Within a “social world ... determined by relations of domination,”<sup>35</sup>

... gender is an integral part of the relations of ruling that also ground other divisions such as class and race. Such kyriarchal relations of domination and subordination come to be understood as biological-differences, as natural or G\*d-given, because of the linguistic-symbolic processes that “naturalize” gender, race, and class differences and reify them into “commonsense” assumptions. They reinscribe again and again the cultural-religious prejudices and social-kyriarchal relations that in turn undergird their own disciplinary practices.

The categories of “female/woman/female” are “unstable and ever-shifting” in that the concepts do not reflect “sex/gender relation” but rather “socio-systemic contextualization.” The fluidity of the terms become more obvious when considering the word “lady” which until recent history indicated a women of “higher status or educational refinement” and even “true womanhood.” All “ladies” were Caucasian. An African-American slave could never be a lady. The “lady/mistress/mother” was the “‘other’ of the lord/master/father.” All other women were “inferior” to the lady due to their class, race, ethnicity or even religion. In that sense they were “others of the other.” While a dualistic sex/gender system tries to place all “women” in one category and compares them to all “men” while insisting that such distinctions are natural and essential, consideration of examples like “lady” demonstrate that such dualisms are not reflective of reality. The reality is much more complex and kyriocentric than such dualisms allow. “Masculine” and “feminine” are not “antagonistic or complementary

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<sup>35</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 92.

archetypes of being human.” To assume that they are “reifies and stabilizes sociocultural gender constructs as natural, essential, or ‘G\*d-given.’”<sup>36</sup>

### **Pentecostal Women as “Objects” of Identity Thinking**

On occasion, both men and women within the PAOC seemed to view “ministering women” as some sort of homogenous group in the sense of a universal, conceptual object without particularities. An indication of this view can be illustrated by the attention that was given to the clothes that ministering women were required to wear. By the late 20’s the issuing of “Deaconess Certificates” for women was standard practice. At that time a “Deaconess Uniform approved by the Conference” was suggested.<sup>37</sup> Where the suggestion originated is not clear. It may have come from the women themselves.

While the General Council, with its all male leadership, indicated that this uniform was a dark blue dress with white collar and cuffs topped off with a hat,<sup>38</sup> the Saskatchewan District went into much more detail. The Saskatchewan District, with its all male leadership, dictated that the uniform was to consist of a navy dress which was to have been made of a non-transparent material and to be no more than thirteen inches from the floor with a plain white collar, cuffs, a tie in either navy or white, a badge, dark

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<sup>36</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 92-93.

<sup>37</sup> *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1928*, 42.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

stockings, black shoes and a plain navy hat which could be made of straw for summer use.<sup>39</sup> The attention to detail by the General Council given to how ministering women should be dressed is noticeable in the announcement regarding a new “Deaconess hat.” Although the new hat was considered an improvement on the “old hat of 1928,” the old hats would still be considered “satisfactory.”<sup>40</sup> Later a pin labelled “PAOC Deaconess” was added to the uniform.<sup>41</sup> If any of the women or men objected to the uniform there is no written record of it. This detailed recommendation and acceptance of a uniform for women in ministry without explanation or controversy seems unusual in a fellowship that did not have any other clerical garb.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, having all the Deaconesses dress in the same manner is an indication that ministering women were seen as one homogenous group.

While the use of the concept “Deaconess” may have facilitated rational discourse, as Adorno and Schüssler Fiorenza have pointed out above, such instrumental rationality dominates the particulars of the real. Having the particular women themselves dress the same may have identified them as filling a particular position. However, it also masked

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<sup>39</sup> “Minutes,” *Saskatchewan District Conference (P.A.O.C.)*, July 10-15, 1928, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, PAOC Archives.

<sup>40</sup> R. E. McAlister, General Secretary-Treasurer, PAOC, *Notice to Deaconesses*, No date, PAOC Archives.

<sup>41</sup> *Minutes of the General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, 1935, 107.

<sup>42</sup> Men wear the current business suit available off the rack at any Men’s store or in the Men’s department of most clothing stores. Pictures in the PAOC archives of the General Executive from the earliest days until the present show the men wearing a typical, two-piece, dark business suit.

their particularities as individual women. Identity thinking appears to have been in operation as, according to Schüssler Fiorenza, within the “logical of identity,” all are being treated according to the same rules, which can be reduced to the unity of one rule or principle as it “strives to eliminate both the differences among moral subjects and the specificity of particular situations.” It is only by “assuming a G-d’s eye view of reality” that a “transcendental subject can establish such an essence” when in fact the subject is attempting to falsely comprehend “everything by reducing it to a synthetic unity or principle.”<sup>43</sup> Yet, such transcendental perspective is not available to humanity. To equate human endeavours to think and communicate with reality, whatever that may be, is a somewhat pompous illusion.

Such a detailed recommendation and acceptance of a uniform for the Deaconesses may have stemmed from a concern to validate ministering women's involvement by assigning women an outfit that, while distinguishing them from non-ministering women, at the same time may have been seen as in keeping with the business suits which male ministers typically wore. It may have arisen from a selective conservative cultural stance in response to the newfound freedom for women of the flapper generation and the way that they were dressed.<sup>44</sup> Such a detailed recommendation and acceptance without explanation or controversy may have been a reflection of the uncontested and

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<sup>43</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 140.

<sup>44</sup> In an article in the March 1921 edition of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, The description of the girl’s clothing sounds very much like the flapper style of the time. *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No 4 (March 1921), 2.

unreflective concept of a “ministering Pentecostal woman” as sober, serious and chaste<sup>45</sup> in contrast with a morally suspect woman. That members of the PAOC engaged in identity thinking that determined that women were either “moral” or “immoral” based on their dress can be illustrated by some of the articles appearing in the institution’s periodical. In an article in March 1921, “Sel” writes that a young girl had complained to her father about the disrespectful way a male stranger had spoken to her. The father responds by admonishing her, stating that, while anyone who knew her would realize that she was a moral girl, a stranger might very well consider her immoral due to her style of dress. The father states,

You are young and attractive, and your dress is such that it displays all your charms of face and figure. Your arms are bare almost to the shoulder, your waist is cut so low that a good portion of your shoulders and chest are exposed to view; your skirt is scant and narrow, and the slit in front, with your bright, short petticoat and your gauze stockings display your limbs almost to the knees; your dress is so cut that every line of your figure is seen in bold relief.

By 1923, an unknown writer criticizes women’s “bloomers” with the words, “It would seem that women are still dragging men down: she was the one who first tempted man and she is still at the same old game.”<sup>46</sup> Also in 1923, A. G. Ward, a leader in the PAOC, complained about the way that women were dressed and suggested that uniforms would be preferable for ministering women.<sup>47</sup> Whether or not the uniform was a response to identifying women as sexually available or not based on their clothing, it was

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<sup>45</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 4 (March 1921), 2.

<sup>46</sup> *The Pentecostal Testimony* (August 1923), 2.

<sup>47</sup> A. G. Ward, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *The Pentecostal Testimony* (August 1923), 2.

clear that women were viewed as moral or immoral “objects” with their dress reflecting their identity without regard for the individual woman’s particular circumstances, personality or style of leadership.

Even so, ministering women are real living human beings, not an abstract concept. As Adorno argued, “Nonconceptuality, individuality and particularity” oftentimes “dismissed as transitory and insignificant” or “contingent”<sup>48</sup> are what is real and true. Making them all wear the same uniform, while perhaps highlighting the particular role they were playing, does not rid them of their particularity. While “conceptual order,” including that of the category “Deaconess,” may be “content to screen what thinking seeks to comprehend,” such screening is of necessity suppression, a disparagement and a discarding of difference.<sup>49</sup>

Later on, the fact that “women” as a category and their access to ordination was debated for almost two decades during the 1970s and 1980s without distinguishing between the various women or their aptitude for ministry is indication of identity thinking occurring.<sup>50</sup> In contrast, while all “men” as a category were presumed to be eligible for ministry, in reality specific qualities and requirements were further mandated as outlined by the PAOC’s constitution<sup>51</sup> that distinguished between the various men who actually

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<sup>48</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 5, 10.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this debate.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, the *PAOC General Constitutions and By-Laws*, “By-Law 6, Ministerial Credentials, Section 2, Qualifications” as amended and in effect for 1974-1984. PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario.

qualified and were ordained. Sometimes men themselves were victims of identity thinking. An example of such would be when they were thought of as one identifiable group and conceptual category within the By-Laws of the PAOC's constitution in order to argue that only "men" qualified for ordination.<sup>52</sup>

### **Identity Thinking as a Means to Dominate Women**

During the 1930s and 1940s, even as women were ministering in relatively greater numbers than was the case later on, women's choices were being limited by identity thinking. As one writer stated, "The happiest husbands are those men who have been fortunate enough to have married a clear minded Christian girl whose ambition was, and is, to be the best housekeeper in the land."<sup>53</sup> D. N. Buntain, a prominent male leader, charged women with "wanting too much freedom."<sup>54</sup> Women were understood to not be able to enter into "competition with men" through such avenues as mountain crossing, exploring, mining, sailing, entering politics and ruling as these were some of the "many things God never intended her to do."<sup>55</sup> Such identity thinking could not have been helpful to those women who were trying to move beyond these negative stereotypes to

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<sup>52</sup> As page two of the 1986 *Committee on "Women in Ministry" – Report to the 1986 Conference*, Western Ontario District, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada points out these qualifications specifically refer to "men" and not women.

<sup>53</sup> "The Christian's Wife," *Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 21, No. 24 (Dec. 15, 1940), 3.

<sup>54</sup> D. N. Buntain, "Keepers at Home – Should Women Preach or Teach?" *Pentecostal Testimony*, May 1, 1939, 1.

<sup>55</sup> "The Christian's Wife," *Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 24 (Dec. 15, 1940), 3.

engage in ministry. In fact, such negative and limiting characteristics applied to the concept “woman” could very well have served to undermine her ministry as a woman.

During the 1970s when the ordination battles were raging, the *Pentecostal Testimony* published stories that included statements by men and women such as “Mom believed young girls growing up should learn to cook, keep house and become Christian mothers.”<sup>56</sup> Another stated, “God gave women the ministry of helps, adapter in the home is her first minister.”<sup>57</sup> Another, “The husband provides for his wife. The wife in turn carefully manages the house and considers the well-being of her husband.”<sup>58</sup> Another maintains that “public ministry” is not for women since the “private sphere of life” is their “sphere of service” and includes being “the faithful wife, the patient mother and the gracious homemaker.” More specifically, “Pentecostal women ... nurse the sick, teach ... serve in places of merchandise and keep offices and financial institutions running efficiently” thereby showing that they are “among the most generous supporters and helpers” in the church, local community and beyond. When it came to ministry, women were to be found in “the choir, the teaching staff, the prayer meetings, and girls’ weekly activities” along with supporting church planting and missionary work.<sup>59</sup> In the handwritten Minutes of a “Ministry of Women Committee” meeting held in Toronto in 1974 the question was asked as to why there were “fewer women today who profess to

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<sup>56</sup> Arthur H. Townsend, “First Fruits, *The Pentecostal Testimony* (May 1971), 2.

<sup>57</sup> May Gamble, “Woman the Adapter,” *The Pentecostal Testimony* (July 1972), 20.

<sup>58</sup> Homer Cantelon, “Erosion in Marriage,” *The Pentecostal Testimony* (June 1974), 7.

<sup>59</sup> C. W. Lynn, “Women in Pentecost,” *The Pentecostal Testimony* (Feb. 1976), 2.

have a call ... than in earlier years.” Concerning overseas work, the suggested answers included discussion regarding “unhealthy attitudes” surrounding authority and administration (it was not clear whether these were women’s attitudes or more general), “materialism” (particularly for single women) and the production of “mother’s boys” rather than leaders (it was not clear what “mother’s boys” had to do with the lack of women on the mission field). The “home instinct of ladies” was cited as another reason for the declining number of women in that such instinct made women “reluctant to move to new areas of challenge” which had “almost brought the twilight down upon ministerial service for single women overseas.”<sup>60</sup> Although the exact nature of the argument is not clear, the tone of the argument seems to indicate that the problem with the declining number of women was understood to reside with the women themselves. This understanding arose from identity thinking; that is, identifying women generally with a “home instinct” and young women with being “materialistic.” Allowances for the diversity which actually exists among women, was not commented upon. Rather, these falsely generalized characteristics were presented and accepted as the reasons for the lack of women missionaries thereby short-circuiting the search for valid explanations. As Adorno cautions, identity thinking represents “particular interests” in its universalizing tendencies,<sup>61</sup> those who control and regulate what qualifies as credible thinking.

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<sup>60</sup> Handwritten Minutes of Ministry of Women Committee Meeting, Toronto on Jan. 17, 1974, PAOC Archives.

<sup>61</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 11.

Again, such negative and limiting characteristics assigned to the concept “woman” would have undermined the efforts of those men and women who were seeking to have ministering women’s access to ordination affirmed. The debate regarding ordaining women was being waged, among other places,<sup>62</sup> in the conceptual realm involving identity thinking in order to dominate the debate and limit women’s access to leadership and the exercise of authority within the PAOC.

### **Identity Thinking and Particular Interests**

Adorno argued that humanity’s perceptions and interpretations, including philosophical systems, are socially and historically determined. Therefore, any conceptualization of reality by humanity is always inherently subjective, partial and reflective of the sanctioned rationality and organization of specific historical times and cultures. Rationality is neither ahistorical nor neutral. Rather, it expresses the needs, values and organization of social existence and is sanctioned by society.<sup>63</sup> When it came to identity thinking, while recognition of non-identity, or the contradictions between concepts and their objects, might lead to reflection and revision of the concepts, such does not always occur, particularly when it comes to contradictory social beliefs. Rather, society dominates objects in order to mould them in the interests of self-preservation. Society’s interests demand the acceptance of subjective conceptual thinking at the cost of objective reality. The problematic nature of identity thinking is ignored; contradictions

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<sup>62</sup> Such as constitutional, Scriptures, tradition, history. See Chapters 3 and 7.

<sup>63</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, John Osborne, Trans. (London: NBL, 1977), 27-34.

are oftentimes not even perceived, and if revealed are readily dismissed, suppressed, disparaged or ignored by and in the interests of a stable society. Within a society where individuals are both subjects and objects, while individuals make up the society, their needs and interests are dominated by and subordinated to the needs and interests of that society which may in fact go so far as to be indifferent to or antagonistic towards the individuals involved. This domination includes the areas of thinking and behaving. In order for society's interests and needs to be legitimated and accepted by the individuals who are subordinate to society, individuals must internalize the domination. Even though a "subject is the agent, not the constituent, of objects,"<sup>64</sup> individual subjects project onto objects what they have been socialized to perceive. That is the individual's "fate."<sup>65</sup>

That leaders in the PAOC may have had their own interests or the institution's self-preservation in mind can be historically illustrated by the concern that women remain in their "place"<sup>66</sup> appropriate to the concept of "women" that was being promoted. Not only ministering women but also nonministering women had difficulties when they attempted to organize a national group of their own for laywomen. In September 1944, the "Women's Missionary Council" (WMC) was formed to encourage prayer, to promote

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<sup>64</sup> Adorno, "On Subject and Object," *Critical Models*, p. 254.

<sup>65</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 315.

<sup>66</sup> For a recent example of the concern of Pentecostal men that women conceived as a "concept" remain in their male defined "place" see the chapter Holmes, Pamela, "The 'Place' of Women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Ministry Since the Azusa Street Revival," *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*, Harold D. Hunter & Cecil M. Robeck Jr., Eds. (Pathway Press: Cleveland, Tennessee, 2006): 297-316 which I was recruited to write and present at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California in April 2006.

missionary work and to assist “in any co-operative work which may have the endorsement (sic) of the Movement from time to time.”<sup>67</sup> However, Marion Parkinson, the WMC National Director from 1965-1974, in her booklet “A Dream Now A Reality: A Story of the Women’s Missionary Council of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada,” claims that “women’s participation in the work of the church” began as “early as 1915” when Mrs. A. H. Argue organized sewing groups to make clothes for “new converts” in Africa. On January 11, 1922 an “official meeting” of this group was held and Argue elected President, a post she held until 1927 when she was replaced by Mrs. H. Bronson. A similar group in Niagara Falls, Ontario also predated the PAOC as it too began in 1915. Parkinson also claims that such women’s groups were “scattered” throughout the “churches across the Dominion.” Parkinson credits Nellie McClung’s influence for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario District’s lead in formally recognizing these women’s groups. In 1942, a “resolution sponsored by the ladies, to be presented to the General Executive that year” was outlined by the Manitoba District Conference women’s groups with its District Secretary.” Alberta followed suit. A National Director was appointed in 1944, Mrs. Ethel (Bingeman) Jamieson, one of the earlier mentioned missionaries to Liberia, West Africa. Since returning to Canada, she had taught in two Bible Colleges and developed a network.<sup>68</sup> Nowhere does Parkinson explain why it had

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<sup>67</sup> Marion Parkinson, *A Dream Now A Reality: A Story of the Women’s Missionary Council* (Toronto, ON: PAOC Archives, n.d.), 1-14.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* At first the PAOC referred its “young men and women” to the Assemblies of God’s school, “Central Bible Institute,” which opened October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1922 in Springfield, Missouri. *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, i.e. Vol. 2, No. 9 (September 1922), 1.

taken almost 30 years for this particular type of ministry by women to be formally recognized.

Furthermore, Parkinson does relate that the newly formed “Women’s Missionary Council” was “squeezed into what might have been at one time a ‘cubby hole’ for ‘what nots’ in the basement ... about four feet square without windows.” Parkinson also acknowledges, “some pastors would not have a women’s group organized in their churches and a few superintendents frowned upon the idea,” again without explaining why. She simply states that seeking “the stamp of approval” of “the brethren” was encouraged by a few superintendents and leaders who “did all they could to ‘put a word in for the ladies.’” In particular, George R. Upton who was “asked to oversee the newly elected office of the Women’s Missionary Society” was supportive and gave “invaluable assistance to the National Director” in his role as Executive Director of Overseas Mission.” When their attempts at organization were met by reluctance and opposition on the part of some of the men within the institution,<sup>69</sup> the women felt the need to respond. One way in which they did this was to insist, as Marion McAlister did, that “...the chain of command be respected and honoured. This is a preventative to misunderstandings and ‘roots of bitterness’ which may defile the church and hinder the flow of the Holy Spirit.” She continues, “ If women recognize the appointed ministries of others they will have ample room to fulfill the ministry of women providing they allow the Holy Spirit to capitalize on their femininity.” She does not explain what she meant by this

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

capitalization.<sup>70</sup> Still, it is clear that she recognized and did not wish to threaten or appear in any way to challenge or upset the national and provincial male leadership.

At the congregational level, the pastor's wife as the "pastor's queen"<sup>71</sup> was to be the "Honourary President" of the WMC unless she was the President. Whatever being a "queen" entailed, it was in relationship to the male "pastor." A President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer were to be elected annually at a meeting presided "over by the pastor or his appointee." In addition to being in submission to the male Pastor, each local WMC group was also under the authority of the all male congregational board.<sup>72</sup> Women were "placed" under the authority of more than one man. It would appear that even lay women's ministries which were not seeking to usurp male headship were perceived as a potential threat by some of these leading men, a factor which was not explained.

Therefore, it is not surprising that women seeking equal recognition with men through the avenue of ordination experienced a difficult and prolonged battle with the institution and the men who lead it and wielded the power.

That leaders within the PAOC have power, which they have been exercising over women even to the point of defining and redefining concepts and practices, can be illustrated by one of the factors preceding the decision to allow women to be ordained.

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<sup>70</sup> *News & Views: Women's Missionary Council Handbook*, Eleventh edition (Toronto On: PAOC, 1944, 1976), 13-14.

<sup>71</sup> Marion McAlister, B.A., M.Ed., U. of Toronto, *The Women's Missionary Council and the Unique Ministry of Women* (Toronto, ON: Women's Missionary Council of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, n.d.), 22.

<sup>72</sup> *News & Views*, 11, 13-14.

In 1978, the name of the “Women’s Missionary Council” was changed to “Women’s Ministries” in recognition that “the ministry of our women across the Dominion of Canada is becoming increasingly varied, involving the lay woman extensively.”<sup>73</sup> At the same time, while the concept of “ministry” was redefined and opened up to women and lay people, the concept of “ordination” came under scrutiny. The report commissioned by the General Conference regarding ordinations stated that,<sup>74</sup>

The PAOC makes ordination to the full Christian ministry, not only the formal recognition of the call of God upon a person who has fulfilled certain requirements of study and probation, but also makes the office of the ordained minister the highest recognition accorded to spiritual leaders within the Fellowship.

However, this “highest recognition” continued to be denied to women. Randal Holm, a former professor at the then called Eastern Pentecostal Bible College in Peterborough, Ontario, claims that there were three major reasons why the motion finally passed in 1984. First, the delegates gave solid historical and biblical evidence in support of women in ministry that removed doubts that the movement was capitulating to a feminist agenda. Second, an appeal to common decency regarding the fair treatment of women who had ministered for years within the ranks of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was made. Third, and *most important in Holm’s opinion, was that the definition of ordination became a significant factor in this turn of events*. Holm cites a report given by David Boyd at the conference that insisted that “ordination confers nothing! It is

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<sup>73</sup> *Minutes of the 31<sup>st</sup> Biennial General Conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. August 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 1978, 18. PAOC Archives.

<sup>74</sup> *Report on Ordination as commissioned by the 1978 General Conference*, PAOC Archives.

simply recognition of the call of God and the consecration of that person to that call to certain types of ministry.”<sup>75</sup> This seemed to satisfy the delegates. When ordination was restricted to men, it was defined as being the “highest recognition.” Before women could be ordained, the concept had to be redefined to mean “nothing.”

These illustrations of the difficulties that women had in gaining formal recognition of particular ministries of their own is indication of the universal and subjective concept of “women” which the leaders of the PAOC, as subjects, had defined for women, as objects, in relationship to the men. Such identity thinking created a considerable amount of consternation when the women themselves did not “fit” the concept. Both the example of women’s wear and of the organization of lay woman’s activities indicate that within the PAOC, women were viewed as a unified, homogenous, conceptual “other” to men. When the women resisted these definitions and the boundaries placed on their activities as women, men and women who identified with men did not understand or recognize the definitions and boundaries and, therefore, could not completely trust and perhaps even feared the women as an unknown entity. Yet, in reality, the ministering women were diverse and creative people who desired meaningful lives and ministries, who felt called to minister within the PAOC and to do so in accordance with their particular gifts and circumstances. It was not their intent to be a threat to the men, to other women, or to the institution. They were simply a contradiction to the PAOC’s concept of “women.”

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<sup>75</sup> See Randal Holm, “Ordination of Women, 2. A Sociological Profile of Current Attitudes,” *A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism* (PhD Dissertation, Laval University, 1995), 6-7.

### PAOC Women's Identity Thinking

Lest it be thought that only PAOC men engage in identity thinking, an example can be shown that women also have been involved. As early as 1935 when ministering women within the PAOC were still relatively common,<sup>76</sup> Mrs. J. Swanson argued that women should not preach or speak in public but rather should set an example for other women through their involvement in strictly housekeeping, spiritual life and dress.<sup>77</sup> In 1973, Miriam McAllister insisted that the "Unique Ministry of Women" is to support men's ministries.<sup>78</sup> As a result, women themselves agreed with and reproduced the male defined concept of "women" as something "other" than "men" requiring domination by male leadership in the public realm and a male head in the private.<sup>79</sup> Bereft of a critical analysis and alternative models of ways of being and organizing themselves, both PAOC men and women have been implicated in the creation and maintenance of kyriarchal

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<sup>76</sup> For example, in Saskatchewan alone in 1949, 33% of the PAOC ministers in Saskatchewan were women. "Minutes," *Saskatchewan District Conference (PAOC)*, July 20-22, 1949, Watrous, Saskatchewan, PAOC Archives. This number was similar during the 1920s and 1930s. See for examples, "Minutes," *Saskatchewan District Conference (PAOC)*, July 10-15, 1928, Saskatoon, Sask., "Minutes," *Saskatchewan District Conference (PAOC)*, July 4-9, 1933, Saskatoon, Sask. and "Minutes," *Saskatchewan District Conference (PAOC)*, June 28-July 9, 1939, Saskatoon, Sask. as found in the PAOC Archives.

<sup>77</sup> J. Swanson, "The Minister's Wife," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Jan. 1935), 6.

<sup>78</sup> Miriam McAllister, "The Unique Ministry of Women," *Pentecostal Testimony* (Nov. 1973), 15.

<sup>79</sup> See for example, Elisabeth Elliot, "Whose Am I?" Hardy W. Steinberg, Nation Director et al, *Insight for Young Adults: The Christian Family* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1982), 8-10; Shirley Flewitt, "Mentors to Many," in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (October 1991), 21.

power. Even though at present there appears to be an openness to emancipatory change for women with the institutional documents being rewritten in a gender inclusive manner so as not to hinder such, that change appears to be minimal and in the form of inclusion of “token”<sup>80</sup> women such as Lillian Douglas<sup>81</sup> and Carlene Hornby-Allen<sup>82</sup> in the General Executive. It is doubtful that a major restructuring will occur to allow for the organized and institutionalized Pentecostal movement within Canadian to truly become a “discipleship of equals”<sup>83</sup> in the near future. As Schüssler Fiorenza has highlighted, both men and women, starting with women themselves first, “must learn to understand” women as “human persons.” “Like men,” women “must realize their human personhood in autonomy, partnership, and self-determination; they must come of age and no longer tolerate any tutelage ....” Both “the traditional male consciousness” and “the emerging female consciousness” must, first become “a personal human consciousness” before any discipleship of equals is possible.<sup>84</sup> Recognizing that even feminist liberation theologies can fall into identity thinking when seeking to analyze the sources and expressions of domination, Schüssler Fiorenza not only developed her own concept of kyriarchy to more

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<sup>80</sup> In 2008, there were 18 men and 2 women on the General Executive of the PAOC. *Minutes of the 48<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the PAOC*, Toronto, Ontario. May 5-8, 2008.

<sup>81</sup> *Testimony*, Vol. 81, Number 12 (December 2000), 17.

<sup>82</sup> Elected to the General Executive in 2006 on the second ballot. *Minutes of the 47<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the PAOC*, Winnipeg, Manitoba. May 8-12. 2006, p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> From Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994).

<sup>84</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Professional Ministry of Women in the Church,” 20.

accurately reflect the diverse experiences of women but also argued for “a discursive space where women as a political collectivity can define” themselves “without needing to suppress patriarchal structural divisions among” themselves. It is her contention that “through dialogue, debate and deliberation” in what she labels the “*ekklēsia* of women”, “feminist theological discourses can seek to transform unitary patriarchal identity formations into creative differences and political strategies for ... multisided struggles.”<sup>85</sup>

### **Beyond Women’s Ordination**

Schüssler Fiorenza claims that kyriocentric knowledge produced by “white, European and American elite males” has not only “defined elite white women as the ‘other’ but also subordinated classes, races, and peoples as the ‘others’ in order to colonize and exploit them under the guise of modern kyrarchical democracy and civilization.” Knowledge has become not only “gendered” but also “racialized, class-dominated, colonialized and” Western<sup>86</sup> “Eurocentric.”<sup>87</sup> As she elaborates,<sup>88</sup>

That is why, in western societies, gendered values and roles such as service, obedience, caring, subordination, emotionality, bodilessness, or licentiousness are not just “feminine” values and roles associated with wo/men

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<sup>85</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Ethics and Politics of Liberation,” 343.

<sup>86</sup> “Western” is my addition to Schüssler Fiorenza’s schema. With a Ukrainian father, I have seen first hand the oppression of Eastern Europeans by the West, a discussion that limited space does not allow.

<sup>87</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 17.

<sup>88</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophialogy,” in *Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996): xiii-xxxix, xxii.

but also ascribed to slaves and other subjugated and colonized peoples, both wo/men and men.

References to “natural differences” become the “ideological justification of dominance that seeks to exclude from full citizenship certain people who are considered inferior.” Such justifications are necessary due to contradiction between the “ideal of democratic self-definition” based on “classical philosophy and theology” whereby all are “created equal” and have the right to participate fully in civil and political matters and the “actual kyriarchal socioeconomic practices of domination” which “at the same time justifies ‘natural’ social stratifications and economic inequalities, its philosophical, political, and religious rhetoric of ‘equality’ for a few ‘eminent and great men’” which “serves to exclude all the ‘others’ from full democratic participation.”<sup>89</sup> While Aristotelian philosophy is “one of the first explicit theoretical legitimizations of kyriarchy as a socio-political and cultural-religious overarching system,” the “antidemocratic pattern of submission and exclusion” was adopted by the Christian Scriptures in what has been labelled “the household-code tradition.” While Christianity did not invent kyriarchy, it mediated and legitimated it.<sup>90</sup>

Schüssler Fiorenza credits the “emergence of many different feminist voices around the globe” with deconstructing “the unitary essentialist understanding of Woman” during the 1980s. Such an abstract, essentialist definition serves to legitimate the domination of women by positing all women as the same and as an “other” of an equally

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<sup>89</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, 18-19.

<sup>90</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophialogy,” xxii.

abstract, essential definition of the concept “man” which can and must be controlled within a patriarchal or kyriarchal context. Adorno’s theory of non-identity as revised by Schüssler Fiorenza to apply to women is necessary to both evaluate and to deconstruct this understanding of woman. As she explains,<sup>91</sup>

Feminists of color ask white feminists to join them in redefining feminism as a theory and practice that can conceptualize ‘the intermeshed oppression of class, race, ethnicity and gender as unacceptable,’ redefining ‘women’s liberation as part of a struggle against all these forms of oppression.’ Such a reconceptualization of feminist theory and practice seeks to make women’s *differing* experiences of multiplicative oppression central to all feminist discourses.

Unfortunately, the PAOC has been actively involved in this elitist “othering.” In its efforts to organize itself with its “gendered” as well as “racialized, class-dominated, colonialized, and Eurocentric” pattern of knowledge, it placed women, non-ordained men and non-Canadian peoples under the authority and governance of ordained men who themselves were, by encoded bylaws, eligible to attain to the national General Executive who, in turn, ruled all. In August 1925, missionaries in other countries were placed under stricter scrutiny. Current missionaries were ordered to “cooperate with those in charge on the field.” They also had to “*communicate with the home office to see if funds are available without injuring the work in other places*” before “*taking on native Evangelists or Bible Women or Teachers*”(emphasis mine). These missionaries could no longer “leave their stations to take up work locally or return on furlough without making provision for the carrying on of the work or obtaining permission from the superintendent

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<sup>91</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Ethics and Politics of Liberation, 340-341.

on the field” with the “time to be arranged by home office.”<sup>92</sup> Many of these concerns were of a practical and financial nature. The *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* had been mentioning such practical concerns regarding missionaries as early as January 1921, claiming that it was becoming increasingly difficult for missionaries to gain entrance to other countries without proper certification from a recognized body.<sup>93</sup> By April 1921, it was reported that “(a)lmost all the Assemblies are now co-operating with the office in the Missionary Department and sending in their donations through the office.” The need for a policy pertaining to missionaries was raised in the same article.<sup>94</sup> By December 1922 the periodical was asking that funds no longer be designated to particular missionaries but be forwarded to the head office undesignated so that those in charge at the head office could decide how to disburse the money based on need. The report was bemoaning the fact that non-Canadian missionaries were receiving designated funds from several sources while “*our own, to whom we owe a moral obligation, are neglected.*”<sup>95</sup>

While the formulation of a missionary policy appears to have been motivated by genuine concern to properly care for those missionaries for whom the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada had responsibility, it resulted in the decision making power being deliberately focused into the home office back in Canada which was under male

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<sup>92</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Western District Council of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* held at Wesley Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba. August 12<sup>th</sup> to August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1925, 2-3.

<sup>93</sup> See the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2 (January 1921), 1.

<sup>94</sup> See the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 5 (April 1921), 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (December 1922), 2.

leadership. This male leadership may not have had first-hand knowledge of the circumstances on the mission field. Again, there is no record of any woman missionary or native worker commenting on or objecting to this new policy. It is also interesting to note that “Evangelists,” whether male or female, were placed in submission to male “Pastors” at the above mentioned August 1925 Western District conference.<sup>96</sup>

... whereas cases have arisen in the last two or three years where Evangelists have not fully co-operated with the Pastor in charge and have shown a lack of ministerial courtesy to the detriment of the work, be it resolved that we recommend to all Evangelists and visiting workers that they endeavour to fully co-operate with the Pastor in charge of the work, recognizing him as head and the one in authority and co-operate with him in the same, and that after leaving the field they do not correspond with the members of his congregation to the hurting in any way of his influence with the people. Carried.

Clearer lines of kyriarchal organizational authority were being established in order to resolve difficulties that had arisen which, although not necessarily caused by women and non-ordained or non-governing men, directly affected them, as many of them were evangelists. All were placed in submission to male, ordained pastors and leaders within the PAOC.

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<sup>96</sup> *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Western District Council of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* held at Wesley Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba. August 12<sup>th</sup> to August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1925, 2.

## Conclusion

With the continuing discussion of the “roles,” “place” and “women”<sup>97</sup> within Pentecostalism, their treatment as “objects” for consideration and conceptual manipulation by “subjects” continues unabated. As Adorno has stated above, objects are not determined by subjects; nor are they encapsulated in their totality by subjects.<sup>98</sup> Rather, the relationship is reciprocal in that subjects and objects influence each other in their interactions. Additionally, while objects are never subjects, subjects are themselves objects. Following from this assertion, it would appear that an object’s insistence on recognition and respect for its particularities is an objectivistic position – even if the subject whose objective particularities are being asserted is involved. A subject that would attempt to deny or suppress these particularities in favour of some presumed universality is in the subjective position.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> See for examples, Yong, Amos & Alexander, Estrelder, Eds., *Philip’s Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Princeton Theological Monographs Series, (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Press, 2008); Pamela Holmes, “Chapter Nine: Ministering Women in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: A Feminist Exploration,” *Canadian Pentecostals*, Michael Wilkinson, Ed. (McGill-Queen’s University Press: Montreal, Quebec, Kingston, Ontario, 2009); Andrea Hollingsworth, “Spirit and Voice: Toward a Feminist Pentecostal Pneumatology,” *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Volume 29, Number 2. 2007: 189-213; Pamela Holmes, “The ‘Place’ of Women in Pentecostal/Charismatic Ministry Since the Azusa Street Revival,” *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy*. Harold D. Hunter & Cecil M. Robeck Jr., Eds., (Pathway Press: Cleveland, Tennessee, 2006); Michele Jacques Early, “‘Into the world, but not of it’: The Socio-theological Framework of Womanhood in the Church of God in Christ,” PhD dissertation. Emory University, 2003.

<sup>98</sup> Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” 24.

<sup>99</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 183.

Schüssler Fiorenza insists the attempt must be made to replace the “logic of identity” with the “logic of democracy” by placing theorizing within the “logic of radical equality” which replaces the construct “woman” with the democratic construct *ekklēssia* of women. She explains,<sup>100</sup>

Situating feminist theorizing and theologizing within the logic of equality rather than of identity allows one to contextualize so-called natural binary sexual arrangements together with those of race, ethnicity, or class as socio-political ideological constructions. Women live in structures that are not simply pluralist. Rather, “they are stratified, differentiated into social groups with unequal status, power, and access to resources, traversed by pervasive axes of inequality along lines of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and age.” Consequently, feminist theories must take care not to reinscribe such patriarchal status *divisions* as positive pluralistic *differences* among women. Rather, a feminist political discursive practice of liberation must “denaturalize” patriarchal racial, gender, and cultural status inscriptions.

While thinking in abstract concepts may be unavoidable in order to facilitate discourse within the current conceptual rationality, such abstract concepts must never be mistaken for reality. Therefore, a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation must avoid thinking in unities, universalities, essences. Rather, specificities and particularities must be noticed as women’s experiences of and within Pentecostalism are contextualized. According to Schüssler Fiorenza, in order to prevent constructing “the identity of wo/men in unitary and universal terms” or re-inscribing “wo/men’s identity in objectivist and essential terms” and to unravel “the unitary Otherness of Woman from Man in western philosophical-political and religious discourses,” “the specific historical cultural contexts” and the “historically defined subjectivity” of the “plurality of wo/men” must be

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<sup>100</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 130.

recognized and upheld.<sup>101</sup> Even though everyone is “ideologically ‘scripted’ and implicated in power relations” and “suffer from a ‘false’ or ‘incomplete consciousness’” and thus can “never be fully liberated” within a “patriarchal world of multiplicative oppressions,” feminists utilize “women’s experience of reality and struggle against patriarchal exploitation as a scientific resource and a significant indicator of the reality against which hypotheses are to be tested.” Such experiences oftentimes reveal “contradictions and fissures in the script and between scripts”<sup>102</sup> as they, echoing Benjamin's methodology, “brush against the grain of history.” Therefore, rather than seeking the identification of Pentecostal women within some concept of what it is to be “women” or through differing interpretations of various roles supposedly inscribed in Scriptures, it would be appropriate for Pentecostals to look at the actual behaviours of women within particular historical contexts. This would be in keeping with Adorno’s insistence on the “priority of the object.”<sup>103</sup>

Therefore, drawing upon the examples of select ministering women within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada as outlined in Chapter 3, these Pentecostal women, who only represent themselves and cannot be generalized to represent all Pentecostal women, acted as though they might be active, committed people who are convinced that

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<sup>101</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “Introduction: Feminist Liberation Theology as Critical Sophiology,” xix.

<sup>102</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 90-91.

<sup>103</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 183. It would also be in keeping with his understanding of “utopia” (See *Negative Dialectics*, 5) which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8 entitled *Apocalyptic Eschatology, Negative Dialectics, Utopic Thinking and Liberative Transformation*.

they have been called and empowered to function as ministers for God in various capacities. They have been called “ministering women” partly due to the fact that the word “ministering” is a factual description of their activity and partly to point out the contradiction inherent in their being denied, in many cases, access to ordained ministry and the title of Minister. Their subjectivity exploded the concept of ministry, ordered or not, that being written out of history might have erased, were not the grain of history brushed against.

Such aspects of these women’s identities, based on a very limited portion of their life histories as gleaned from some PAOC sources, is incomplete. Within other contexts, different aspects of who they are and what they are about will not only be noted but also may, in fact, contradict what has been drawn out. Such contradictions and additions are part of the human identities in all their complexities.

In addition, when it comes to the liberation of women within Pentecostalism, the influence of elite males along with the women and men who identify with them in producing, maintaining and possibly transforming the current conflicted and ambiguous situation within which ministering women find themselves must be acknowledged. As Adorno has stressed, “Women mirror the injustice masculine society has inflicted on them – they become increasingly like commodities.”<sup>104</sup> Within Pentecostalism ministering women have been admonished not to fall for culture’s commodification of them as sexual objects even as they and their labour have been objectified and

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<sup>104</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Prisms*, Samuel and Shierry Weber, Trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1967), 87.

appropriated for the benefit of the male created, defined and ruled corporation. While there are indications that, since the 1998 restructuring of the PAOC, a more equitable treatment of ministering women within its midst is possible,<sup>105</sup> there is still much to be done. Recognition and active acceptance of the reality of the influence by the elite men within the PAOC can set about moving the organization in a more just and ethical direction. Such a move will not only benefit the women in its midst but also the men. As Adorno speculates,<sup>106</sup>

Hope cannot aim at making the mutilated social character of women identical to the mutilated social character of men; rather, its goal must be a state in which the face of the grieving woman disappears simultaneously with that of the bustling, capable man, a state in which all that survives the disgrace of the differences between the sexes is the happiness that difference makes possible.

In the previous chapters, several issues involving “authority” and “power” have been raised and discussed. In Chapter 5, the nature of enlightenment rationality was highlighted. This chapter briefly reviewed identity thinking from Adorno’s and Schüssler Fiorenza’s perspective and suggested several ways in which such limited and oppressive identity thinking was occurring within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The next chapter will examine two major questions interrelated with identity thinking and the exercise of authority and power which function with dominating consequences within Canadian Pentecostalism before moving on to suggest several emancipatory possibilities for countering such oppressive practices and thinking. The first question explores the question of Pentecostal identification as Fundamentalists. The second question examines

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<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 3 of this work.

<sup>106</sup> Adorno, *Prisms*, 87.

preunderstandings and experience influencing both how Pentecostals interpret the Scriptures and, arising partly from such interpretation, how they are defining and oppressing women. Pentecostal women themselves, with their understanding of Scriptures as both empowering and as representative of a sacred, hierarchical view of reality and relationships, end up oppressing themselves as they seek to be true to their Pentecostal faith. The result is a self-imposed silencing or multiple benign attempts to learn how to exercise authority within the institution in a manner in keeping with the Scriptures. Rarely do Pentecostal women consider that Scriptures have been interpreted by those benefiting most from kyriarchal power - elite, Caucasian, Western-Eurocentric males - and represent kyriarchal knowledge which Pentecostal women have been socialized into and internalized.

Schüssler Fiorenza has formulated a hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures that uses a variety of insights and methods.<sup>107</sup> Some of her work intersects with authority issues currently operating within Pentecostalism. Therefore, the following chapter, after discussing the relationship of Pentecostalism with Fundamentalism, will constellate aspects of Schüssler Fiorenza's work with portions of Pentecostal perspectives in the hopes of illuminating and evaluating these authority issues. Once these issues have been examined, possibilities for an emancipatory approach to interpreting the Scriptures and viewing ministering women shall be explored.

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<sup>107</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 24-38.

## CHAPTER 7

### QUESTIONS OF “AUTHORITY” AND “POWER”

#### **Pentecostals and Fundamentalism**

In popular parlance all Pentecostals are typically categorized as Fundamentalists. This is not accurate. While there are continuities between Fundamentalists and Pentecostals and while some Pentecostal groups are fundamentalistic, there are also definite discontinuities.

Soon after Pentecostalism’s emergence within the United States the various Pentecostal fellowships sought to be accepted and recognized by other Christian groups. As Pentecostalism arose partly out of the radical wing of the evangelical movement, particularly the Anglo-Wesleyan holiness movement as well as the African-American slave experience,<sup>1</sup> Evangelicalism, of which Fundamentalist is a small subset, was the

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<sup>1</sup> See Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987) for discussion of Pentecostalism's Methodist and holiness roots. See Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 18ff for discussion of Pentecostalism's black, oral roots and 144ff for discussion of Pentecostalism's Anglo-Catholic roots.

one, and pretty much the only, Christian group which tentatively recognized Pentecostalism's existence in its infancy.<sup>2</sup>

Within Canada, the PAOC was eager to maintain good reputation with Evangelicals even though it recognized that it was different from them. As R. E. McAlister insisted in 1922, “Pentecost can be repeated the same as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, with all the accompanying signs, manifestations, operations and gifts of the Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> For example, Kulbeck mentions that Evangelicals criticized the Pentecostal movement within Canada as unscriptural due to the fact that “many of the outstanding evangelists, missionaries, teachers and pastors . . . have been women.”<sup>4</sup> In response to the criticism, Kulbeck explained that the PAOC position was similar to that of the Assemblies of God as understood by Carl Brumback whom she quotes, “Perhaps the present-day Pentecostal Movement has been somewhat lenient in its enforcement of I Corinthians 14:34, 38.” She continues citing Brumback,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Edith L. Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism and American Culture*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), p. 185. Until the 1940s the Assemblies of God in the States, like most Pentecostal groups, remained relatively isolated from other Christian groups. However, as the Evangelical community (with the exception of the Fundamentalist groups) was willing to accept the Pentecostal movement into their ranks, in 1942 the Assemblies of God formally aligned themselves with the Evangelical movement by participating in an Evangelical gathering in St. Louis from which the National Association of Evangelicals was formed.

<sup>3</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2 No. 4 (April 1922), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Gloria Grace Kulbeck, B.A. *What God Hath Wrought: A History of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, Rev. Walter E. McAlister and Rev. George R. Upton, eds. (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958), 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14 referring to Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* (London, England: Elim Publishing Company Limited, 1946), 314-315.

This leniency may be due to a reaction against the extremely legal attitude of other groups; or it may be that we have been influenced by the Twentieth Century idea about women's rights or it may be that we have emphasized the Scriptural exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, we do feel that the spirit of the rule is in effect in our midst. On the whole, women are not given undue prominence in the movement; they represent a very small percentage of the ministry; and they are virtually silent with respect to doctrinal and governmental questions ... in some instances, women may speak in the church without violating their subjection to men.

However, Kulbeck also highlights women's active involvement. The ambiguity is obvious. Although women were actively involved in ministry during the early years of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada's formation, their participation in ministry was accepted but limited, affirmed but restricted. A "place" may have been created for women in public ministry but women's involvements seemed to require a defence or an explanation.

During this period of seeking acceptance, the Assemblies of God considered themselves "fundamentalists with a difference" in that they were in basic agreement with the "fundamentals of the faith." Nonetheless, Fundamentalists would have nothing to do with Pentecostals and officially opposed the movement in 1928.<sup>6</sup> This is understandable in that Fundamentalists tend to be rational and text directed in their practice. As such, they view the Bible as the authoritative, verbally inspired, literal and inerrant, written Word of God.<sup>7</sup> The "letter of the law" is very important to them. Pentecostals, in

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<sup>6</sup>Edith Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 5, 6, 159.

<sup>7</sup> See, Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Supplement Series 28, John Christopher Thomas, Rickie D. Moore, Steven J. Land, Eds. (London, New York: T & T Clark International, *A Continuum Imprint*, 2004), 35-62.

comparison, are experiential and believe themselves to be Spirit directed in their practice. While Pentecostals have a high view of the Scriptures, they tend to approach them in a less literal and rational sense. The “Spirit of the law” is important to Pentecostals.<sup>8</sup>

Fundamentalists tend to be suspicious of the Pentecostal emphasis on the immediate experience of the Spirit. Therefore, Fundamentalists tend to be anti-Pentecostal and anti-charismatic. Many Pentecostals consider it at least an uninformed overgeneralization if not an outright insult when they are labelled Fundamentalists.<sup>9</sup>

This distinction between Pentecostals and Fundamentalist is important in that it holds out the promise of the development of hermeneutical approaches within Pentecostalism that are not held hostage to a misplaced historicism or debates regarding “inerrancy” or false choices between “fundamentalist” or “liberal” methods of interpretation. Pentecostal approaches provide examples of other ways to handle the biblical texts to which they assign authority. Fundamentalists consider the Scriptures inerrant. Evangelicals consider them sufficient and authoritative. Pentecostals consider them inspired and illumined.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Timothy B. Cargal, “Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age,” *Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers* 1991, 1, 5-6.

<sup>9</sup> This explanation is given as a comparison to point out the distinctions between Fundamentalists and Pentecostals and not a criticism.

<sup>10</sup> Cargal, 1-3, 6-7.

The identification of Pentecostalism with fundamentalism even among Pentecostals is far from settled. As one Pentecostal, Timothy Cargal, explained the situation within the United States,<sup>11</sup>

Pentecostal biblical interpreters in the United States have become increasingly entangled in debates originating in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy of the early twentieth century ...

Modernism finds its epistemological roots (and some would say its defining characteristic) in the Enlightenment ideal of “objectivity.” Its basic presupposition is that reality is objectively knowable, and (by implication) only that which is objectively knowable is real. This objectivist/positivist presupposition is then brought into the service of a historicist view of meaning; history becomes the ‘field encompassing field’ which gives significance and meaning to the knowledge about ‘objective reality.’ ... fundamentalists sought to maintain their beliefs within the confines of the modernist philosophical paradigm by comparing and contrasting their approach to the Bible with that of their modernist opponents. For the modernists, the meaningfulness of the Bible for twentieth century Christians was found in the ‘kernels’ discovered by critical, objective historical reconstruction and in the very process of historical development itself; for fundamentalists, already committed to the belief that the bible is true and meaningful, biblical interpretation demonstrates that the Bible is objectively and historically true ... What both fundamentalists and modernists have in common is a philosophical presupposition that only what is historically and objectively true is meaningful.

This has had serious repercussions when it comes to the women within its midst. When Scriptures are granted the status of some sort of “final authority,” they are often used in a literalistic, prescriptive sense. Within Pentecostalism, such a use of Scriptures is common, stemming from and feeding into its fundamentalistic leanings.

A primarily rationalistic approach, whether that is expressed in fundamentalism, or even liberalism, is incongruent with Pentecostalism’s experientialist practices.<sup>12</sup> As

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 5-6. See also Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, for an ongoing discussion of this controversy along with a suggestion for a particularly Pentecostal approach.

well, a fundamentalist approach tends to be hierarchical and exclusive which is in direct conflict with Pentecostalism's original egalitarian impulse and inclusive ethos. While in the early years Pentecostals were not in the position to be involved in this controversy due to their small size, loosely organized structures, lower class backgrounds and dismissal by the larger, dominate churches,<sup>13</sup> they indiscriminately went along with the larger evangelical community that sided with fundamentalism. Now that Pentecostals are finally seeing the need to determine their own identities and decide their own loyalties, this fundamentalistic stance can be critically rethought.<sup>14</sup> As Allan Anderson, a scholar of Pentecostalism has argued, "Pentecostalism ... predated fundamentalism and is essentially different from it." In addition, Pentecostalism "brought a new *experience* rather than an argument against theological liberalism." As a "harsh critic" of

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<sup>12</sup>Harvey Cox discusses this tendency describing it as a conflict between "fundamentalists" and "experientialists" evident globally in all religious groups in his book *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twentieth-First Century* (Reading, Menlo Park, New York and Don Mills: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 299-321. Cox sees experientialist family resemblances between Pentecostals, liberationists and feminists.

<sup>13</sup> Gerry Sheppard, using an insight from James Washington, labelled Pentecostalism a "submodern" movement in that, while it emerged within modernity, it nevertheless was "not invited as equal partners into the modernist debate." Gerald T. Sheppard, "Biblical Interpretation After Gadamer," PNEUMA Volume 16. Number 1. (Spring 1994): 121-141, 127.

<sup>14</sup> A careful reading of Adorno's *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* while dated could assist in this critical rethinking, particularly Adorno's discussion of "emotional release," religion as having a "good old time," following a leader, maintaining "unity," the "last hour" approach, "speaking with tongues" in a decidedly non-Pentecostal understanding of the practice, "anti-institutionalism," appeal to the "faith of our fathers," and "communism." Theodor Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000).

Pentecostalism, fundamentalism is “better seen as the ‘fraternal twin’ of liberalism and its ‘logical end’”<sup>15</sup> than as interchangeable and synonymous with Pentecostalism.

Identifying Pentecostals with fundamentalism is not only false but also potentially harmful when it comes to the liberation of women within its midst. As Schüssler Fiorenza notes, fundamentalist groups in the various religions, including Christianity, “are a political-religious response to the struggle of democratic movements” including feminist ones “around the globe.” Within Christianity, not only does the “political-religious right” claim “the power to name and to define the true nature of biblical religions against liberations theologies of all colors and geographical locations,” their “well-financed think tanks ... supported by reactionary political and financial institutions ... seek to defend kyriarchal capitalism.” In the process, they continue to “debate ... women’s place and role” even as they portray liberated “women as signifiers of Western decadence or of modern atheistic secularism” and “masculine power as the expression of divine power.” While they use “modern media technologies,” “modern technological science,” “modern industrialism and nationalism,” they denounce “many of the political and ethical values espoused by modern democracy.” These political and ethical values include “basic individual rights, pluralism, freedom of speech, the right to housing, health care, and work, equal compensation for equal work, social market measures, a democratic

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<sup>15</sup> Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 2006), 259.

ethos, the sharing of power and political responsibility, and especially equal rights for women.”<sup>16</sup>

Significant when it comes to the liberation of women within Pentecostalism, fundamentalists use the Scriptures to attack women, as Schüssler Fiorenza suggests,<sup>17</sup>

Not only in the last century but also today patriarchal right-wing forces in society lace their attacks against women’s rights and freedoms in the political, economic, reproductive, intellectual, and religious arenas with biblical quotations and appeals to scriptural authority. In countless pulpits and fundamentalist TV programs, such patriarchal attacks are proclaimed as the Word of God while the feminist struggle for women’s liberation is denounced as “godless humanism” that undermines the “American family.”

Therefore, a discussion of the role and authority of Scriptures within Pentecostalism generally, and within a Pentecostal feminist critical theology of liberation more specifically, is warranted.

### **Schüssler Fiorenza, Pentecostals and Scriptures**

The Bible has been used to authorize and legitimate women who seek liberation from exploitation and enslavement. It has “inspired” many women to “speak out and to struggle against injustice, exploitation, and stereotyping” providing them with a “vision of freedom and wholeness” and empowering them “to struggle against poverty, unfreedom, and denigration.” At the same time, these same Scriptures, both in the past

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<sup>16</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994, 1995), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), xii.

and currently, have been used to exploit and enslave women, children and non-elite men.

As Schüssler Fiorenza claims,<sup>18</sup>

... the political right does not simply misquote or misuse the Bible as a Christian feminist apologetics seeks to argue. It can utilize certain Scriptural texts because they are patriarchal in their original function and intentions ... Certain texts of the Bible can be used in the argument against women's struggle for liberation not only because they are patriarchally misinterpreted but because they are patriarchal texts and therefore can serve to legitimate women's subordinate role and secondary status in patriarchal society and church.

Therefore, feminists advocate the use of a "hermeneutics of suspicion" when seeing to interpret both "contemporary androcentric interpretations of the Bible and the biblical texts themselves."<sup>19</sup> The "critical dialectical mode" of interpretation Schüssler Fiorenza promotes is her own "critical feminist hermeneutic of liberation" which both recognizes the ambiguities of the Scriptures when it comes to women and non-elites while drawing out its potential to "end relations of domination and exploitation."<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, Schüssler Fiorenza recasts biblical studies in rhetorical terms in the hopes of displacing supposed objective and non-political approaches presently gaining ground even within some women's studies.<sup>21</sup> She argues that biblical interpretations are not disinterested but rather have a political context and content and tend to reinforce society's status quo.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, she stresses that biblical interpretation be recognized as

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, xiii.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, xii.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, xiii.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

“the site of competing discursive practices.”<sup>23</sup> As she explains it, the current paradigm functioning even within the academy, which stresses supposedly impassive, detached, objective, value-free, non-ideological, non-political scholarly research and discourse, is in reality an exercise in self and institutional deception.<sup>24</sup> This is because everyone brings his or her experiences and preunderstandings to any task including that of interpretation. As a result, she would most likely *not accuse* but rather *assume* that Pentecostals “eisegete,” that is, read their preunderstandings into the Bible like everybody else. Still, she would also probably insist that Pentecostals, like everyone else, must *take responsibility* for the effects of their interpretations of biblical texts. It is not enough to recognize that eisegesis is occurring. Those often unconscious preunderstandings that are brought to the biblical text must be critically examined and evaluated to determine how they are influencing the interpretative process and people.

In addition, Schüssler Fiorenza views the Bible as an “historical prototype” rather than a “mythic archetype.” When viewed as a mythic archetype, the historical assumptions of the contexts within which the Bible was formulated including androcentrism, patriarchy and kyriarchy, are posited as normative and authoritative. In contrast, when viewed as an historical prototype, the Bible is recognized as being written and read from within particular historical and ideological contexts. Therefore, it can be critically examined to discern those portions that appear to legitimate oppression from

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 152.

<sup>24</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 40-46.

those which are liberating.<sup>25</sup> In her view, the Bible becomes, at the very most, a source, or even only a resource, for women's struggles for liberation.<sup>26</sup>

For many Pentecostal women and men, viewing the Bible as only a resource is insufficient. While a variety of different hermeneutical approaches have been and still are used by different Pentecostals,<sup>27</sup> for many of them the Scriptures are understood as a place, among others, where God encounters people. The goal of interpretation for Pentecostals is not simply to discern what the text may have originally meant or even what it still means today. Rather, in their reading, studying and preaching of the Scriptures, Pentecostals seek to know and be known by God in a transformative and ongoing experiential fashion. Pentecostals view the Scriptures as much more than a resource. Yet, the Scriptures do tend to be read as a type of "archetypal" document. When coupled with a lack of awareness of preunderstandings influencing interpretation and with an assumption of "objectivity" derived from the larger societal "norm," the

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<sup>25</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 10-14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 14. Earlier she had claimed that the New Testament is both a source of revelatory truth and a resource for patriarchal practices. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origin*. Tenth Anniversary Edition With a New Introduction (New York: Crossroads, 1983, 1993, 1998), 30. With the use that she makes of the Bible in deriving norms such as the "Spirit," "Sophia," "divine Presence," "discipleship of equals," and "reign of God" from it, the Bible seems to be functioning as a significant source in her work. In spite of this discrepancy, while Schüssler Fiorenza insists that her approach is in keeping with the statements of the Second Vatican Council that affirmed that the Bible is without error in what matters "for the sake of our salvation." Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Discussions of these various approaches have appeared, for instance, in *PNEUMA*, *SPS Annual Meeting Papers* and *The Journal of Pentecostal Theology* in recent years. However, no consensus has been reached.

Bible becomes a site of contradiction and conflict for all Canadian Pentecostals, particularly ministering women as can be illustrated by referencing the PAOC's history.

Within the early years of Canadian Pentecostalism, whether or not one was qualified to minister, it was the Holy Spirit who was understood to be the One who gifts people for ministry within the church. As the Spirit could gift whomever the Spirit pleased, leadership was on the basis of giftings. "Individuals were to be honored for their God-given gifts and not their pedigree, natural talents or education."<sup>28</sup>

When it came to women, "in the early Pentecostal movement, having the 'anointing' was far more important than one's sex"<sup>29</sup> or being part of an organization. A high premium was placed on the immediate experience of being guided by the Holy Spirit. This meant that women as well as men were free, in fact had an obligation, to follow the call to preach the gospel. If questioned about their involvement in ministry, it was not uncommon for a woman to appeal to the Spirit's leading and affirmation of her call as well as her obligation to be obedient to it.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Randal Holm, *Organizational Blues: The Struggle of One Pentecostal Denomination with the Bugbear of Institutionalism*, Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers, November 10 - 12, 1994, Wheaton, Illinois, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Popular History* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1985), 137.

<sup>30</sup> Women's obligation to be obedient can be seen in the words of Blanche A. Appleby when she signs her correspondence regarding her work in South China reported in the December 1922 issue of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, "Yours in His bonds," which implies that she was a slave for God with no choice but to do the Master's Will. *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (December 1922), 1.

Spirit baptism was understood to equip and empower anybody, including women, to minister in fulfillment of the prophesy found in Joel. An example of this egalitarian assumption can be found in the writings of Zelma Argue. In the very first issue of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* published in December 1920, Argue has an article entitled “Your Sons and Your Daughters.” What is particularly significant about this article as it relates to this discussion is that it does not defend the rights of women to minister. Instead, it defends the rights of young people to prophesy. Gender is not the major concern for Zelma in this article - youthfulness is. As she states,<sup>31</sup>

In that dear familiar quotation, Acts 2:17, 18, there is a certain part which we young people can justly lay claim upon as our own. Perhaps you have never noticed it. We have known, of course, from this passage that this wonderful outpouring of the Latter Rain, falling the last fourteen or more years, is a sign of the last days just as truly as modern inventions, of the troublous times, or the return of the Jews. We have known, too, that the promise was for each individual, for it was to those afar off, even to as many as the Lord should call. And, on the strength of this passage, divinely anointed women, handmaidens of the Lord, are conceded the right to prophecy, to minister, under the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Yet there is more. Away back in the days of Joel, when this passage was first given by inspiration, it was foreseen and foreordained that upon young men and young women, even upon children, the Lord would pour out of His Spirit in these last days...

Argue simply acknowledges that women have been “conceded the right to prophecy, to minister” and then moves on to defend the rights of the young to do likewise. She uses the examples of Eve and Mary as possible models that young people could emulate before she turns to David as an example of how a Spirit filled person should behave. Then she exhorts the youth, “Young people of Pentecost, get the vision!

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<sup>31</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 1 (December 1920), 3.

Let the fire of the Holy Ghost burn within you .... ‘For yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.’”<sup>32</sup> It was the emphasis on the imminent return of Christ, that these were the last days, which gave the Joel passage pre-eminence with its affirmation of the ministry of everyone.<sup>33</sup>

Argue’s emphasis on the imminent return of Christ is evident in other articles when she writes in the March 21, 1921 edition of the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, “How rapidly the harvest is ripening for the sickle ... The world is in a high tension of expecting ... Don’t you feel a little strange when you think of being already in the beginnings of the birth throes of a new age, a new order of things.”<sup>34</sup> In the December 1921 issue, she declares that, “the fullness of time for the return of Jesus is upon us ... The falling of the latter rain is here. There is the promised enduement of power for those who obey the injunction, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ ... Are we awake? Are we going to act, or rather let Him act through us? ... May the fire of the Holy Spirit burn within us until we reach a place of reckless daring in obeying His injunctions and believing so that He can work in power!”<sup>35</sup> When she did directly deal with women, as in her July 1922 article “Two Types of Women Described in the Bible”, Argue maintains that Pentecostal

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> See for example the article, “Do You Love the Lord’s Appearing” which states “We are a missionary people because we believe in the Second Coming of Jesus ...” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1922), 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No 4 (March 1921), 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 11 (December 1921), 4.

women, in order to not lose out “on the sweetness and power of God,” should turn to the Bible for their values and standards rather than look to “the world” which she declares is “ripening for Anti-Christ” (emphasis mine). Quoting Titus 2:8, she encourages her readers to not allow anyone to despise their youth but to set an example.<sup>36</sup> The following month, she was once again exhorting by underscoring “the Christian’s incentive for service – ‘Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be’. Rev. 22:12.” They will be rewarded and soon because “of the speedy return of the Lord.”<sup>37</sup> The sense of the imminency and unpredictability of Christ’s return was used by Argue to motivate all people, young or old, male or female, to dedicated service.<sup>38</sup>

That everyone, including women, was expected to be a “soul-winner” was the men’s understanding as well. R. E. McAlister writes in the PAOC’s periodical in October 1921 “It is the privilege of every Minister of the Gospel - of every Christian man and woman, boy and girl, to be a soul-winner.”<sup>39</sup>

In short, even though the Scriptures were comprehended as an “archetypal” document, a constellation of preunderstandings was influencing how the Scriptures were

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<sup>36</sup> Zelma Argue, “A Personal Talk to Pentecostal Young Women: Two Types of Women Described in the Bible,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (July 1922), 2-3.

<sup>37</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (August 1922), 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 6 (March 1921), 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, No. 9 (December 1921), 2.

interpreted. This constellation included the understanding that the Spirit was the One who empowered people to win others. If a woman was empowered and called by the Spirit to a particular ministry, it was not her choice but the Spirit's. Women, as well as men, were understood to have an obligation, as well as a right, to respond to the "latter rain" empowerment and call of the Spirit to evangelize the world in the last days before the Lord's imminent return. Such practice was understood to be affirmed in the Scriptures based on passages such as Acts 2 and Joel 2.

However, when Christ did not return as soon as expected, the original impulse towards viewing everyone as soul-winners who could potentially be involved in a preaching ministry was seriously undermined. Concerns surrounding the organization of the movement by the men who established the PAOC surfaced and eclipsed the earlier emphases. It was at this point that the other teachings of Scripture regarding male headship and female submission such as found in Ephesians 5, 1 Timothy 2 and Titus 2 began to come explicitly into play as preunderstandings concerning male and female relationships were assumed. As long as the movement remained relatively unorganized, questions of male headship - female submission could play themselves out on individual and local levels, remaining relatively hidden. Yet, once the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada was organized, a dominating assumption of male only leadership emerged in regards to the exercise of corporate authority and how it might function. At the same time, while warning women not to overstep their bounds and attempt to usurp authority

over men, the role of women within the home was being idealized. As the mothers of men, women were told that they had a “grander sphere” of responsibility and privilege.<sup>40</sup>

By 1927, within years of the initial chartering of the PAOC, even though Mrs. J. S. Stills repeated arguments similar to Argue’s above, she finds it necessary to use them to directly defend women’s right to preach. She writes in an article entitled, “Should Women Preach the Gospel,” “God is pouring out His Spirit today and His daughters and handmaidens are prophesying, no matter what opposition the devil puts up. God’s word is being literally fulfilled and a sign of the last days. Your sons and daughters will prophesy ...”<sup>41</sup> In her opinion, opposition to women preaching was demonic. The men who had designated themselves leaders of the PAOC did not agree. Male preunderstandings about a dominating model of male headship and the proper “place” of women within the home were taken to the “archetypal” text of Scriptures to legitimate the oppression of the women, individually and corporately, as they were placed in submission to the men and the institution. Moreover, many of the women were, and still are, supportive of that male hierarchy believing it to be divinely ordained!<sup>42</sup> With the

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<sup>40</sup> D. N. Buntain, “The Christian Wife,” in *The Pentecostal Testimony* (December 15, 1940), 3.

<sup>41</sup> J. S. Still, “Should Women Preach the Gospel,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* (June 1927), 6.

<sup>42</sup> For example, in 1988 in an article entitled “A Woman’s Place in Ministry”, Margaret Gibb, who is described as pastoring Greenfield Park Pentecostal Church, near Montreal, along with her husband Robert, writes in the July issue of the *Pentecostal Testimony* (pp. 10-11), “Pentecostal women in our nation hold firmly to the Biblical principle of male leadership and headship.” She places this position in contrast to the “feminist message of women’s rights for power and authority” which “has fallen on deaf ears, as far as our

“Christian Right” within Evangelicalism in the United States influencing Canadian Pentecostalism and its emphasis upon a patriarchal model of both family and society legitimated by the authority of Scriptures, it remains to be seen what preunderstandings will win out in the future within the PAOC.

### **Possibilities**

#### **Spirit and Experience**

Pentecostals insist that the Spirit’s involvement is a major factor in understanding the Bible as the Word of God; there is significance to the biblical text that goes beyond its function as a work of literature that can only be perceived with the aid of the Spirit. The assumption is that the Bible can be read by a non-Christian without anything of spiritual value being gained. Non-Christians are thought to be blind to the reality of God’s revelation in Scripture unless the Spirit opens their eyes. It is only when the Spirit illumines the Bible that it becomes spiritually meaningful for readers. In this sense, the language and grammatical aspects of the text are not what makes the writings the Word of God but God’s use of them. As the Word of God, the Spirit-illumined Scriptures are understood to possess transformative power and authority. This strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit in interpreting the Bible is derived by Pentecostals from the Scriptures themselves that emphasize the role of the Spirit in revealing God and God’s will.<sup>43</sup>

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women are concerned.” Margaret Gibb, “A Woman’s Place in Ministry,” *Pentecostal Testimony* July 1988: 10-11.

<sup>43</sup> For examples, such passages as John 14:26; 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10ff.

Pentecostals also stress the role of the Spirit in inspiring both the original writers and the current readers. While a distinction is made between the original Spirit *inspired* authors - resulting in the text being granted ultimate authority - and the current Spirit *illuminated* interpreter - resulting in a less binding appropriation - "... within a Pentecostal setting these 'illuminated' meanings exercise far more power over Pentecostal believers since they are perceived as carrying divine sanction and authority."<sup>44</sup> As it is the same Spirit guiding and assisting both the original authors and the modern interpreters, the historical gap between past and present is assumed to be bridged.<sup>45</sup> Expressions such as "the Spirit showed me" or "the Holy Spirit revealed to me" are commonly heard from both the pulpit and the pew regarding the interpretation and possible applications of Scripture. Multiple meanings of the biblical text are understood to apply to various situations as they arise - situations that never occurred to the original author(s). Obviously, the potential for abuse exists in such practices. In spite of this, acknowledging that there are several interpretations of a text is not the same as saying that all interpretations are correct. Any text can be misinterpreted.

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<sup>44</sup> See Cargal, pp. 10-12 and French L. Arrington, "The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals," *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 1994: 101-107, 101.

<sup>45</sup> See Roger Stronstad, "Pentecostalism, Experiential Presuppositions and Hermeneutics," *Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers*, 1990, O24 and Arrington, 101.

Regardless, within Pentecostalism, limiting the text's meaning to what the original author(s) thought is considered too restrictive.<sup>46</sup> As one Pentecostal article explains, "*understanding* involves the creative capacity of the interpreter to open up new insights which transcend the time-bound situation of the original author and the original audience. It is at this juncture where creative transcendence is needed, where the Spirit may indeed teach us and lead us into all truth."<sup>47</sup> Interpretation is thought to be both an art and a technique that involves the Word and the Spirit. Faithfulness to the text as an "archetypal" document - which provides a relatively "objective" control, along with inspired creativity which allows God to move and causes the Scriptures to function more as an "historical prototype" are both important in the interpretative process.

While this emphasis on the Spirit allows for a certain amount of fluidity when interpreting the Scriptures, it does not take into account the influence of preunderstandings in the process. Such preunderstandings have an experiential basis. Pentecostals are concerned about "religious experience." This is significant in that "Pentecostals said yes to both the authority of Scripture and the authority of experience" thereby putting the two concepts "into a creative dialectical tension."<sup>48</sup> As one

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<sup>46</sup> Such as Evangelical exegesis does. See for example, the work of Gordon Fee such as *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2002)

<sup>47</sup> Stronstad, "Pentecostalism, Experiential Presuppositions and Hermeneutics," O24.

<sup>48</sup> Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century*, 63.

Pentecostal explains, echoing the thinking of Schüssler Fiorenza and Adorno, this approach is significant.<sup>49</sup>

The Pentecostal hermeneutic that allows experience to inform interpretation brings into focus the issue of subjectivity versus objectivity. The assumption is that if the biblical text is approached from the stance of human experience, then the interpretation is more subjective; but if approached on the basis of logic and reason, the interpretation is more objective. Logic and reason occur within the human mind and, therefore, are subjective to some degree. The restriction of the hermeneutical process to reason and logic is to try to take a broader sweep of human experience and to encounter a stranger's point of view...

... Objectivity and subjectivity have been thought of as opposites. Both need to be seen as two sides of the same coin, and both need to be seen as falling in the sphere of the experience of faith that has been ignited by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. From this perspective the hermeneutical process can be viewed as dialogical rather than linear, so that, at every point, experience informs the process of interpretation and the fruit of interpretation informs experience. So Pentecostals admit that their praxis informs what they find in Scripture, and they go on to acknowledge that what they find in Scripture informs their Pentecostal praxis.

An example from early Pentecostal history illustrates how preunderstanding arising from experience influences the interpretation of the Bible. In its relatively egalitarian and inclusive beginnings at Azusa Street, the early Pentecostal movement understood itself to be representative of a "full" gospel. This "full" gospel not only emphasized experiences of the Spirit as part of a five fold<sup>50</sup> gospel but also included the understanding that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was good news not only for a privileged

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<sup>49</sup> Arrington, "The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals," 105-106.

<sup>50</sup> "Five-fold" gospel refers to the Christological understanding within some portions of Pentecostalism that Jesus is Saviour, Sanctifier, Baptizer in the Spirit, Healer and Soon Coming King. Donald W. Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 19-21. For an examination from several Pentecostal perspectives see "The Fivefold Gospel," *Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers*. March 13-15, 1997. Patten College, Oakland, California.

few but for *all* people of all nations - male, female, black, white, young, old rich, poor, educated, uneducated, whomever.<sup>51</sup> This preunderstanding was then taken to the Bible. Affirmation was found there in such passages as Acts 2:17, 18. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy..."<sup>52</sup> Passages such as this one with an inclusive theme were emphasized as they were understood to be more in line with the "full" gospel than such passages as 1 Corinthians 14:34 "Let your women keep silence in the churches..." or Ephesians 6:5 "Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters..." which were not stressed. The preunderstanding of what constituted the "full" gospel<sup>53</sup> and the plain, literal sense of the Bible were brought together in order to discern what God was saying in and through the Scriptures.<sup>54</sup> These early Pentecostals were moving *from* their own experiences (including experiences of life - such as being looked down

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<sup>51</sup> C. M. Robeck, Jr., "Azusa Street Revival," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988): 34-36, 34. *Apostolic Faith* 1. No. 1 (Sept. 1906): 2.

<sup>52</sup> This passage is quoted in full or part throughout *The Apostolic Faith*. The quotes in this section are from the then commonly used King James Version.

<sup>53</sup> "Full Gospel" is the way that Pentecostals refer to versions of Christianity which take the Holy Spirit as real and active seriously by including experiences of the Spirit in the life and ministry of the churches and people.

<sup>54</sup> An interesting exercise would be to make a list of the passages of Scriptures used in William Seymour's *The Apostolic Faith* and those *not* used.

upon by more privileged folk - and experiences interpreted as being of the Spirit - such as women being called and anointed by the Spirit) to the Spirit inspired and illumined Scriptures which were interpreted in light of the preunderstanding of what constituted the “full gospel” within a communal context, through oral testifying and preaching, so that the community could evaluate the interpretations and add an “amen.” Such a process was powerful, accountable and dependent upon the ongoing activity of the Spirit within their midst. Several aspects of these Pentecostal practices of interpretation which would most likely not qualify as meeting the criterion of “objectivity” continue today in Pentecostal corporate worship services and have yet to be completely evaluated for their promise and problems including an adequate assessment of what constitutes the “full gospel,” the experiential aspects, the part played by the community and the *Spirit's involvement in the whole dialectical and dialogical process*.

Pentecostals tend to move from their experience of God to the Bible.<sup>55</sup> If their experiences are not supported by the Pentecostal community's interpretation of Scripture, they are suspect.<sup>56</sup> As one Pentecostal explains, such an approach has advantages in that the authority of Scripture is not founded upon a “bedrock of doctrine” but rather doctrine rests on the experience of encountering God as Spirit. Therefore these doctrinal

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<sup>55</sup> Hermeneutically, a common criticism of Pentecostals, particularly by evangelicals, is that they “eisegete their experience into the text.” However, many Pentecostals feel no need to defend this approach. See for example Roger Stronstad, “Pentecostal Experience and Hermeneutics,” *Paraclete* (Winter 1992): 16-26.

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, “Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, Issue 8 (April 1996): 63-81, 77-78 quoting M. McLean, “Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic,” *Pneuma* 6.2 (1984), 38.

positions, various practices and even unexamined assumptions about how things should be or are - such as patriarchy - can be challenged and corrected without doing damage to the core of Pentecostal faith - i. e. an encounter with God as Spirit and the outworkings of that encounter. Pentecostals are not likely to enter into a “fight to the death” in defence of rational, doctrinal statements and the potential is there to think critically about their practices and positions.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, authority itself is fluid, not embedded or grounded in the above-mentioned “bedrock of doctrine” but understood to reside with human experiences of the Spirit.

Experiences and Scriptures are being used as sources within Pentecostalism along with reason and Pentecostal communal tradition. Due to the lack of acknowledgement of the direction of this movement - from experiences to the Scriptures - confusion and conflict arise. Recognition of the direction of this movement could help resolve this confusion and conflict when it comes to the “women question” as well as other issues. Once the direction of the movement is acknowledged, experiences can be critically analyzed using reason and Pentecostal communal tradition in order to decide which experiences are in keeping with the good news of the gospel for *all* people.

Pentecostalism’s fundamentalistic tendencies, even when they attempt to function as a counter balance, are incongruent with their experientialist practices. Pentecostals understand themselves to have experienced the Spirit Who empowers them to live out the

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<sup>57</sup> The exception, of course, is those Pentecostal groups that have aligned themselves with the more fundamentalistic evangelicals. As well, this is not to suggest that doctrines are unimportant to Pentecostals. Doctrines are very important. However “Pentecostals base their faith *first* on the God that they have met and know in relationship ...” Scott A. Ellington, “Pentecostalism and the Authority of Scripture,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 9 (1996): 16-38, 17-18.

ramifications of that experience. Pentecostals are constantly seeking to discern and experience the Spirit. There are no clear guidelines as to what experiences should be considered, as everything and anything has the potential to be considered an experience of the Spirit. Experiences are considered of primary importance in that they are what are used to make sense of and make up lives. Pentecostals start with what they consider to be experiences of the Spirit and then reflect on them.

Even so, when it comes to the liberation of women, Schüssler Fiorenza cautions that the methodological starting point for hermeneutics cannot be a “commonsense” type of experience alone. Experiences along with values and mind-sets can be critically reflected upon and analyzed.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Role of the Community**

For Schüssler Fiorenza, reflection and analysis of experience are carried on within the *ekklesia* of wo/men. Within this *ekklesia* of wo/men, feminist discourses seek “to persuade the democratic assembly and to adjudicate arguments in order to make decisions for the sake of everyone’s welfare.”<sup>59</sup> As she describes it, wo/men church is not a “site of competing confessional discourses.” Rather, it is a “rhetorical space from where to assert women’s theological authority to determine the interpretation of Christian scriptures, tradition, theology, and community” where “the divine breath of life” invigorates “all and everyone” and authority is derived from the “experience of G-d’s liberating presence in

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

<sup>59</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 131.

today's struggles to end patriarchal domination"<sup>60</sup> and historical and kyriarchal contexts.<sup>61</sup> She argues that the "authority of inspiration" is not limited to only certain people or even texts but is given to the whole church as comprised of people who are "enlivened and empowered by the life-giving breath of Sophia-Spirit."<sup>62</sup> She declares, "inspiration must not be understood as a reified given in biblical texts but as inherent in the practices of a critical interpretation for liberation."<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, Schüssler Fiorenza claims that "inspiration" as "the life-giving breath and power of Sophia-Spirit" did not cease once canonization occurred. The Spirit remains active today. She calls for a return to the "practice of 'discerning the spirit' as a deliberative rhetorical spiritual practice"<sup>64</sup> not only in everything the church does but also more specifically within "the people of Sophia-G-d who are women," who are "sisters of the Spirit." To Schüssler Fiorenza's words could be added "brothers" as through the ages such sisters and brothers of the Spirit have proclaimed the gospel in the authority of the Spirit, thereby overcoming racial and gender prejudices along with social and educational disadvantages.<sup>65</sup> While "discerning the Spirit" is supposedly a regular practice in Pentecostal circles, rarely has anyone dared to ask what "spirit" is being manifested in a

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 152.

<sup>61</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 10-14.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

<sup>63</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 163.

<sup>64</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 88.

<sup>65</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 156-157.

community where androcentric assumptions and kyriarchal practices continue to silence and restrict Spirit gifted and called women and men. Moreover, what “spirit” is being manifested when Scriptures are appealed to in order to undermine the Spirit’s authority to blow where She will?

While Schüssler Fiorenza's location of inspiration primarily in the practices of the *ekklesia* of wo/men is debatable, her point that inspiration is a result of the breath and power of the Spirit and is, therefore, not to be located in the Bible alone, is valid. For Pentecostals, inspiration, with its inherent authority, resides with the Spirit Who continues to gift and empower people and to illumine the Scriptures. Therefore, experiences and the Scriptures can be critically examined to discern those portions that appear to legitimate oppression from those which are liberating.<sup>66</sup> The influence that experience exerts within Pentecostalism is both strength and a weakness.

In early Pentecostalism, the Spirit inspired and illumined Scriptures were understood to be authoritative. As the *Apostolic Faith* declares, “We are feeding upon the Word which is revealed by the Holy Ghost - the whole Word and nothing but the Word,” even though certain portions of that Word, such as the above mentioned “Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters...,” were not expounded.<sup>67</sup> Yet, the Spirit was also understood to be empowering people to speak with authority. As *The Apostolic Faith* explains, “‘He will guide you into all truth.’ We ought to take the Holy Ghost

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<sup>66</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone*, 10-14.

<sup>67</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, No. 7 (April 1906): 2.

before any other teacher. We should have no teacher between us and the Holy Ghost.”<sup>68</sup>

Authority was also being exercised through people telling and retelling their stories of how the Spirit was at work in their lives thereby examining and re-examining the interpretations of the Bible in the light of the insights of all Spirit filled believers.<sup>69</sup>

Intentional effort was made to allow all to contribute including non-elite men and women regardless of race or social class.

Part of the living out of the gospel for Pentecostals includes paying attention to context, discerning the Spirit at work in the world drawing the world toward God, while at the same time noting the evil that must be confronted and challenged. This involves paying attention to voices, to perspectives, which they may not be eager to hear, prophetically calling the movement to account for how it is living out the gospel in the power of the Spirit.

### **A Provisional Way Forward**

#### **The Possibilities of Conscientization**

Convinced that “wo/men have internalized and are shaped by kyriarchal ‘commonsense’ mind-sets and values,” Schüssler Fiorenza maintains, “the hermeneutical starting point of critical feminist interpretation can only be wo/men’s experience of injustice as it has been critically explored by a hermeneutics of suspicion in the process of ‘conscientization.’” According to Schüssler Fiorenza, a feminist critical process of

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<sup>68</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* 1, No. 6 (February-March 1907): 1.

<sup>69</sup> *The Apostolic Faith* is full of such stories, testimonies, sermons, etc.

conscientization “strives to create critical consciousness and has as its goal both a praxis of solidarity and a commitment to feminist struggles that seek to transform patriarchal relations of subordination and expression.” Accompanied by cognitive dissonance, conscientization includes “‘breakthrough’ and ‘disclosure’ experiences” which bring into question the ‘common-sense’ character of patriarchal reality.”<sup>70</sup>

Within the Pentecostal community, women can be heard. Even so, before they speak, they must become aware of their own internalization of patriarchal assumptions. Otherwise, their speech will simply reinforce their own subordinate positions and undervalued contributions. Pentecostal women can become self-aware - have their “consciousness raised” - and then act. Perhaps a place to begin is with the recovery of their own somewhat egalitarian history and hermeneutic that involves experiences and community as discussed above.

Schüssler Fiorenza points out that feminist approaches, being explicitly committed to the struggle to change patriarchal structures, “must disentangle the ideological (religious-theological) functions of biblical texts for inculcating and legitimating the patriarchal order.”<sup>71</sup> Within the Pentecostal community, this would include the ideology of male headship reinforced by patriarchal interpretations of Scripture. As mentioned earlier, Schüssler Fiorenza also notes that “there is no place outside ideology from which one can critique ideology. One can only critique an ideology by locating oneself in another one, or by using the contradictions within a single

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<sup>70</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *Sharing Her Word*, 82.

<sup>71</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said*, 41.

ideology to uncover its disjunctures and opposing relations.”<sup>72</sup> Although a difficult position to be in, being both explicitly Pentecostal and feminist could prove fruitful.

### **The Possibilities of a Self Reflective Exercise of Authority**

Schüssler Fiorenza emphasizes that many hermeneutical discussions revolve around the issue of authority. The Pentecostal community is caught up in this conversation, the debate concerning the role of women within the church being a case in point. Still, her concern regarding the issue of authority tends to overlook the fact that in any relationship power and authority is being exercised - i.e. her own as an “expert” in feminist theology including her concept of “women church” as a democracy of equals. Schüssler Fiorenza also seems to assume that authority is always exercised in dominating ways. It, of course, can be, but does not necessarily have to be. Relocating authority from the biblical text to a woman affirming community inspired by the Spirit may not correct the problem of the misuse of authority. Even a woman affirming community is comprised of women and women identified men who have been saturated with patriarchal assumptions from which it is difficult to disentangle themselves. There is a very real danger of reproducing oppressions of various types. As well, the biblical text has always been interpreted by a community, Spirit inspired or not. Within Pentecostalism, which was Spirit focused and woman affirming (as well as racially and socially inclusive) in its beginning, patriarchy/kyriarchy still eventually became the unquestioned model of relationships. Conscientization might help. Yet, even that involves interaction with and interpretation of the biblical text. The problem is not so

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

much to dismiss, ignore or argue against the authority of Scripture as much as to exercise that authority in a healthier way.

A method that honours the Bible, recognizing that it has the potential to speak and influence in nondominating ways, is preferable. Schüssler Fiorenza and Pentecostals are not primarily concerned with the historical facts of the biblical text (although historical questions do enter into the interpretative process). Instead both focus on the symbolic meaning of the text, ascertaining that meaning through “imaginative reconstruction” (Schüssler Fiorenza) or “Spirit illumination” coupled with various evangelical methodologies (Pentecostals). The meaning of the text applies then today as “women church” (Schüssler Fiorenza) or “Spirit-filled believers” (Pentecostals). The possibilities and potentialities of this dialectical model that brings together the role of Bible and the role of the community linked by the Spirit in the process of interpretation deserve exploration. Within this dialectic the Bible acts as a meta-narrative or a “historical prototype” as Schüssler Fiorenza calls it, in the sense of being a significant resource of stories and teachings illustrating how the Spirit of God has acted within the lives of people in the past. As within Pentecostalism it is assumed that the self-same Spirit inspired the recording of this material and continues to illumine its interpretation, it then becomes a significant source of inspiration for Pentecostals’ ongoing lives together. As such, the Bible would provide the consistency for the ongoing living out of the biblical narrative in a creative fashion acting as an authoritative text that can be constantly re-examined to determine whether its interpretation is promoting abundant life for all, in accordance with the Spirit, or only for a privileged few. In addition, “that we

may have life, and have it more abundantly” is an often repeated phrase within Pentecostal congregations. Within Canadian Pentecostal worship contexts, one of the reasons for being filled with the Spirit is so that people might receive the power or be empowered to experience life in all its fullness and abundance.

### **The Possibilities of Pentecostal Particularities**

The Pentecostal community’s attempt to continue to live out the implications of their Christian commitment in creative ways consistent with their context would be the other side of the dialectical relationship. Pentecostals often speak of being an “Acts 29 people” indicating that they consider the story of the Bible to be ongoing. The attempt can be regularly examined to see how it continues the story of the Bible. As the Bible is considered not essentially a doctrinal treatise, but a “record of testimonies, a story of the relationship between God and his creation”, it witnesses to the “diverse ways in which the biblical authors *experienced* the revelation of God.” This lends itself to the attempt at continuing to experience the revelation of God.

It is the Spirit bringing the various aspect of the biblical text to life that the community would then recognize as relevant and authoritative, compelling and enabling them to apply these insights to particular continuing contexts in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit illuminated Scriptures serve as judge and corrector of experiences while at the same time pushing towards the possibilities of new realities being recognized and realized. While Spirit illuminated Scripture may be the final authority, such authority does not become concretized in doctrinal positions. Such an approach should be

conducive to the conscientization process because all voices are being heard and considered.

### Conclusion

In order to be considered humane, any thinking, including theological thinking, must remain intentionally self-reflective and critical in order to identify and analyze those aspects of a movement or tradition which hold emancipatory potential and those aspects which are oppressive. Within Pentecostalism, a move away from dogmatic, biblical text and theology with its apologetic and polemical attitudes toward doctrines and articles of faith can be undertaken. As American Pentecostal scholar, Frank Macchia has explained in a work dealing with global Pentecostalism,

... within Anglo-American Pentecostalism with its concern to remain acceptable to Christian Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, systematic theology has been equated with scripturally supported doctrines which summarize Pentecostal beliefs. As a result, dialogical, contextual, critical and creative reflection on those beliefs and their implications for social and cultural issues has been lacking and needs to be encouraged.<sup>73</sup>

Nevertheless, Macchia continues,<sup>74</sup>

Afro-American, marginalized Pentecostals in the United States and Two Thirds World Pentecostals have focused on "experience" validated only by the "text of Scriptures and the experience of the Spirit in the daily lives of those searching to be faithful to Jesus Christ." As a result, some "theological creativity" has

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<sup>73</sup> Frank Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology," *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, Eds. (Carlisle, California: Regnum Books, 1999): 8-29, 8-9.

<sup>74</sup> Macchia draws on the work of another Pentecostal scholar, Russ Spittler. *Ibid*, 10-11.

emerged and is reflected in preaching, various publications and "non-official expressions of church life."

According to Macchia, a "paradigm shift" is occurring within Pentecostal theology from a theology of "Bible doctrines" to the "rise of critical theology" which is prophetically concerned for personal and social liberation. As Macchia highlights,<sup>75</sup>

If Pentecostal spirituality is to become identified with liberating praxis, an ongoing discernment of the forces of deception and their ideological defences utilized by corporate power to maintain the status quo will need to be utilized by Pentecostal communities of faith.

Although overcoming kyriarchal attitudes and practices within Pentecostalism will not be easy, it is possible. Pentecostals are intensely interested in liberation, in life abundant for *all*. There is an underlying, emancipatory impulse in Pentecostalism dating from its origins. Its continuing growth among oppressed, marginalized peoples continues to be fertile ground for this liberative lens. Today Pentecostalism is in a position to reclaim its liberative stance and explicitly and intentionally reapply such a stance to all those within its own midst who are experiencing oppression, not only at the hands of others, but also as a result of its unacknowledged harmful, ideological presuppositions and its incongruent hermeneutical practices. Pentecostal people will hopefully once again recognize that life experiences, including experiences of the Spirit, are influencing how Scriptures are read and appropriated. These experiences, if critically discerned and evaluated, will assist in interpreting and appropriating the Scriptures in a fashion that is liberative rather than oppressive. This will require Pentecostalism to re-emphasize its natural tendency to move from experiences to the Scriptures and resist pressures to

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<sup>75</sup>*Ibid*, 8-13.

reverse this tendency. Pentecostal scholar, Stephen E. Parker has brought together, among others, Freud,<sup>76</sup> Tillich<sup>77</sup> and Pentecostal congregational practices in order to make suggestions for discernment and decision making. Pentecostals can read Scriptures and examine diverse experiences more discerningly and intentionally in ways which move “beyond exegetical and historical dialogues” while also retaining “an emphasis on the role and authority of experience.”<sup>78</sup> These include insights gleaned from the experiences of women and those of other oppressed groups within its midst in order to recognize and to interpret passages with kyriarchal frameworks in a fashion which truly makes the gospel "good news" for all. As Pentecostal Christians, both experiences of the Spirit and the Scriptures can be acknowledged as possessing authority by virtue of the fact that they are "of the Spirit." It is the Spirit as God who is, and who grants, authority. As the Spirit is understood to be constantly moving, different people and Biblical texts are constantly being authorized and empowered. Authority shifts as the Spirit moves. To statically locate authority within one book, office or person is to undermine the Spirit's authority and independent agency. The Spirit blows where She<sup>79</sup> wills.

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<sup>76</sup> Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 7, John Christopher Thomas, Rickie D. Moore, Steven J. Land, Eds., (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 117-144.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 145-173.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>79</sup> My preferred pronoun for referring to the Spirit, rather than the more commonly used “he” or “it.” Part of my reason for doing so is to raise awareness about the use of “he” commonly used within Pentecostalism and how it feeds into the assumption that God is male.

Perhaps a place to begin is with the recognition that identity thinking is occurring within Pentecostalism and is exercising power and has been granted the authority to do so. Once this recognition has occurred, a recovery of Pentecostal people's own various histories and an acknowledgement that their identity as Pentecostals are connected to their experiences of the Spirit is in order. One particularly useful way Pentecostals can do this is to adopt Adorno's non-identity thinking in order to develop their own identity. That way Pentecostals may begin to acknowledge that there is no such thing as a "typical" Pentecostal. Pentecostalism globally is noticeably diverse. Within Canada, it is also multi-faceted, becoming more so each year as new waves of immigrants arrive in Canada bringing with them their version of Pentecostal spirituality. The sooner Pentecostals acknowledge their diversity<sup>80</sup> along with their particularity as being people who focus on the Spirit, the better it will be for those peoples within their midst who are being dominated, even if it is unconsciously, by elite, Caucasian male Pentecostals.

While some Pentecostals may wish to identify themselves as also being Fundamentalist, Evangelical, Catholic, Latin American or not Pentecostal at all, such as in some of the African Initiated Churches and some of the house church movements in China, the point is, there is no such thing as a typical Pentecostal. Diversity is the norm. The only thing that Pentecostals have in common is that they all emphasize experiences

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<sup>80</sup> Academic Pentecostalism is aware of this diversity. See for instance "Affirming Diversity," *Society of Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers*. November 10-12, 1994. Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois and "Towards Healing Our Divisions: Reflecting on Pentecostal Diversity and Common Witness," *Society of Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers*. March 11-13, 1999. Evangel University, Springfield, Missouri.

of the Spirit and even that is interpreted in many different ways. Pentecostals are people who claim to have experiences of the Spirit Who blows where She will - which is non-determinable. Their identity beyond that resides in the parts of the concept "Pentecostal" into which Pentecostals do not fit. That is both part of Pentecostalism's strength and its weakness. Pentecostalism is easily adaptable to various contexts, has the potential to influence many peoples, is always in flux and transformation, is not easily pigeonholed or analyzed, has the potential to remain radical and counter-cultural and is not easily controlled, except by an exceptionally charismatic figure. It is at this point that Adorno's variety of utopism comes into play. "Utopia would be above identity and above contradiction; it would be a togetherness of diversity."<sup>81</sup> The idea of utopia also serves other liberative functions as shall be demonstrated in the next chapter.

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 150.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **APOCALYPTIC ESCHATOLOGY, NEGATIVE DIALECTICS, UTOPIC THINKING AND LIBERATIVE TRANSFORMATION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will explore the problems and possibilities of an apocalyptic eschatology, negative dialectics and utopic thinking as they pertain to hope of liberative transformation for ministering women within Pentecostalism.

#### **Marx and the Progressive Possibility of Religion's Utopic Thinking**

Marx's view of religion was interwoven with his comprehensive analysis of modern capitalism that still holds an important position within discussions regarding the causes and conditions of classed life. In keeping with the Enlightenment emphasis on reason and rationality and its suspicion and rejection of faith and belief, Marx was critical of religion. He considered religion to be both an embodiment of eschatological hopes and an expression of true suffering. However, his view of religion was dialectical in that he also thought of it as a distraction from real life and a legitimating of inhuman conditions.

In one of his early works, *Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* written in 1843, Marx pronounced "the critique of religion as essentially complete."<sup>1</sup> According to Hegel, human history is the process of God coming to self-consciousness, a fact that can only be understood as the process nears its completion and God becomes sufficiently self-aware. Hegel considered Christianity to be the mature religion of this process.<sup>2</sup>

However, Ludwig Feuerbach in *The Essence of Christianity* insisted that humanity projects all that is deemed good, desirable, valuable and perfect within humanity expanded to an infinite degree unto God. Therefore, rather than God creating humanity in God's image, humanity created God in its image. Christianity is not historical but a fictional projection. Humanity worships this God of Christianity rather than recognizing and developing its own innate characteristics. In the process, efforts to develop a fully human world populated by beings living a fully human life are thwarted. The solution, according to Feuerbach was to recognize as truly and fully human that which is being projected, that God was an illusion and so is the invention of religion.<sup>3</sup>

Marx agreed with Feuerbach. Still, he went even further by not only challenging religion but also the political structures and elites that appealed to such religion for their authority. He also explored the phenomena of religion generally seeking to discern its

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<sup>1</sup> David McLellan, ed., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 70.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Wolff, *Why Read Marx Today?* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 16-19.

causes. Marx concluded that it was the suffering and deprivation of the working conditions of ordinary people within an industrialized, capitalist context which produced the desire and the need for a euphoric but destructive painkiller – religion, “the opium of the people” – in order to attempt to exist within their miserable and inhumane conditions. Unfortunately, while religion alleviated the symptoms, it also was masking the true causes of the painful conditions.

Marx’s analysis of such conditions was ruthless and sweeping. Until the true causes of human misery were addressed, religion would remain as an illusionary but necessary aspect of survival. Conversely, remove the causes of the problem and the need for the symptom relief, religion, would vanish of its own accord.<sup>4</sup> The type of religion to which Marx objected was that which legitimates elites and pacifies the oppressed.

In short, according to Marx, within a capitalist context, economic and material conditions not only ground and influence the social, political and cultural aspects of life involving corporate and communal life, they affect what people think about and how they think, even how they view themselves. While on the one hand, what people think and how they view themselves may arise out of material conditions, on the other hand, thinking and identities may also, dialectically, reinforce material conditions, intentionally or unconsciously. Therefore, as the problems of life within a capitalist context are intertwined with materialist concerns, solutions are also intertwined in real-life, material activities. Hegel’s form of idealism, with its emphasis on the mind, consciousness and ideas, had to be turned on its head so that concrete, material existence in the form of

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, 19-21.

economic, political, social and cultural factors could be focused upon in order for its ideals of human emancipation to be realized. If religious thinking, particularly the aspects of it which engage in protest and what may be very well be utopic thinking within such an inhumane world, could be prophetically utilized to denounce and undermine elites and empower and sustain the poor and marginalized and to bring about social change, there may be some usefulness to it.

### **Negative Dialectics and Transformation**

In his rejection of the understanding of reality as one unified totality or even orderly, Adorno argued that humanity's perceptions and interpretations, including philosophical systems, are socially and historically determined, thereby creating a reality which is subjective, partial and reflective of the sanctioned rationality and organization of specific societies. Adorno disagreed with Engels and Marx that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."<sup>5</sup> Rather, he was concerned about the actual, historical limitations placed on individuals regardless of their class. As he asserts,<sup>6</sup>

To this day history lacks any total subject, however construable. Its substrate is the functional connection of real individual subjects: "History does nothing, does not 'possess vast wealth,' does not 'fight battles'! It is man, rather, the real, living man who does all that, who does possess and fight; it is not

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<sup>5</sup> Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Community Party," in Tucker, Robert C., Ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd Edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1972, 1978): 469-500, 473.

<sup>6</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, E. B. Ashton, Trans. (New York: Continuum, 1966, 1973), p. 304. Quote from Marx and Engels, *Die heilige Familie* (Berlin, 1953), 211.

‘history’ that uses man as a means to pursue its ends, as if it were a person apart. History is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his ends.” Nevertheless, history is equipped with those qualities because society’s law of motion has for thousands of years been abstracting from its individual subjects, degrading them to mere executioners, mere partners in wealth and social struggle. The debasement was as real as the fact that on the other hand there would be nothing without individuals and their spontaneities.

Adorno explicitly rejected comprehensive philosophical systems such as Hegel’s, replacing them with an approach that emphasized the immediate historical nature of questions arising from the human condition particularly in its unintentional form<sup>7</sup> He attempted to re-interpret the disparate perceptions, the “undifferentiated smallest unities” which he highlighted in his critique of identity thinking, to provisionally create partial portions of reality rather than an entire system.<sup>8</sup>

Never assuming for a moment that he could solve any riddles through his philosophical interpretation of reality, Adorno engaged in an “immanent critique,” or “argument from within”<sup>9</sup> in the hopes of challenging any universalizing philosophical systems that would seek to merge philosophy and history with real historical happenings. Adorno insisted upon a sustained negative dialectic that would “think against our

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<sup>7</sup> Theodor Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” *The Adorno Reader*, Brian O’Connor, Ed. (London, England: Blackwell, 2000), 31-32.

<sup>8</sup> Adorno viewed music and art as two particularly adept expressions of negating identity thinking and, thus, posing a challenge to the society status quo. See for instance, his *Aesthetic Theory*, Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, Eds., Robert Hullot-Kentor, Trans., Ed. and Introduction (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 1-15, quote 185.

<sup>9</sup> Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 66.

thought.”<sup>10</sup> In Adorno’s approach “dialectics is neither a pure method nor a reality in the naïve sense of the word.” It is not a pure method because “contradictory,” “unreconciled matter” which “resists any attempt at unanimous interpretation” rather than “thought” is what “brings us to dialectics.” In his dialectics Adorno attempted to philosophize “concrete things” rather than about them “without advance assurance of the thought.”<sup>11</sup> Additionally, Adorno’s dialectics was not “a simple reality” because dialectics involves thinking “in contradictions, for the sake of the contradiction once experienced in the things, and against that contradiction. A contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against reality.”<sup>12</sup> Basically, Adorno sought to demonstrate the untruth of what passes for truth within modern enlightenment thought.

As far as he was concerned, his theoretical work was an important aspect of the empirical procedures and concrete aims of critical theory in that it was the foundational methodology that allowed for ongoing critical rational reflexivity capable of challenging the assumptions and distortions of the status quo.<sup>13</sup> In the process Adorno was “strongly committed” to maintaining “a connection between experience and rationality” so much so

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<sup>10</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, E. B. Ashton, Trans. (New York: Continuum, 1966, 1973), 141.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 33

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 144-145.

<sup>13</sup> Brian O’Connor, *Adorno’s Negative Dialectic: Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: MIT Press, 2004), p. ix.

that he refutes “philosophical positions that fail to recognize the structure of experience” thereby depriving “themselves of the ability to express themselves rationally.”<sup>14</sup>

According to O’Connor, Adorno viewed experience as an open “process” and “structure of reciprocity and transformation” “in which ... one (a subject) is affected and changed by confrontation with some aspect of objective reality (an object).”<sup>15</sup> As Adorno explained, in contrast to idealism’s philosophies which enchant and make “absolute” the concept, “reduce ... phenomena to a minimum of propositions,” “confine the essence” in “finite definitions” and believes they possess an “infinite object,” Adorno posited a nontotalistic, “changed philosophy” which “would be nothing but full, unreduced experience in the medium of conceptual reflection.”<sup>16</sup>

Adorno rejected the Frankfurt School’s earlier emphasis on placing information and facts within a larger conceptual totality as another form of ahistorical, identity thinking that wrongly collapsed object and subject even as it legitimated the status quo. In its place he posited an ontologically and epistemologically based approach that refused to offer any solution to this world’s woes even as it insisted that reason has failed; the concept has not captured its object. In contrast to philosophical idealism’s assumptions,

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<sup>14</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. xix. While outside the parameters of this project, Adorno’s insistence on the necessity of taking into account experience as an essential aspect of rationality is an important point that Pentecostals, with their own emphasis on experience as reasonable, would do well to consider in depth.

<sup>15</sup> O’Connor, *Adorno’s Negative Dialectic*, 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 13.

he insisted that it is not possible to find final answers or uncover truth.<sup>17</sup> The most that can be expected is to highlight momentarily the disjuncture between systems of thought and the actual experiences of history. As he explains, “Unlike science, philosophy knows no fixed sequence of question and answer. Its question must be shaped by its experience, so as to catch up with the experience. Its answers are not given, not made, not generated: they are the recoil of the unfolded, transparent question.”<sup>18</sup>

Adorno linked his insights regarding negative dialectics and identity thinking to the questions of “theory and praxis” and “subject and object.” As he explained it, “At the same time as the Cartesian doctrine of two substances ratified the dichotomy of subject and object” coupled with the “Cartesian doctrine of the indubitable certainty of the subject,” literature for the first time portrayed praxis as a dubious undertaking on account of its tension with reflection.” Furthermore, he speculated “whether in its indifference toward its object, all nature-dominating praxis up to the present day is not in fact praxis in name only.” Therefore, a “consciousness of theory and praxis must be produced” that does not divide the subject and object or theory and praxis so that theory will not become “powerless” nor result in arbitrary praxis. Unfortunately, the “irrationality of praxis that continually resurfaces ... unceasingly animates the illusion of

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<sup>17</sup> Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” *The Adorno Reader*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 63.

the absolute division between subject and object.” Therefore, some hard thinking needed to occur.<sup>19</sup>

Adorno’s dialectic, which does not suppress contradictions nor try to force concepts into a particular identity, may appear “divergent, dissonant, negative for just as long as the structure of our consciousness obliges it to strive for unity.”<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, his negative dialectic is more representative of reality partly due to its realistic refusal to claim to represent a total or unified truth or system. While one would hope that such contradictions would encourage a self-reflective movement beyond what it currently considered normative, an unreasonable inertia manifests itself refusing to revise particular social beliefs with the understanding of reality and the contemporary situations that reflect them. While individual thinkers may note contradictions and deem them intolerable, in the service of social self-preservation and stability, corporate, cultural identity thinking and the domination it legitimates not only asserts itself but flourishes as it reproduces itself through the lives of people. Few of these people recognize the irrationality and contradiction of their lives, believing themselves to be uncompromised, autonomous human beings. It is at this point that Adorno’s variety of utopism comes into

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<sup>19</sup> Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, Henry W. Pickford, Trans. and Preface (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 259- 263.

<sup>20</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5. Using non-identity thinking when it comes to Pentecostalism’s ministering women is a concrete example of movement towards Adorno’s utopic idea. See Chapter 6, *The Nature and Power of Identity Thinking*, for a discussion of this matter.

play. “Utopia would be above identity and above contradiction; it would be a togetherness of diversity.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Horkheimer**

As far as Horkheimer was concerned, religion is an expression of the justice longed for by those who have experienced suffering which in turn produces a longing, an image and a hope for some sort of perfect justice. “Religion is the record of the wishes, desires, and accusations of countless generations.” Unfortunately, as far as Horkheimer was concerned, the institutionalized churches of Christianity were too enmeshed in the culture to continue the struggle for social justice resulting in this religious, justice-seeking impulse becoming undermined. As he explains,<sup>22</sup>

However, the more Christianity brought God’s rule into harmony with events in the world, the more the meaning of religion became perverted. In Catholicism God was already regarded as in certain respects the creator of the earthly order, while Protestantism attributed the world’s course directly to the will of the Almighty. Not only was the state of affairs on earth at any given moment transfigured with the radiance of divine justice, but the latter was itself brought down to the level of the corrupt relations which mark earthly life. Christianity lost its function of expressing the ideal, to the extent that it became the bedfellow of the state.

While religion was a repository for and an expression of the longing and hope, oftentimes utopian, for justice and equality, it also serves as a smoke screen hiding the real life causes for them here in this world. Attention to moral matters, or the condition of their “inner (wo)man,” or the promise of heaven for those who were in right

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>22</sup> Max Horkheimer, “Thoughts on Religion,” *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, Michael J. O’Connell & Others, Transl., (New York: Continuum, 1972): 129-131, 129.

relationship with God can mask the reality that many injustices and inequalities begin and can end here on earth through human efforts. As a result “true discipleship” in the form of an “image of perfect justice,” whether an idealistic and illusionary one or not, often leads many people away from religion. Again, Horkheimer explains,<sup>23</sup>

The productive kind of criticism of the status quo which found expression in earlier times as a belief in a heavenly judge today takes the form of a struggle for more rational forms of societal life. But just as reason after Kant, even though it knows better, cannot avoid falling into shattered but nonetheless recurring illusions, so too, ever since the transition from religious longing to conscious social practice, there continues to exist an illusion which can be exposed but not entirely banished. It is the image of a perfect justice.

While Horkheimer wanted to focus attention on the actual hope and longing for perfect justice, he was not doing so naively. As far as he was concerned, perfect justice in this world was an illusion.<sup>24</sup> The hope for the church, then, in Horkheimer’s view, is to recognize that “its position rests on the belief that absolute justice is not simply a projection of men’s mind but a real eternal power...”<sup>25</sup> For Horkheimer, utopia was the “longing for the wholly other,” a religious longing that hoped for justice and well-being for all.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 131.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 129-130.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 130.

<sup>26</sup> Marsha Hewitt, “Charles Davis and the ‘Warm Current’ of Critical Theology: A Feminist Critical Appreciation”, in *The Promise of Critical Theology: Essays in Honour of Charles Davis*, Marc P. Lalonde, Editor (Waterloo, Ontario: Published for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion by Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1995): 117-135, 118 quoting from Max Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen, Ein Interview mit Kommentar von Helmut Gumnior* (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1970).

## Adorno's Sustained Negativity and Transformation

### Adorno and Benjamin's Approach

Adorno picked up on some of Walter Benjamin's insights and translated them into his own work as he set about developing his own "inverse theology."<sup>27</sup> It was Adorno and Benjamin's hope that they could not only "rescue the religious contents from the myths" that humankind had developed throughout its "long march from animality to freedom" but also to "rescue the modern world from itself" by helping it "resist the always new attacks of repaganization, re-mythologization and most of all re-barbarization."<sup>28</sup> Both attempted "to rescue semantic material from the depth of the myths through a theological inversion: by letting them migrate into the discourses of the different secular expert cultures, and into profane political action." Both understood that this "secularization process could not be stopped."<sup>29</sup>

This understanding of theology's secularization can be noted in Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy (concept) of History." In Thesis I, theology is a power to be reckoned with which could be used in the service of historical materialism if kept "out of

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<sup>27</sup> Adorno, "On the Morality of Thinking," *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London, New York: Verso, 1974, 2005): 73-75, 73-74.

<sup>28</sup> Siebert, *The Critical Theory of Religion: The Frankfurt School* (Lanham, Maryland, and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 8-9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23 quoting Adorno from "Th. W. Adorno and Benjamin" (Hornberg letter of August 2, 1935) in W. Benjamin, *Brief 2* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1978): 671-683, 678.

sight.”<sup>30</sup> In this first Thesis, a puppet called “historical materialism” is playing a winning game of chess. A hunchback (theology) is behind the successful operation of the puppet.<sup>31</sup> The inanimate puppet, historical materialism, seems to enlist the services of the hunchback, thus signifying that inanimate puppet, historical materialism, is alive and active while the living hunchback becomes objectified. The inference is that while “the materialist presentation of history” is an important tool which “leads the past to bring the present into a critical state”<sup>32</sup> in the hopes of a positive outcome, it is “theology” which is behind its successful operation even though it has to remain hidden. Theology was not simply an “opiate.” Theology gave historical materialism its ethical and moral grounding, courage and power. Therefore, history could not be conceived as simply a series of events that the elite deemed useful but was rather an arena full of atrocities demanding redeeming. Humanity was not simply the product of powerful forces and peoples but rather a graveyard of grievous wrongs to be righted. Theology is an important dialogue partner for a political, materialist philosophy.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, historical materialism brought theology down to earth where it belonged, among people, rather than projecting humanity’s ideals “out there” onto some future state or god.

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<sup>30</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Edited and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt, Translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969): 253-264.

<sup>31</sup> Cesar, Jasiel. *Walter Benjamin on Experience and History: Profane Illumination*. (Mellen Research University Press: San Francisco, 1992), 102ff.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin, “N On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,” 471, [N7a, 5].

<sup>33</sup> Cesar, *Walter Benjamin on Experience and History*, 85.

Historical materialism explained how and why humanity had ended up in the current condition and suggested ways to change things.<sup>34</sup>

Yet, Benjamin seemed to be suggesting that theology was safeguarded by being secularized or hidden. As Benjamin himself explained it, “My thinking is related to theology as blotting pad is related to ink. It is saturated with it. Were one to go by the blotter, however, nothing of what is written would remain.” While theology was completely absorbed in Benjamin’s thought, the profane and the Messianic are separate and distinct and involved in a dialectical relationship that preserves their particularity rather than dissolving it within a synthesis.<sup>35</sup> In Benjamin’s “Theological-political Fragment,” God’s kingdom is not the goal of human history but its end. God may have created historical reality but would not intervene in it. Rather, the Messiah would put an end to historical reality. The only way to proceed was to promote the happiness of the profane<sup>36</sup> even though true happiness would never be fully achieved.<sup>37</sup> It was utopic.

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<sup>34</sup>Walter Benjamin, “Theologico-Political Fragment,” *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms Autobiographical Writings*, Edited and with an Introduction by Peter Demetz, Translated by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1978): 312-313.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 471, [N7a, 7].

<sup>36</sup>Cesar, 29-32.

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin, “Theological-Political Fragment,” *Selected Writings: Volume 3, 1935-1938*. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland and Others, transl., Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, eds. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002): 305-306.

### Horkheimer and Adorno

Horkheimer and Adorno concentrated primarily on theory and viewed utopia as a completely unreachable state within a society in which the productive forces are totally administered and the perceived needs of many are met, thereby nullifying any transformative potential. Reflecting their Jewish heritage which refuses to name God or the sacred, Horkheimer and Adorno insist that the only way to work towards such a humane world is to negate, through a comprehensive and radical, multi-layered critique, the world which humanity has created, a world which could never measure up to the nameless other of God.<sup>38</sup> As Adorno stated, “Our perspective of life has passed into an ideology which conceals the fact that there is life no longer.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Adorno explained,<sup>40</sup>

The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light. To gain such perspectives without veility or violence, entirely from felt contact with its objects – this alone is the task of thought. It is the simplest of all things, because the situation calls imperatively for such knowledge, indeed because consummate negativity, once squarely faced, delineates the mirror-image of its opposite. But it is also the utterly impossible thing, because it presupposes a standpoint removed, even though by a hair’s breadth, from the scope of existence, whereas we well know that any possible knowledge must not only be first wrested from what is if it shall hold good, but is also marked, for this very reason, by the same distortion and indulgence which it seems to escape. The

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<sup>38</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Adorno, *Minima Moralia, Reflections on a Damaged Life*, E. F. N. Jephcott, trans. (London, New York: Verso, 1951, 1974, 2005), 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 247.

more passionately thought denies its conditionality for the sake of the unconditional, the more unconsciously, and so calamitously, it is delivered up to the world. Even its own impossibility it must at last comprehend for the sake of the possible. But beside the demand thus placed on thought, the question of the reality or unreality or redemption itself hardly matters.

A truly humane world is never attainable within the context of what humanity has created for itself and experienced. It is completely "other," an observation of which is only expressed within religion. Therefore, the only progressive approach toward transforming this world toward one that is more liberative is one that involves a sustained negativity in recognition of this "otherness."

### **Pentecostal Attitudes Towards Transforming this World**

#### **A Potential Problem with Apocalyptic Eschatology**

Not surprisingly, given teachings like Pearlman's discussed earlier, Pentecostalism throughout its history has generally been disinterested in ecological concerns and nature. In 1988, Jean-Jacques Suurmond, a Pentecostal and a minister with the Reformed Church in the Netherlands wrote, "As yet, neither Pentecostalism nor the charismatic renewal has produced a consistent theology involving the whole of life."<sup>41</sup> In his article, "Christ King: A Charismatic Appeal for an Ecological Lifestyle," Suurmond stresses that the "distinctive contribution of the Pentecostal experience" is "its appeal to the churches and the world for an ecological lifestyle." Suurmond notes that the word "ecology" is derived from the Greek word, *oikos*, meaning house, intimating the

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<sup>41</sup> Jean-Jacques Suurmond, "Christ King: A Charismatic Appeal for an Ecological Lifestyle," *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 1988), 26-35, 26.

interdependent aspects of all of our life within the whole world as our home.<sup>42</sup> Suurmond does not hesitate to attribute the increasing awareness of ecological concerns to the inspiration of the Spirit, insisting that such awareness is essential if our home is to remain habitable. As he explains,

The Spirit is the ecological principle of creation, as he is the ecological principle within the being of God himself. Did not already Augustine submit, that the Spirit forms the bond between the Father and the Son? He makes unity in diversity possible: one God who yet exists in three "persons." Originating from the Word, the Spiritus-Creator broods the universe into being. He holds all things together in a creative, dynamic tension and sees to it that this astounding pluriformity yet constitutes one creation. In the same vein, he is active among people as builder of relationships, creating communities out of separate individuals. The Spirit who is within us, is also (borrowing from Buber) the Spirit who is between us. So, the Spirit, issuing from the inner being of God, spans the extremes of creation. He is the deeply personal presence in our life which makes us cry out: "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:15), uniting us in the community called Church. At the same time, he hovers over the immense deep, of empty and formless worlds, unifying them into one cosmos and thus creating the very conditions which make our human existence possible ...<sup>43</sup>

Suurmond then goes on to make three different appeals - for a "personal ecology," an "ecclesiological ecology," and a "universal ecology."<sup>44</sup> Even though Suurmond's

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>44</sup>The appeal for a personal ecology stresses that all aspects of the human personality are part of a balanced ecological unity. As a kind of *oikos*, or dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), our bodies are included in acts of worship expressed in a diverse range of charisms "ranging from dance to administration, from a celibate life to the married state, from social action to glossolalia." The "personal encounter in the Spirit with Christ ... is the primal experience ... which heals the fragmentation of spirit, soul and body" restoring "all different aspects of our personality to a sound, ecological balance" thereby allowing people to become "real individuals, undivided and holy (i.e. whole) people who grow in their identity as temples of the Holy Spirit." The appeal for an ecclesiological ecology stresses the understanding that the Christian community is also *oikos*, the dwelling place of the Spirit (2 Cor. 6:16). Pointing out that the Greek word

article appeared several years ago, discussions of ecological matters are generally lacking within Pentecostal circles or introduced as a “special topic” for consideration<sup>45</sup> without any real lasting policy development. The little that is being mentioned must be gleaned from articles focusing on other issues. Nevertheless, hints of promising ideas are appearing.<sup>46</sup> These articles indicate that Pentecostals are more than capable of thinking

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*oikos* forms the root for both the words “ecology” and “ecumenism” he insists the unity in diversity that is the universal church be recognized and respected. Each unit of diversity is free to grow as the Spirit stimulates growth in a particular area while celebrating their unity with other diverse expressions of the faith. The appeal for a universal ecology reminds Christians that “God will not redeem us apart from the world in which we live ... The ultimate, definite hallowing (making whole) of the Church implies the hallowing of the universe ... the whole creation is destined to become the *oikos*, the dwelling-place of the Spirit.” Again stressing the need for unity in diversity, Suurmond warns that diversity without unity results in “diabolic chaos” - manifested in acid rain, increased incidences of cancer from exposure to nuclear waste and the depletion of the ozone, unemployment, addiction, absurd wasteful food production practices - while unity at the cost of diversity results in “beastly totalitarianism” – “multinationals which fund profit-friendly dictators,” “police states with their so-called re-education camps, the Inquisition, the crucifixion. The outpouring of the Spirit is God’s answer both to diabolic chaos and beastly totalitarianism.” The Church birthed by this outpouring of the Spirit becomes a “strategic bridge-head in the struggle for a renewed universe ... In her He unites all things in heaven and on earth, that whole cosmic diversity, under the charismatic reign of the ‘one head, even Christ’ ... (Eph. 1:3-14).” *Ibid*, 28-35.

<sup>45</sup> June 2003, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada’s *Testimony* magazine dealt with the topic of “Celebrating Creation and the Environment.” Vol. 84, No. 6. See also the unpublished Conference Papers of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, March 13-15, 2008 entitled *Sighs, Signs & Significance: Pentecostal & Wesleyan Explorations of Science and Creation*.

<sup>46</sup>Examples of such articles are Richard J. Mouw, “Life in the Spirit in an Unjust World,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 9:2 (Fall 1987): 109-128; Miroslav Volf, “Human Work, Divine Spirit and New Creation: Toward a Pneumatological Understanding of Work,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* (Fall 1987): 173-193; Murray W. Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” *Journal for Pentecostal Theology*, 2 (1993): 51-64; Ralph Del Colle, “Spirit-Christology:

theologically about the relationship between God, humanity and nature. With such promising ideas and obvious ability, the question must be asked, “What is preventing Pentecostalism from pulling these ideas together and formulating a responsible, ecologically aware theology?”

### **The Possibilities of Apocalyptic Eschatology**

In 1997, an effort was made to explain why Pentecostals are not interested in ecological matters in a thesis by Jeffrey Goins entitled “Expendable Creation: Classical Pentecostalism and Environmental Disregard.”<sup>47</sup> Goins claims that Pentecostals adhere to a dualistic, supernatural versus natural view of reality whereby humanity is understood to work out their eternal salvation to be enjoyed in an afterlife while they are still alive in this mortal, natural world. Nature, as the context for and servant of the working out of that salvation, is deemed of lesser value than the eternal enterprise. Adding to Pentecostal indifference, according to Goins, is the assumption that nature serves the

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Dogmatic Foundations for Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,” Paper presented to the *Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Nov. 12-14, 1992, Springfield, Missouri; Jeffrey T. Snell, “Beyond the Individual and Into the World: A Call to Participation in the Larger Purposes of the Spirit on the Basis of Pentecostal Theology,” *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 49-50. April 1994 *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* was devoted to various evaluations of Jürgen Moltmann's work along with a response by Moltmann to “My Pentecostal Dialogue Partners.” See also the Conference Papers of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, March 13-15, 2008 entitled *Sighs, Signs & Significance: Pentecostal & Wesleyan Explorations of Science and Creation* In June 2003, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada’s *Testimony* magazine dealt with the topic of “Celebrating Creation and the Environment.” Vol. 84, No. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Jeffrey P. Goins, *Expendable Creation: Classical Pentecostalism and Environmental Disregard*, Masters of Arts (Philosophy), Dec. 1997.

purposes of a divine plan that eschatologically includes the destruction and replacement of the earth. Nature is therefore robbed of its independent agency. Pentecostals also understand this supernaturalism to be operative within natural history. As a result, nature becomes God's concern, not humanity's problem. Goins cites a publication of the Assemblies of God (AG) in the United States that adheres to a similar apocalyptic eschatology. This document addresses the issue of environmental protection. The statement begins, "The Assemblies of God believes that everyone needs to be a good steward of all God's creation - including the earth."<sup>48</sup>

However, the same article repeatedly emphasizes the temporality of nature - "As Christians we believe dominion requires good stewardship of our temporary home - earth."<sup>49</sup> Stewardship becomes linked to money and tithing from a literal interpretation of parables such as Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 16:1-13. The Assemblies of God appears to be apprehensive about placing too much emphasis on the environment, listing such concerns as people turning "their adoration from the Creator to the creation," the link between environmental concern and the New Age Movement and the "overemphasis of the environment at the expense of spiritual issues effecting life and eternity. It seems more concerned with the environmental movement than about the environment itself."<sup>50</sup>

While Goins is correct in asserting that the devaluing of nature within Pentecostal theology must be addressed, it must also be remembered that various Pentecostal groups

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, Introduction.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 9-10.

hold different eschatological ideas and, therefore, generalizing from the AG to all of Pentecostalism is not possible. For example, while the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada adheres to an eschatological understanding similar to that of the AG,<sup>51</sup> the Society for Pentecostal Studies, with its membership derived from various global Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, has entitled the 2008 Annual Meeting, “Sighs, Signs & Significance: Pentecostal & Wesleyan Explorations of Science & Creation.”<sup>52</sup> While non-Pentecostal Jürgen Moltmann presented the Opening Plenary Session on the topic of “Sighs, Signs, and Significance: A Theological Hermeneutics of Nature” and presented “Darwin, Theology and Culture” in the Third Plenary,<sup>53</sup> the various papers presented by Pentecostal participants as well as the willingness to explore such a theme indicate an openness to environmental issues.<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, contrary to Goins assertion, the influence of an apocalyptic eschatology does not necessarily have to be negative. While, admittedly, a premillennialist eschatology can result in a disinterest in what is going on in nature, Pentecostals such as those who hold to such an eschatology usually pay very close attention to natural occurrences through the world as they seek signs of “the end times.”

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<sup>51</sup> See for example, “Statements of Fundamental Beliefs” in the *PAOC General Constitution*. PAOC Archives. Mississauga, Ontario.

<sup>52</sup> Program, *Sighs, Signs & Significance: Pentecostal & Wesleyan Exploration of Science & Creation*, Society for Pentecostal Studies and Wesleyan Theological Society Third Joint Meeting, March 13-15, 2008, Duke University Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina, Title Page.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 17-18, 21-23, 25-27.

Earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters are interpreted as indicators of “the Second Coming of Christ.”<sup>55</sup> Therefore, an apocalyptic eschatology can co-exist with an interest in and concern for our natural environment. In June 2003, the PAOC’s *Testimony* magazine did just that when it dealt with the topic of “Celebrating Creation and the Environment” in a manner which drew out the less dominating, stewardship model of interpreting humanity’s relationship with nature.<sup>56</sup> Murray W. Dempster, former President of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, in 1991, in his article “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology” stated “hope in the consummation of God’s reign ... touched on environmental concern for the liberation - not the annihilation - of the entire ecosystem from the bondage of this present age.”<sup>57</sup> Dempster argues,<sup>58</sup>

The Bible clearly warns that believers will not make this world better. This world will only grow steadily worse until Jesus returns to take His followers out of it. The Church can ... busy itself by attempting to correct social inequities, such as poverty and injustice. After all, Jesus said we should do good to all men. And throughout the Christian community has led the way in protecting the weak, educating the unlearned, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and providing shelter for the homeless. And that’s good! But, again, the Church is destined to lose the war against human suffering in this age ... Jesus did

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<sup>55</sup> For examples, Hal Lindsey, Carol C. Carlson, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1970), and Hal Lindsey, *There’s a New World Coming* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1984).

<sup>56</sup> June 2003, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada’s *Testimony* magazine dealt with the topic of “Celebrating Creation and the Environment.” Vol. 84, No. 6.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 63

<sup>58</sup> Murray W. Dempster, “Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology,” *Journal for Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), 51-64, 60 quoting Editorial, “Sidetracked!,” *Mountain Movers* 31 (March 1989).

not commission His church to make this pitiful place a paradise ... Christ did not ask His followers to renovate this place. This place is condemned. Jesus raised up His disciples to pluck men and women out of this world and set them on the path that leads to a heavenly home ... There's really only one task the Master has given His Church ... The Church can preach the gospel under the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit so that people hear and believe the message ... and become saved ... And the Church has no other assignment ... Any church activity that does not lead to this should be hastily abandoned.

Dempster goes on to mention in the footnote that J. P. Hogan, Executive Director of the Department of Foreign Mission, responded to this article by criticizing it soundly. Hogan said,<sup>59</sup>

Many people feel that the Church should engage in social assistance only for the purpose of prying open doors for the gospel ... But if that is our motivation for providing assistance to hurting people, then we are the ones who need the help. Our hearts are tainted. As the director of the Fellowship's overseas efforts, I want the world to know that the reason we do these things is because Jesus did them ... We have no other motive than that. If our providing social assistance opens doors that would otherwise be closed to our missionary endeavor ... good! But if not, we will still continue to provide relief. Because opening doors is not our reason for sharing in other people's sufferings. Demonstrating the truth of Christ's words and sharing the love of God are our interest.

Dempster considers the first quote to be the prevalent view within most Pentecostal churches. The reign or kingdom of God is equated with some sort of "idealized state of future ahistorical bliss" whether "heaven" or "eternal life" or "the land beyond the river." Dempster suggests that the "biblical truth of Jesus Christ's second coming" be interpreted within the "framework of Jesus' own conception of the kingdom." This "integration of the belief in the second coming of Christ into a theology of the kingdom of God can be facilitated by observing its 'already-not yet' character." This interpretation of Christ's ministry within the prophetic tradition based on the

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 10-11.

Nazareth manifesto found in Luke 4:18-19 and elsewhere within the synoptics, Dempster believes, will be a “powerful motivation for Christian social concern.” Within this prophetic tradition “the eschatological continuity between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’” kingdom implies that the apocalyptic act at the end of this age will not be one of total *annihilation* of the world but one of total *transformation* of the world.” Dempster points out that the social function of the doctrine of Christ’s second coming did not promise the early church an escape from a doomed world but hope for a future eschatological fulfillment of what had already begun and in which they were participating.<sup>60</sup> For the current Pentecostal movement, a change in apocalyptic expectations such as Dempster is suggesting has the potential to radically alter the Pentecostal approach to not only ecological issues but also social justice ones. While “heaven” in the form of a truly humane world is not possible, Christians have a responsibility to imitate Jesus and do what they can to transform it.

### **Conclusion: A Pentecostal’s Response**

An apocalyptic eschatology does not necessarily lead to a disregard of nature. It can precipitate proclaiming a resounding “no” to this world and civilization as it presently exists and the types of instrumentalized, enlightenment rationality that legitimates and sustains it. In that sense, it can serve as a sustained negativity or an inverse theological position that negates the status quo. When dialectically coupled with a utopic belief in some sort of “heaven” as an ideal possibility of a perfect existence that

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 61-62.

is truly humane and just, hope for such an “other” way of being can be articulated and worked toward. Transformation can occur which is liberative. As this world will never truly get better, any such transformations achieved must remain provisional and constantly negated as new forms of liberation become known. Intentionally seeking out oppressive beliefs and practices by engaging “others” who have not yet been heard, in all their particularity and diversity, may help uncover where liberation is still needed. Moreover, the process must start and remain ongoing. There have been emancipatory themes since the beginning of the Pentecostal movement. These themes, if allowed to develop unhindered by the presupposition of divinely ordained domination, have liberative potential. As Leonard Lovett has recently stated,<sup>61</sup>

For 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty' is a claim long attested to and affirmed by Pentecostal-charismatic believers. The Spirit is not an isolated portion of God. The Spirit is God and God is expressed in community, shattering and renewing, rending and healing, revealing and transforming, lifting and liberating a people unto God.

Lovett continues,<sup>62</sup>

Hope is the mainspring of present and future existence and without it humankind collectively hangs at the end of the tether in time without meaning or purpose. Our Pentecostal-charismatic forefathers understood and knew this better than we because their teleology was clear, thus enabling them to endure the searing lash of chattel slavery. Undoubtedly, it was the Spirit who gave them the ability and authority to fling their defiance into the teeth of circumstance as they peered toward the dawn of a "new day a'comin' in history."

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<sup>61</sup> Leonard Lovett, "Liberation: A Dual-Edged Sword," *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* (Fall 1987), 155-171, 165.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

Lovett maintains that there can be no “authentic liberation into freedom apart from empowering Spiritual Presence.” He states, “To be *for freedom*, liberation, indeed, must be a two-edged sword, for oppression has two aspects: The shackles of oppression must be broken (external), while the oppressors are liberated from oppression within (internal).” He dreams of “a time when members of the Society for Pentecostal Studies and other scholarly and professional societies will return to their denomination, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and seek ways to engage in responsible dialogue with their leadership about the church's opportunity to participate with the Lord of the church in the act of liberation.” He dreams that “we will be willing to suffer ostracizement, expulsion, unemployment or social abandonment for the opportunity of identification with the oppressed.” He dreams “of a time when we will seek out our best minds and talents in order to turn radically to the Absolute source of our being, God, for grace and guidance in the act of liberation.” He dreams “of a time when our political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, teachers, and others will search for common ground with Pentecostal-charismatic theologians and church leaders in pooling and mobilizing our resources for the struggle. Even though they come from various disciplines they are urgently called upon to remember that the form of liberation chosen will, indeed, be the product of Divine creation, and not merely human ideology ... We need to stop merely debating and making scholarly presentations about liberation, and become ‘liberative.’”<sup>63</sup>

While dreams like these sound good, they are easier to speak of than to act upon. Such dreams will not be able to be lived out until a real transformation occurs within

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 168-169.

Pentecostalism and modern enlightenment cultures as a whole. Nevertheless, a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation must grasp on to the hope expressed in such dreams in order to motivate itself to work towards the utopic ideal to which it aspires of a world truly humane and just for women and all “others,” even as it realizes that such will never be realized in full.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Rather than entitle this last chapter “Conclusion,” it has been labelled “Concluding Comments.” Such a label is in keeping with the provisional nature of conclusions in a project which adopts a negative dialectic. It is also in keeping with the foundational nature of this project that seeks to explore the possibilities of and basis for the developing of a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation.

#### **The Cost of Domination**

Pentecostal women have challenged, with varying results, the restrictions placed upon them by patriarchal and kyriarchal ideology and practices. In many cases, they have struggled with some success to overcome any lack of confidence in their own ability to discern and to own God- and self- generated identities. Such struggles come with a cost as the following examples illustrate.

Aimee Semple McPherson is a well-known example of one woman’s approach to overcoming kyriarchal limitations which transcends the American-Canadian border. McPherson was committed to a “place” for women in ministry. As she argued, “Women

must preach to fulfill the Scriptures,” as a legitimate sign of the end times.<sup>1</sup> As McPherson stated, “When God anoints you to preach, here are your credentials and authority, students (sic), whether male or female. ‘Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.’ When people say a woman should not preach in church, remember thus saith the Scripture.”<sup>2</sup>

McPherson was also deeply committed to the understanding that the Spirit transcended the humanly created colour line by bringing together the races.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps it was McPherson’s proximity to one of the end points of the historical Underground Railroad in Southwestern Ontario. Perhaps it was her experiences at Hebden’s Toronto based Mission where she and her first husband, Robert Semple, had been exposed to the large Chinese population.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it was her experiences in the Deep South of the United States where she witnessed people of all shades praying together in the Spirit as she ministered. Whatever the reasons, McPherson’s name for the denomination she founded and led, “The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel,” not only referenced the “foursquare” teaching of Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming

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<sup>1</sup> Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody’s Sister* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 195.

<sup>2</sup> Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, “Prophetic Vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches,” *Review of Religious Research* 22:1 (September 1980): 2-17, 9 quoting Aimee Semple McPherson, “Class notes on the Book of Acts at Life Bible College (Los Angeles).

<sup>3</sup> Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 125-126.

<sup>4</sup> Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson*, 84.

King, it also was an allusion to the hope for a new and just city, the New Jerusalem, which “lies foursquare” according to Revelation 21:16. In the end, McPherson suffered widowhood, divorce, family feuds and died young.<sup>5</sup>

American, Pentecostal, Biblical, womanist scholar, Estrela Alexander, in her 2003 Dissertation entitled “Gender and Leadership in the Theology and Practice of Three Pentecostal Women Pioneers,” mentions McPherson along with two African-American Pentecostal ministering women, Mary Magdalena Tate and Ida Robinson. Within the Canadian Pentecostal community, McPherson is somewhat known but not Tate and Robinson. Alexander notes that this pattern of recognition exists even within African American Pentecostalism!<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, all three women ministered beyond the initial early years of the Pentecostal movement. Therefore, all three experienced both the early movement’s relative openness to women in ministry and the placement of restrictions upon them. These three women not only defied the traditional roles for women granted them by their sexist and hierarchical churches, they also moderated the “other worldly” emphasis of much of Pentecostalism by focusing attention on the material welfare of people. While Alexander notes that these three women were not to be considered radical activists in that they did nothing to change the existing Pentecostal groups,<sup>7</sup> the question could be raised as to whether or not they were in a position to do so. Power is never

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 128.

<sup>6</sup> Estrela Y. Alexander, “Gender and Leadership in the Theology and Practice of Three Pentecostal Women Pioneers,” Ph. D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 2003, 224.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 241-248.

easily forsaken or shared; entrenched male power, African-American or Caucasian, even less so.

While the ministries they established were substantial and included education, social services, and places of worship, Tate's, Robinson's and McPherson's response to the call of God on their lives was personally costly. All three had to leave their initial denomination. All experienced serious illness almost to the point of death. Tate and McPherson had failed marriages. And all three died at a relatively young age.<sup>8</sup> While personality factors figure into this cost so also do the sins of sexism and racism which at the very least made their response to their calls more complicated and difficult.

Pentecostalism owes its ministering women an apology for the ambiguous "place" in which it continues to place them. For women of colour, recognition of and apology for the ongoing racism and sexism within Pentecostalism is long overdue. The struggle of African-American women as they oppositionally form their sense of identity by dialectically resisting and engaging both Eurocentric and Afrocentric definitions of womanhood while attempting to deal with religious subjugation within Pentecostalism's marginalized context as a protest and reform movement which further oppresses its women and, white Pentecostalism, doubly so, is untenable. Black women's situation is as complex as the previous sentence<sup>9</sup> that attempts to illustrate grammatically the

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 224-235.

<sup>9</sup> Michele Jacques Early, "Into the world, but not of it': the Socio-theological Framework of Womanhood in the Church of God in Christ," PhD dissertation, Emory University, 2003, 93.

interrelated nature of kyriarchal oppression. Sorting out the threads is not easy or even particularly possible without major effort and restructuring.

Pentecostal women since Azusa Street remain caught in a personally and communally costly “place” between the promise of Pentecostal empowerment and the reality of a patriarchal and kyriarchal Pentecostal culture which oftentimes uses Scriptures to reinforce its ideology. If it were not for the women, Pentecostalism probably would not have been established in many countries throughout the world. The role of those of African descent with its emphasis on oral liturgy and narrative theology and the importance of personal witness cannot be overestimated. Ministering women have always had, and continue to have, a vital and essential “place” in ministry – with or without the blessings of ruling men and their institutions.

In her discussion of the woman bent double in Luke 13:10-17. Schüssler Fiorenza states,<sup>10</sup>

... it is not enough for men to reject as patriarchal ideologies all symbolic theological constructions of the subordination or complementarity of “women’s special nature and place”; they must also relinquish their patriarchal privileges and join women in the struggle to overcome the infirmity and bondage imposed by patriarchy.

Recognizing ourselves in the subject-position of the woman bent double, women can break the power of “immasculation” by rejecting the prescribed feminine subject-position as the non-male and by consciously recognizing ourselves *as women* deformed and exploited by societal and ecclesiastical patriarchy. Those of us who are privileged in terms of race, class, culture, and education must reject the temptation to insert ourselves as quasi-equals into the complementary position *vis-à-vis* the elite, white propertied, Euro-American “given” phallic subject-position. We must become conscious that until every woman is free, no woman is truly able to overcome patriarchal infirmity and bondage.

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<sup>10</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 205.

Schüssler Fiorenza continues,<sup>11</sup>

The healing of the woman bent double tells about the caring presence and power of G-d at work in the words and praxis of [*basileia*] movement. We do not know whether the woman who was freed from her bondage to a spirit of infirmity joined this movement. Her story is cut off and forever lost in historical silence. We know of her at all only because *she has become the occasion for theological debate* (emphasis mine).

“Only when woman is acknowledged as an equal partner in societal discourses will our one-sidedly male-structured society be transformed. In short, the women’s movement is still not finished today.”<sup>12</sup> As she explain it,<sup>13</sup>

The Christian churches will overcome their patriarchal and oppressive past traditions and present theologies only if the very base and function of these traditions and theologies are changed. If there is no longer a need to suppress the Spirit who moves Christian women to participate fully in theology and church, then Christian theology and community can become fully liberated and liberating. Church Fathers and theologians who do not respect this Spirit of liberty and freedom deny the Christian community its full catholicity and wholeness. Feminist theologians and Christian feminists will obey this call of the Spirit, be it within or outside established church structures. They do it because of their vision of a Christian and human community where all oppression and sin is overcome by the grace and love of God.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 216.

<sup>12</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Professional Ministry of Women in the Church,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 13-22, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation,” *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation* (New York: Crossroads, 1993, 1994): 53-79, 71.

### Results of the Discussion

The preceding has been an initial exploration of the necessity and possibilities for the development of a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation. While part of the aim of the project was to further and supplement the ongoing efforts to develop particularly Pentecostal theologies which honour and reflect the diversity of the global movement, there has been little theological debate involved. Rather, critical dialogue was pursued by constellating the work of feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and critical theorists Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno with Pentecostal thinkers and history in the hopes of illuminating issues with emancipatory potential as well as oppressive practices and beliefs. The goal has been to explore the basis for the development of a Pentecostal feminist critical theology. As feminist theology is rooted in feminist action, furthering the interests of Pentecostal women as *subjects of theology and agents of transformation, not occasions for theological debate* has been the intention.

The feminist theologian and critical theorists selected have proven to be more than adequate conversation partners in the concern to produce thinking which can abolish the oppression and injustice perpetrated against ministering women and other non-elite persons within Pentecostalism through a sustained critique of domination and oppression. Both went beyond traditional theological categories to include social and political critique in its furtherance and practical manifestation of feminist goals.<sup>14</sup> Concrete

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<sup>14</sup> Marsha Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 3.

conditions involving women were examined with an emancipatory agenda in mind including the potentially liberative characteristics of Pentecostalism and the nonreligious interlocking structures of domination and oppression which form the ideological context of modern day Pentecostalism.<sup>15</sup> This process pointed toward the possibility of a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation which encourages critical thinking and reflection on the real life conditions in which women live.<sup>16</sup>

After introducing the dialogue partners and explaining the logic of their selection in Chapters one and two, Chapter three demonstrated that Pentecostal women have always been active subjects and agents within Pentecostalism even though their histories have been, until now, relegated to the sidelines or footnotes or neglected entirely. Now that some of it has been recovered, the emancipatory potential of this “dangerous memory” may be put to liberative use.

After typical explanations were outlined in Chapter four, Chapter five, in conversation with Adorno and Horkheimer, discussed in greater depth the historical roots of the emancipatory and oppressive factors seen, not only in Pentecostalism, but in all of Western culture. Dialectically, both liberation and domination were discovered to be part of enlightenment rationality fixated upon mastery of nature. Pentecostalism micmicked this dialectic.

As women were shown to be identified with nature, a Pentecostal critical feminist theology of liberation, while exposing the dominating aspects of modern, enlightenment

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 1-3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

rationality would require a more liberative foundation which opposes such domination and the misuse of power in any way. Further discussion of identity thinking and its operation within Pentecostalism, particularly as it pertained to the oppression of women, was highlighted in Chapter six as this possible more liberative foundation.

Chapter seven dealt explicitly with two major sources of authority which have been used to dominate women. The first detailed Pentecostalism's identification with fundamentalism and its oppression of women. Such identification was analyzed and refuted. The second considered the use of the Scriptures. The attribution of authority to particular interpretations and interpreters of Scriptures was examined. A potentially liberative hermeneutical methodology within a Pentecostal critical feminist community was suggested.

Chapter eight explored the hope involved in the use of utopic thinking coupled with a negative dialectic in provisionally transforming Pentecostalism toward an emancipatory praxis.

Finally, this conclusion summarized the project before making suggestions for further study.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

There are several topics to address further in order to facilitate the movement toward transforming Pentecostalism into a movement that thinks and acts in a liberative manner toward its women. For instance, this introductory exploration could be expanded upon and include such topics as "revelation," "experience," "power/empowerment,"

“capitalism” and “discernment” and include the categories of “age,” “class,” “race” and “sexual orientation” in a substantial manner not possible within the limits of this project. As there is no absolute guarantee against illusion and self-deception within the current context, permeated by instrumental and dominating enlightenment rationality, no sacred authority beyond which to hide or to which to appeal as prophetic challenges to injustices can be mounted, all conclusions must remain provisional.

In addition, and in recognition that emancipatory movements, even religious ones, do not guarantee liberation within a context such as that within which Pentecostalism finds itself in Canada, a sustained examination and critique of social, economic and political structures is suggested. Within North America and Europe, reform movements are often absorbed resulting in support for the status quo.<sup>17</sup> Critical theory can assist in defining, explaining and orienting the global Pentecostal movement’s objections to intolerable social conditions rather than continuing to collude with oppressive strategies or remaining sectarian or marginalized. In particular, Marx’ and the Frankfurt School’s critique of modernity and capitalist society could be useful. With critical theory’s analysis of the psychological and the sociological, roughly analogous to Pentecostalism’s emphasis on the individual and the corporate, these critiques might function as a helpful tool in determining some of the ideological and historical dynamics of Pentecostalism’s emergence and eventual institutionalization within a modern, capitalist context in the United States and Canada.

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<sup>17</sup> See Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion*, 225.

In the meantime, “tongues as groans too deep for words,” a common Pentecostal depiction of glossalalia, is preferable to silence, as a concrete symbol of solidarity with those people and a creation that is suffering and crying out for liberation, justice, reconciliation and redemption.

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