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THINKING THROUGH THE METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL QUANDARIES OF GENDER AND CANADIAN PENTECOSTAL HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

To date, my research has focused on a series of biographies of women who were involved in the Pentecostal movement in Canada during the first half of the twentieth century. These women occupied multiple roles as evangelists, pastors, missionaries, teachers, musicians and writers. This paper concentrates on three issues of theory and methodology that present particular queries and quandaries for researchers of Pentecostal history. The first is a question of *approach*: “What does a gender history approach bring to the study of Pentecostalism and how is this different from women’s history?” The second is a question of *archives*: Given that the primary source material available about Canadian Pentecostal women (both unpublished and published) tends to be celebratory, what can be gained from regarding these commemorative texts when they clearly are not unmediated sources? The third is a question of *audience*: what does a study of women in the Pentecostal movement bring to conversations within Pentecostal faith communities in Canada and also to conversations among academic historians of religion in Canada? Is there a place for building bridges between these two communities?

What first drew me to explore the gender history of Pentecostalism in Canada were oral history accounts of how women had played significant roles in spreading and establishing the movement across Canada in the 1910s and 1920s. When I was gathering information to compile the origins of a local Pentecostal church (Glad Tidings Tabernacle in Sudbury, Ontario), on the occasion of its 70th anniversary,¹ I heard repeatedly about women in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s in leadership roles as travelling evangelists or pastors of churches. I found it notable that in conversation with senior citizens who recounted their parents' experiences of "coming into Pentecost," a familiar story emerged: quite often, the first encounters that these Canadian working-class families had with Pentecostalism were described as occurring "under the ministry of Sister So-and-So." Struck by the fact that women were occupying such roles, and doing so many years even before the more liberal United Church of Canada ordained its first female minister in 1936, my curiosity was piqued.²

My original research question was why women were welcomed into these non-traditional roles of public performance. I wondered how to explain that a

¹ Linda M. Ambrose, *Glad Tidings Tabernacle: 70 Years of Pentecostal Ministry in Sudbury, Ontario, 1937-2007* (Sudbury: Glad Tidings Tabernacle, 2007).

² The first woman to be ordained in Canada was Lydia Gruchy, who was ordained in the United Church of Canada in Saskatchewan in 1936. For a popular biography of Gruchy, see Patricia Wotton, *With Love, Lydia: The Story of Canada's First Ordained Woman Minister* (Winnipeg: D & P Wotton, 2012).

<http://www.lydiagruchybio.ca/> Accessed May 21, 2012.

conservative group like Pentecostals, a group I perceived to have a decidedly anti-modern stance on most of the issues of the day, could be so seemingly modern and progressive on the question of women's participation in public ministry early in the twentieth century. The paradox of an anti-modern message being proclaimed by modern messengers like Aimee Semple McPherson and a host of other more anonymous sisters intrigued me. I have since demonstrated how a gender history approach to the biographies of Pentecostal women like Zelma and Beulah Argue, Carrie and Susie Davis, and Alice Belle Garrigus reveals a fascinating set of ambiguities that serve to complicate our understanding of women's involvement in theologically and socially conservative religious movements.³

By nature, Pentecostalism is multi-faceted and splintered. With a variety of expressions, and a range of theological positions, one must resist the temptation to homogenize or to make assumptions about the monolithic nature of the movement because it had and

³ Linda M. Ambrose, "Zelma and Beulah Argue: Sisters in the Canadian Pentecostal Movement," in *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement*, Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, eds. 99-127 (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010); "Establishing a Gendered Authority through Pentecostal Publications: The Writings of Zelma Argue, 1920-1969," in *Historical Papers: Journal of the Canadian Society of Church History* (2009): 69-80; "Pentecostal Women in Atlantic Canada: Remembering the Founding Mothers," Unpublished paper, presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Studies in Religion, Fredericton, NB, May 30, 2011; and "Aimee Semple McPherson," in *A Handbook of Pentecostal Christianity*, Adam Stewart, ed., (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012): 142-146.

still has many varieties.⁴ Although that splintered nature eludes generalization, the largest grouping of Pentecostals in Canada is the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, a group that has both a formal archives at its denominational headquarters and a longstanding publication. Because PAOC records are available and accessible, it is logical that a historical researcher trained to archival methods would look to the PAOC as a useful place to begin and indeed, my explorations of the PAOC have proved to be quite fruitful.

I

Turning first to the question of *approach* then, my work takes the form of gender history. Elizabeth Brusco remarked in her 2010 essay “Gender and Power,” that “the issues of gender in Pentecostalism beg interdisciplinary perspective”⁵ and I propose that the biographies I am compiling using gender history have the potential to do three things.⁶ First, I assert that bi-

⁴ For more on Canadian Pentecostalism, see Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, eds., *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010); Michael Wilkinson, ed., *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009); and Adam Stewart, ed., *A Handbook of Pentecostal Christianity* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012).

⁵ Elizabeth Brusco, “Gender and Power,” in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, Allan Anderson, Michael Gergundor, Andre Droogers and Cornelius van der Laan, eds., 74-92 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 74.

⁶ An earlier version of this part of the paper was presented as Linda M. Ambrose, “Where Will Gender History Take Us in Pente-

ographies written with a gender history perspective will take us beyond the "great woman" approach because we are doing more than just recovering and adding in the stories of Pentecostal foremothers. With an interest in the less famous women as well as the recognizable names, the task is to try to understand the roles of Pentecostal women in general, not just the more atypical ones. Moreover, because gender history is not just the history of women, but also of men and of masculinity itself, I assert secondly that gender history has the potential to take Pentecostal students behind closed doors. Through the lens of gender history one can explore the interactions between women and men in the context of the family and church because these socially constructed and ever-shifting gender dynamics have dictated norms within Pentecostal circles about how the sexes should interact. By looking at those prescriptive notions, we can begin to unpack essentialist notions about femininity and masculinity and understand how ideas about those roles came to be accepted in the first place. One of the main concerns of gender studies is attention to how power is socially constructed, reinforced and maintained. With attention to questions of power dynamics, my third proposition is that a gender history approach can take us beneath church structures because the gendered power dynamics of church government and of family life can be explored through gender history.

costal Studies?" Presented at the 41st Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia, March 1, 2012.

Brusco has argued that neither the victimization hypothesis nor the marginality explanation (drawn from Marxist and Weberian theories) offer satisfactory explanations to questions about why women convert to Pentecostalism.⁷ I would add that neither do such theories give much insight into how the sexes interact within Pentecostal subcultures. Brusco concludes that Pentecostalism in Colombia, where her anthropological work is based, offers empowerment to women by transforming social relations within the home and family.⁸

Context is extremely important, as Brusco asserts, and therefore, my study of Canadian Pentecostal women in the first half of the twentieth century is offered in part, as an answer to the call for “an increasing number of contextualized case studies that will help to understand the particularity of the Pentecostal experience for women.”⁹ From my biographical research work about Canadian Pentecostal women I conclude that a gender history approach leads us to do three things: i) discard the hagiographic goal of merely finding and celebrating women in the movement; ii) discourage essentializing the sexes and explore how both femininity and masculinity were socially constructed in particular ways for Pentecostals; and iii) discover complexities about power dynamics as the fledgling movement institutionalized and the roles available to women were shaped and reshaped in increasingly restrictive ways over the twentieth century.

⁷ Brusco, 85.

⁸ Brusco, 87.

⁹ Brusco, 89, 90.

II

My second methodological and theoretical issue is a quandary about the *archives* that are available for exploring these questions of gender history. My work is based on a variety of sources including church newspapers, autobiographies of Pentecostal ministers, histories of local church congregations, and biographies written in celebration of the lives of admired pioneers of the movement. Making use of these publications that were intended for Pentecostal readers presents a variety of challenges. Perhaps the greatest one is that church history publications, both at the national and more local levels tend toward hagiography.¹⁰ As local congregations mark anniversaries or produce biographies, they do so with the agenda of establishing importance and these sources unabashedly proclaim that their purpose is inspirational – to preserve the memory of individuals whose lives provide a legacy of faith to be emulated by those coming after them.

Despite the devotional purposes for which these sources were intended though, historians can use such texts to understand more about the mindsets and the gender politics both of the characters themselves,

¹⁰ See for example, Gordon Atter, *The Third Force* (Caledonia, ON: ACTS Books, 1962); Gloria Kulbeck, *What God Hath Wrought: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Toronto: The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 1958); Thomas William Miller, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada* (Mississauga, ON: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994); and Douglas Rudd, *When the Spirit Came Upon Them: Highlights from the Early Years of the Pentecostal Movement in Canada* (Burlington, ON: Antioch Books, 2002).

but even more so, of those who created the texts. Robyn Sneath argued convincingly that Mennonite church publications served as tools of building imagined communities among the faithful scattered across wide geographic areas¹¹ and historian Lynne Marks used church publications to explore both the ideals and the anxieties about family life that preoccupied various Canadian churches at the turn of the twentieth century.¹² I strive to use a similar approach to the publications of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada by asking how this fledgling movement built a sense of community among readers and what early Pentecostals were prescribing as ideal, what they were worried about, and what they were hoping to stand against. In other words, I am curious to explore social memory. In a paper on the writings of one particular Pentecostal woman, Zelma Argue, I set out to prove that the creation of that church publication was actually an exercise in creating and reinforcing imagined community among Pentecostal believers.

Grant Wacker observed that early Pentecostals took a teleological view of history, meaning that for them, “history was providential, progressing inexorably from Creation to the Final Judgment.” Although the early histories they wrote of their own movement

¹¹ Robyn Sneath, “Imagining a Mennonite Community: The *Mennonitische Post* and a People of Diaspora,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 22 (2004): 205-220.

¹² Lynne Marks, “A Fragment of Heaven on Earth? Religion, Gender, and Family in Turn-of-the-Century Canadian Church Periodicals,” in Mona Gleason, Tamara Myers, and Adele Perry, eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History* 6th edition. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 157-173.

were “unreliable as conventional works,” Wacker observed that such texts could be “very useful as ‘ritualized’ works.”¹³ The ritualization that Wacker identified is not unique to Pentecostals, since history is often written for the purpose of ascribing meaning to the past through commemoration.

Theoretical challenges arise from the hagiographic portrayals of these early Pentecostal because of the ways in which historical memory of their leaders is crafted. Writing about commemoration has lately been receiving a great deal of attention from historians. One of the best-known genres of Canadian history in this regard is military history, and particularly the work of Jonathan Vance on the commemoration of World War One, in his book entitled *Death So Noble*.¹⁴ Vance’s premise is that the trope of noble sacrifice was the language invoked to construct the memory of those youthful victims of war as manly defenders of empire, and even more importantly for Canada’s national history, the fearless nation-builders of the young dominion. For Pentecostals wishing to valorize the often misunderstood pioneers of their movement or hoping to elevate the importance of now-all-but-forgotten evangelists and itinerant preachers who crisscrossed the continent driven by their sense of eschatological urgency, similar commemorative creativity is invoked, creating a cast of faith heroes and found-

¹³ Grant Wacker, “Are the Golden Oldies Still Worth Playing? Reflections on Writing History Among Early Pentecostals,” *Pneuma* 8 no. 2 (1986): 95. Cited in Cornelius van der Laan, “Historical Approaches,” in Anderson, et al, 207.

¹⁴ Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1997).

ing fathers credited with laying the groundwork both for local congregations and for national networks of Pentecostals such as the PAOC. Just as military historians have paid attention to the language and symbolism of war memorials, historians of Pentecostalism can profit from giving similar attention to the language and metaphors that are used in church halls and publications to remember and revere the founders of Canadian Pentecostalism.

I have argued elsewhere that professional historians have a complicated relationship with these commemorators.¹⁵ It is not an exaggeration to say that the work of enthusiastic local and denominational historians is unapologetically biased, with the rhetoric of admiration for spiritual giants central to their version of the story. Yet at the same time, those folks are guardians of the records, documents and institutional memory to which professional historians need access. It is a familiar dilemma in our discipline – what should the relationship be between professional historians and the so-called “amateurs” who may lack formal training but who abound in enthusiasm for history and have the power to grant or deny access to the archival records? How to manage that relationship is an ongoing dilemma and part of a larger question that is reflected in the ways that historians theorize about archival research.¹⁶

¹⁵ Linda M. Ambrose, “Review of *The Davis Sisters: Their Influences and Their Impact* by Patricia Pickard,” *Canadian Journal of Pentecostal Charismatic Christianity*, Volume 2 no. 1 (2011): 175-178. <https://journal.twu.ca/index.php/CJPC/article/viewFile/45/41>

¹⁶ Alison Prentice and Beverly Boutilier, eds., *Creating Memory: English Canadian Women and the Work of History* (Vancouver:

My recent correspondence with an enthusiastic church archivist serves as a case in point to illustrate this quandary. My current research project is exploring why the Pentecostal movement felt it was necessary to create its own training schools, what social trends and ideologies it was reacting to, and how the history of those schools serves to reflect the gendered nature of Pentecostal experiences in Canada from the 1920s to the 1950s. Hoping to see what the PAOC archives might contain regarding the history of their own bible colleges, I made an inquiry about the sources that might be available at the national headquarters in Mississauga. Among the places where I predicted I might see gendered language and assumptions on display in the archival sources were school yearbooks, correspondence of school administrators, and the business records of the PAOC itself concerning the creation and administration of those colleges. I sent an email inquiry to the archivist for the PAOC proposing to make a site visit to explore the holdings. In her enthusiastic response to me the archivist was very accommodating, and she encouraged me to bring her my questions about what I wanted to know so she could answer them. She instructed me: "Make up your list and come prepared to "get the facts!!!!!"¹⁷ It is a complicated and delicate matter for a historian to ex-

University of British Columbia Press, 1997); Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History in Colonial India* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Christopher Dummitt and Michael Dawson, eds., *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

¹⁷ Marilyn Stroud, PAOC Archivist, email to author, May 10, 2012.

plain to those who are the gatekeepers of such record groups, that the quest is not so much for “facts” as it is for texts that will lead us to more theoretical interpretations of the past.

As theorist Antoinette Burton and her collaborators have argued, work in the archives is always more than simply a fact-finding mission.¹⁸ Indeed, Burton posits that the archives themselves are socially constructed collections intended to reflect a certain version of the past for the organizations whose histories they purport to preserve. In Burton’s edited collection entitled *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*, one contributor uses the example of the French national archives to analyze how the state’s own agenda is promoted through the collection and ordering of its archival holdings.¹⁹ What is true for political regimes can also be true for particular churches, denominations and movements. It matters very much who creates the archive, how they understand the history of their group, and what they deem to be worthy of preservation.

Cornelis van der Laan explained in his 2010 essay “Historical Approaches,” that Pentecostal history must be written by historians who share the faith because he concluded, “secular historiography simply does not have the appropriate tools to include God.”²⁰ While that claim is debatable, another of his assertions

¹⁸ Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Jennifer Milligan, “‘What is an Archive?’ in the History of Modern France,” in Burton, *Archive Stories*, 159-183; see also Burton’s “Introduction: Archive Fever, *Archive Stories*,” 1-24.

²⁰ Van der Laan, 208.

seems easier to accept. When describing the kind of history generated by Pentecostals about themselves, he remarked, "This is not so much a matter of objectivity versus subjectivity but rather the use of different categories."²¹ For van der Laan, the best studies of Pentecostal history, like those produced by Grant Wacker and Edith Blumhofer, "connect the social location, mind-set, and subculture of the Pentecostals with broader cultural and social currents in North America."²²

Historian Steve High, in an article entitled "Sharing the Authority in the Writing of Canadian History," suggests that oral history forces historians to consider questions of authority and interpretation because interviewees are the ones who own the stories that we historians want to collect.²³ My quandaries about using Pentecostal archives leads me to similar dilemmas about how to manage questions of objectivity and voice and how to negotiate the barriers that exist between professional and so-called amateurs.

III

This brings me to the third issue under discussion: that of the *audience* for this work on Pentecostal gender history. The Pentecostal church community in Canada provides a potential audience for the kind of

²¹ Van der Laan, 208.

²² Van der Laan, 209.

²³ Steven High, "Sharing Authority in the Writing of Canadian History: The Case of Oral History," in Dummitt and Dawson, *Contesting Clio's Craft*.

scholarship that gender history about Pentecostals is producing. For example, as anniversaries of local churches and significant milestones for denominational structures are marked in this country, there does seem to be an interest in historical questions. In my experience, there is an interest in the work I am doing, at least at the level of the recovery of women's stories. The initial response is usually a level of surprise that women originally played so many leading roles in Pentecostal work, and a curious delight that Pentecostal great-grandmothers seemed to be such unconventional characters. But whether longstanding members of the PAOC are open to examining their churches' structures and practices, both past and present, through a gendered lens remains to be seen. The question of women's roles in the churches, for example, could usefully be informed by revisiting the early years of the movement and a reconsideration of how the current restrictive reality of women's gendered roles in PAOC churches came to be the norm.

That line of inquiry inevitably begs uncomfortable questions about what happened to reverse the trend of liberation and why, over the course of the following century, women were no longer welcomed into roles of public leadership, certainly very rarely as pastors, and were even less likely to serve in roles of church governance. While such questions appeal to Pentecostals with some awareness of gender politics and feminist leanings, those with more conservative tendencies might not be welcoming to a scholarship that calls into question the shared assumptions about the norms of the Pentecostal subculture. To raise these kinds of questions is to call for a re-assessment of

some of the heroic male leaders that Pentecostal commemoration elevates and it necessarily means challenging the current status quo.

The quandary then, becomes whether there is a place for academic historical inquiry within Pentecostal circles. Because Pentecostalism has long been associated with anti-intellectual tendencies, the question is whether or not the church wants to hear and think about the kinds of questions that gender studies inevitably raises. In the United States, for example, an organization called the Society for Pentecostal Studies presents a forum for exchanges between academic researchers from secular postsecondary institutions and scholars who work within the churches at seminaries and bible colleges of various Pentecostal stripes. On its website, the SPS, which began in 1970, describes itself as:

an organization of scholars dedicated to providing a forum of discussion for all academic disciplines as a spiritual service to the kingdom of God. The purpose of the society is to stimulate, encourage, recognize, and publicize the work of Pentecostal and charismatic scholars; to study the implications of Pentecostal theology in relation to other academic disciplines, seeking a Pentecostal world-and-life view...²⁴

The relationship that the SPS fosters between the academy and the church is a delicate one. While I am

²⁴ Society for Pentecostal Studies, "About Us – Mission and Goals" <http://www.sps-usa.org/about.html> Accessed May 21, 2012.

not proposing a similar organization for Canada, (indeed the creation of such an entity in this country is hard to imagine), the model is an interesting one. In the realm of women's studies and the SPS, one of the leading scholars is Dr. Estrelida Alexander, a theologian and past president of the Society, who has written widely on the question of Pentecostal women.²⁵ In her presidential address to the Society in 2010 entitled "When Liberation Becomes Survival," she made a passionate case for the need of Pentecostals to take up questions of equity arising from the Christian gospel message around the issues of gender, race and sexual orientation.²⁶ The reaction to her address was mixed and the cultural differences between Canada and America notwithstanding, one wonders whether Canadian Pentecostals, particularly those outside the academy, would really welcome the opportunity to entertain such provocative discussions.

Whether or not particular denominations are a ready audience for this scholarly work in gender studies and Pentecostalism, more academic settings such as the Canadian Congress of Humanities and Social

²⁵ Estrelida Alexander, *The Women of Azuza Street* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005); *Limited Liberty: The Legacy of Four Pentecostal Women Pioneers* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008); Estrelida Alexander, ed., *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009).

²⁶ Estrelida Alexander, "When Liberation Becomes Survival, Society for Pentecostal Studies, Presidential Address, North Central University, Minneapolis, MN, March 6, 2010. <http://www.northcentral.edu/sermons/archive?page=42>. Accessed May 21, 2012.

Sciences are an appropriate venue because of the contribution this work makes to the scholarship on women and religion in Canada more broadly, and to work on Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity specifically. In the realm of academic women's history and religion, it was in 1992 that Ruth Compton Brouwer lamented the lack of attention that social historians of Canadian women's history were giving to religion, calling it an "unacknowledged quarantine."²⁷ Happily, in the intervening twenty years that lack is now being addressed. Yet in the emerging scholarship, there still remains an unacknowledged oversight: that of the more marginal evangelical groups such as Pentecostals. While Pentecostals have historically been perceived as "of the fringe," current statistics show that Pentecostalism, in all its various expressions, is one of the world's fastest growing faith groups. As a body of scholarship is built around Pentecostalism, there is need for attention to questions of gender, both in terms of women's roles and also in terms of how Pentecostalism has encouraged particular expressions of masculinity. Gender studies of Pentecostalism hold promise for exploring the experiences of religion that fell outside of mainline churches and more established religious structures.

Moreover, theories around "lived religion" have gained prominence among scholars of religious studies and this has influenced the approach of Canadian historians. Several examples come to mind including Marguerite Van Die in her recent book "Religion, Fami-

²⁷ Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Transcending the Unacknowledged Quarantine: Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women's History," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27 no. 3 (1992): 47-61.

ly and Community in Victorian Canada: The Colbys of Carrollcroft,” Lynne Marks and her work on nineteenth and early twentieth century religion and the family, and Tina Block’s current SSHRC-funded work on west coast secularism in the second half of the 20th century.²⁸

My work attempts to make connections between lived religion and Pentecostalism because questions around women, men, and gender provide one subject area ripe for this kind of exploration. While Pentecostal belief systems formally confess a commitment to equality among men and women borne out of the prophetic fulfillment of passages such as Joel 2 (where sons *and* daughters are expected to prophesy), in reality, women in Pentecostal movements have more often been relegated to roles that are rigidly defined and delimited by culturally-derived scripts about what is and what is not appropriately feminine. At the same time, even though women continue to outnumber men in Pentecostal churches across the country, men have continued to occupy roles of power in church governance and have been expected to take up

²⁸ Marguerite Van Die, *Religion, Family and Community in Victorian Canada: The Colbys of Carrollcroft* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007); Lynne Marks, “A Fragment of Heaven on Earth? Religion, Gender, and Family in Turn-of-the-Century Canadian Church Periodicals,” in Mona Gleason, Tamara Myers, and Adele Perry, eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History* 6th edition (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2011), 157-173; Tina Block, “‘Toilet-seat prayers’ and Impious Fathers: Interrogating Religion and the Family in Oral Histories of the Postwar Pacific Northwest,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 29 (2009): 1-27.

leadership not only in the church, but in the home. Historical exploration about the ideas of gendered “leadership” among Pentecostals, framed by the theory of lived religion, holds great promise.

Thinking through the queries and quandaries of researching gender in Canadian Pentecostal history leads one to conclude that this field involves much more than a simple recovery mission determined to retrieve lost stories. Although the goal of rescuing and documenting such stories provides a good starting point, the real work of analysis begins when we start to think about how to process the material that surfaces. A gender history approach that pays attention to methodology and theory holds promise for developing a more nuanced understanding of the complexities that women and men experienced in the past through their associations with Pentecostalism in Canada. As archival sources continue to be collected and explored by researchers, a number of issues arise about how and why these sources were amassed in the first place, and how they can be read as so much more than a simple narrative tale. There is widespread interest in the research findings of this field, both among the academic community and in church circles. As researchers from various disciplines explore Canadian Pentecostalism and momentum in the field continues to build, gender historians who attend thoughtfully to questions about approaches, archives, and audiences can help to move the scholarship forward.