

## THE END OF TONGUES?

A CONVERSATION WITH GABRIEL, STEWART AND  
SHANAHAN

DAVID WELLS, RANDALL HOLM, AND VAN JOHNSON

**ABSTRACT:** *The remarks of these three respondents to Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan's "Changing Conceptions of Speaking in Tongues and Spirit Baptism Among Canadian Pentecostal Clergy" were initially presented at the Canadian Symposium, an annual gathering of the Canadian Pentecostal Research Network, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. The session took place at Life Pacific College in San Dimas, California on March 10, 2016. The piece concludes with Gabriel and Stewart's reply to the respondents, demonstrating that this conversation is an ongoing dialogue.*

**DAVID WELLS:** As Andrew Gabriel and Adam Stewart indicate, their survey was conducted with the full agreement of the General Executive of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), the ongoing engagement of the General Officers, and upon its completion, the willingness for open dialogue and communication of the survey results and interpretation. The underlying posture of the current PAOC leadership is to encourage "theological vitality" which is one of three primary focuses of our "2020 Initiative."<sup>1</sup> Along with an environment that is seeking to encourage scholarship and interaction, we have an active theological study group who keeps bringing theological priorities to the fore and serves as a working group for assignments such as the General Executive's request that the language of our "Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths" be reviewed and refreshed. Therefore, when Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan did the extensive work they have done in their survey and present the observations that they do, it is appreciated and viewed as beneficial. While not all of their interpretations in this paper may be fully

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the PAOC 2020 Missional Initiative, see <https://paoc.org/family/general-superintendent/desk-of-david-wells/news-release---paoc-2020-initiative> (Accessed June 27, 2016).

embraced by all, the findings are considered seriously. Having read their paper, I have three specific responses to offer.

First, I would like to point out that while there are some elements of the authors' sociological understanding that I agree with, there are some points where I disagree. Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan assert, "First, sociologically we argue that the changing views of PAOC clergy regarding the relationship of tongues to Spirit baptism are the result of their participation in a generic evangelical subculture, which promotes the adoption of a common evangelical religious identity and experience." My observation is that to understand the PAOC's evolving perspective on pneumatology and especially Spirit baptism you need to recognize the primary constituencies that our credential holders, and by extension our churches, fall into. I suggest that within PAOC there are three such groupings: Eclectic Pentecostals, ie., evangelicals with Pentecostal tendencies; Historic or Classical Pentecostals; and Charismatic, Neo-Pentecostal and Renewal movements. I agree that credential holders who are Eclectic Pentecostals, that is, those who are evangelicals with Pentecostal tendencies, have tended to broaden out and moderate their Pneumatology both doctrinally and in practice. They are able to "fully subscribe" to our Statement of Faith with an "as-much-as-we-can-be-expected-to-accurately-define Spirit-baptism" approach. Their theological and philosophical convictions also generally lend themselves to a limited or more measured approach when it comes to the practice of spiritual gifts in public worship and other activities often associated with historic or classical Pentecostalism. Historic or classical Pentecostals are the second grouping, and I observe that they are probably the ones who contribute the majority of survey respondents who hold to classic definitions of Spirit baptism and initial evidence. There is, however, a third constituency which is very evident in the life of the PAOC and who vary in their defining of the initial evidence of Spirit baptism. They are those who have had their pneumatology strongly impacted by more charismatic, neo-Pentecostal and renewal movements. Some are leaders who have been raised in historic Pentecostal churches, others have transitioned into "the family" but they share the experience of having had their understanding of the Spirit's person and ministry impacted by the teachers, conferences and movements that champion life in the Spirit but not always with classical Pentecostal definitions. In fact, some

have been moved away from these definitions as they observe those that seem to be great “definers” but who are not, in their minds, “doers.” They choose the models and the definitions of the “doers” over the “definers.”

The second point to remember is the impact of doing theology a slightly different way. We have openly communicated that as a PAOC fellowship we attempt to deal with doctrinal and holiness issues by determining if this is a question of: 1) Biblical Absolutes (“Thus says the Lord”), for example, Jesus as the one and only way of salvation; 2) Corporate Conviction (“It seems good to us and the Holy Spirit”) as in the case of initial evidence; or 3) Personal Conviction (“Others may, I cannot”), which would include some justice issues. When we engage in “corporate theology” according to this model, it does create an environment where students and credential holders feel free to interact with our distinctives with openness rather than uniformity. It is less of a “franchise” or fixed-set culture, and more of a dialogical “centre set” one. In my mind this partially explains the variations in survey responses for the category “strongly agree” and also on the semantics of whether tongues is “the” evidence, “an” evidence, etc. as noted by the survey. It would also indicate the need for ongoing dialogue about the definitions used in the “Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths.” Another example of this would be “initial physical evidence” as compared to “initial evidence.”

The third and final point I wish to make is that I remain fascinated by diversity. Clearly, as a national leader I am intrigued by the differences the survey identifies in the responses about relative Spirit baptism and initial evidence. I am left with a number of questions. I wonder, for example, about the age of the respondents: What variables are at work influencing the experiences of younger credential holders, and setting them apart from those who are older? Another important consideration is church size: as the authors indicate, have the larger PAOC churches adopted a more evangelical approach to corporate life in the Spirit leading to a less historical understanding of “initial evidence”? And what about geography: Is it a case of the “liberal” west versus the “conservative” east? Do the denominational schools in the various districts vary in how they are impacting students on the question of Spirit baptism and initial evidence?

There is a lot to consider in this survey and in this paper. It deserves further engagement by the General Executive, General Officers, the Theological Study Group, and the PAOC constituency. The questions that Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan raise are particularly timely for our fellowship as we review and renew our “Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths.”

**RANDALL HOLM:** Reading this paper brings back many fond memories. In 1992 in partial fulfillment of my PhD thesis, “A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism,” I sent out my own survey to PAOC credential holders. Unfortunately, in those pre-internet days, I had to use conventional *mail* to distribute my survey to 200 PAOC ministers. Ensuring the anonymity of those surveyed, 134 responses were returned. Using the Likert Scale of “Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree” the survey was in both French and English and consisted of 50 items.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of my project was to analyze the operation of authority within the contemporary Pentecostal movement, in particular through the pages of PAOC history. To that end I attempted to measure the Pentecostal regulation of faith by tracing the movement of three key issues within this fellowship: namely the evidential tongue construct (Spirit baptism as subsequent to salvation with tongues as the initial [physical] evidence),<sup>3</sup> divorce and remarriage, and the ordination of women.

My goal was not to defend the legitimacy of any of the positions discussed but rather to observe any changes over time and to subsequently question what was the impetus for change. I wanted to explore whether there was any common element found in each evolution. Accordingly, my research was simultaneously theological, historical, and sociological.

Incidentally, I smiled reading the footnote of the Gabriel et al paper where the researchers thanked the PAOC General Executive for

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<sup>2</sup>For a full list of the survey see see Randall Holm, “A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism,” [https://www.academia.edu/4422810/Authority\\_in\\_Pentecostalism](https://www.academia.edu/4422810/Authority_in_Pentecostalism)

<sup>3</sup> The parenthesis is included around the word “physical” because depending on who and when the formulation is uttered the word may or may not be included.

granting permission to survey credential holders and for the encouragement they received from National Office. When I began my own project, (1992) I too approached the sitting General Superintendent and solicited his help in formulating the items of my survey. Items of this nature must strike the balance of being open to interpretation but not so diluted that any response will do. Furthermore, I asked if at least I could get an endorsement, since I was a PAOC credential holder in “good standing.” While the General Superintendent was cordial in his remarks, I sensed he was anxious about the idea and I only learned about a week later he was troubleshooting after Carl Verge had presented his paper at a national event, the Conference on Pentecostal Leadership (COPL II).<sup>4</sup> In any event, I waited several months for a response to proceed and when none came, I sent out the survey. One week later I received a nice letter requesting that I should not proceed with the survey – full stop. In the end, it all worked out. I pledged allegiance to the fellowship and we carried on. All this to say, times have changed. I commend the General Executive for supporting this project of Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan.

For the purpose of comparison, here are the items I included as part of my own questionnaire with their results on the question of tongues and Spirit baptism (Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=undecided, D=Disagree and SD=Strongly Disagree). While I will not go into the analysis of the findings, I did conclude that the leadership of the PAOC did not need to fear at that time, that the “evidential construct” was in any serious jeopardy. Even the inclusion of the normative word “indisputable” (#30) did not seem to deter clergy from endorsing their doctrinal distinctive.

There are, of course, many ironies on this path. Pentecostals owe a debt to their emphasis on tongues as a firm NO to evolutionists, certain humanists, and the general secularization of contemporary society when it resists acknowledging the other-worldliness of Christianity. In essence it was a NO to the pillars of modernity. On the other hand, through the pages of its middle years, from 1930-1970,

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<sup>4</sup> COPL was a National Conference on Pentecostal Leadership. This conference was held in Toronto where Carl Verge presented his doctoral work on the impact of higher education in Pentecostal ranks. His survey results in 1988 were not viewed favorably by the general populace of PAOC pastors who attended the conference. Many saw it as the inevitable plight of those who pursued higher education.

Pentecostals did everything they could to employ the very tools of modernity to package Spirit baptism into a successful, somewhat quirky brand of spirituality. It allowed Pentecostals to hitch themselves to the generally respectable evangelical wagon while maintaining a relatively distinct identity. If one was playing the proverbial search for “Waldo,” Pentecostals were the “Waldo” who really wanted to blend in, but on closer inspection still remained somewhat distinct, but we are not always sure why.

|                                                                                                         |            |           |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------|
| 16. All Christians are instilled with latent ability to manifest the “Gifts of the Spirit.”             | 31%        | SA        |      |
|                                                                                                         | <b>34%</b> | <b>A</b>  | mode |
| mean = 3.539                                                                                            | 5%         | U         |      |
| sd=1.408                                                                                                | 17%        | D         |      |
| missing - 6                                                                                             | 13%        | SD        |      |
|                                                                                                         |            |           |      |
| 22. The survival of the PAOC is integrally linked with adherence to the doctrine of “initial evidence.” | 17%        | SA        |      |
|                                                                                                         | 19%        | A         |      |
| mean=2.712                                                                                              | 2%         | U         |      |
| sd=1.438                                                                                                | <b>40%</b> | <b>D</b>  | mode |
| missing – 2                                                                                             | 21%        | SD        |      |
|                                                                                                         |            |           |      |
| 30. Speaking in other tongues is the indisputable initial evidence of the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit.” | <b>62%</b> | <b>SA</b> | mode |
|                                                                                                         | 21%        | A         |      |
| mean=4.308                                                                                              | 5%         | U         |      |
| sd=1.099                                                                                                | 9%         | D         |      |
| missing - 4                                                                                             | 3%         | SD        |      |
|                                                                                                         |            |           |      |
| 46. Christians need the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to successfully resist temptation.                   | 22%        | SA        |      |
|                                                                                                         | <b>33%</b> | <b>A</b>  | mode |
| mean=3.263                                                                                              | 5%         | U         |      |
| sd=1.365                                                                                                | 29%        | D         |      |
| missing -1                                                                                              | 10%        | SD        |      |

A second irony noted in this paper is that early Pentecostals, prior to any firm institutionalization, were far more forgiving in cementing a direct causal relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism. They preferred the biblical expression of signs (plural) over the modern construction of “evidence.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, this did not even become a credential issue in the PAOC until the General Conference in Calgary in 1938 when a formal resolution was passed prohibiting someone from being credentialed if they had not experienced their personal baptism with the evidence of speaking in tongues. That decision was a game changer. Should one believe they were called to vocational ministry, the pressure was on to get one’s baptism. And if technique could help make it happen, so be it.

My purpose here is not to denigrate the wisdom of creating what I have called an evidential construct and making it a credentialing issue. Elsewhere I have argued, notwithstanding acknowledging the providential work of the Spirit, it is unlikely that speaking in tongues would have endured as an iconic presence without some institutional help to keep the experience viable, repeatable and meaningful. Pragmatically, it was genius to fuse tongues and Spirit baptism in a causal relationship.<sup>6</sup> It gave sympathetic adherents an objective (read: modern) way of testing their baptism. It kept the Pentecostal movement in the public eye and it encouraged adherents, at least to some degree, to explore the limits and possibilities of this gift of the Holy Spirit. In the end, I argue that tongues as an “evidential construct” of denominational Pentecostalism was pragmatically conceived as an absolute sociological necessity.

But here we are today, and if a theme has emerged in Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan’s paper, I would suggest that initial evidence is not necessarily required, because the language of “evidence” is no longer necessary for the perpetuity of Spirit baptism. And if we can get

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<sup>5</sup> Reducing tongues to “evidence” renders initial and/or physical adjectives a moot point. Tongues as evidence, something measurable is the only such thing found in Scripture that fits such a Cartesian category. Are tongues the only sign of Spirit Baptism – that is another question.

<sup>6</sup> My own doctoral thesis concludes that pragmatism is a key element governing the regulation of faith in Pentecostalism. See Holm, “A Paradigmatic Analysis of Authority within Pentecostalism,” cited above.

that out of the way perhaps we can begin in earnest to explore fresh ways in which the gift of tongues and Spirit baptism can make a global impact on how we do church and worship God.

Some of this is happening already with Frank Macchia's emphasis on tongues as an acoustic sacrament, my own work on tongues as an acoustic icon, and Jamie Smith's idea of tongues as a linguistic prostration before God.<sup>7</sup> Of course much more is being done and could be done at the level of the academy. However, if I read a caution in Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan's report, it is that for many PAOC clergy their indifference to upholding our "classical" position is more in keeping with a long trend of "participating in a generic evangelical subculture." This is not anything new, but it has far greater consequences than the deconstruction of our evidential construct. The battle before Pentecostals today, as Ken Archer so eloquently declared in his 2015 presidential address to the Society for Pentecostal Studies, is hermeneutics. In particular, it is problematic for historical Pentecostalism to align too closely with an aging evangelical propositional rationality that continues to handcuff Pentecostal contributions to the global church.

Tongues has never been a great fit with the evangelical ethos. (Disclaimer: I am unabashedly a Pentecostal but a horrible evangelical.) Unleashed from its modern moorings of evidential language, if we continue to saddle up beside evangelicals, I fear much is to be lost. On the other hand, this could be an opportunity to seize the day, as the Spirit leaks out of the temple, as happened in Acts 3, and invites new understandings about its continued role in the global gospel mission.

**VAN JOHNSON:** Full credit needs to be given to Andrew Gabriel, Adam Stewart, and Kevin Shanahan for their research on the current theological convictions of PAOC credential holders and to the denomination that encouraged their work. By re-employing the 1985/6 survey by Carl Verge and adding some additional questions, the authors offer us a snapshot of attitudinal trends over 30 years. In general, what the researchers believe they have shown is an increasing

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<sup>7</sup> Randall Holm, "Tongues as a blush in the Presence of God," [https://www.academia.edu/4422867/Tongues\\_as\\_a\\_Blush\\_in\\_the\\_Presence\\_of\\_God](https://www.academia.edu/4422867/Tongues_as_a_Blush_in_the_Presence_of_God)



adoption by PAOC credential holders of convictions common to the larger evangelical movement in Canada.

I will begin with what their research revealed about the varied understandings among credential holders as to what, if anything, constitutes evidence for Spirit baptism. That there is now a greater diversity of opinion than in the 1980s was reflected in the working title of their article, “Tongues No Longer Required.” As alarming as the title will be for some, the diversity of expressions is not surprising for me after twenty years in graduate classrooms. My students, who include credential holders, regularly (i.e., ‘usually’) discuss their various convictions and misgivings about Pentecostal distinctives in the safety of an academic institution. In addition, the data itself is not as alarming as it may first seem: speaking in tongues still factors into a majority of our conceptions of Spirit Baptism, albeit in a variety of forms, i.e., “the evidence,” or, “an evidence,” or, just “evidence,” etc.

Secondly, I think there is something noteworthy about the fact that credential holders with some graduate education are trending in a slightly more conservative direction in their belief about tongues and Spirit baptism than those with college diplomas or degrees. I grew up in Pentecost hearing the intentional slip of the tongue whenever the word “seminary” was mentioned. It regularly (i.e., “always”) came out as “cemetery.” Thank the Lord that the data suggests that the two terms are not synonymous.

Thirdly and most importantly, the survey includes a particular emphasis on how credential holders perceive the relationship between Spirit baptism and evidential language. It does not, however, survey the meaning we attach to Spirit baptism – neither what it signifies in 2015 nor what we thought it meant in 1985/6. This is where the real issue lies in determining how our theological perceptions have fared in the last three decades. Since there are a number of conceptions among us about what constitutes Spirit baptism, we should not be surprised that we disagree over what indicates its reception. Tongues may no longer be required for some because what they conceive as Spirit baptism certainly does not require tongues, at least from a biblical standpoint.

The meaning of Spirit baptism among us has become so packed with disparate concepts that it has become largely meaningless as a point of discussion or survey. Indeed, although the concept of Spirit baptism was not the sole focus of the survey, the sampling given in the paper of some of the qualitative or short-answer responses illustrate how differently we view it.

To what do we owe this theological shift in thinking about a primary Pentecostal distinctive? The researchers conclude that behind our increasing reticence since the 1980s to affirm that tongues is *the* evidence of Spirit baptism is the pervasive influence of a “growing generic evangelical subculture.” This sociological category may be more appropriate as a statement of consequence rather than causation. Why, after decades of existing in relative isolation from the broader evangelical culture, whether by banishment or self-imposed exile, did Pentecostals become part of it and to such an extent that under the sphere of its influence we have equivocated on matters integral to Pentecostal identity? It is hard to imagine that Pentecostals are involved in the subculture at all, and as willing and respected members, without the mediating presence of the charismatic movement that began in the early 1960s. Ron Kydd’s work on the effects of the charismatic renewal on classical Pentecostalism in the 1960s and 1970s concluded that the renewal accelerated the cultural absorption of Pentecostalism, pushing Pentecostals towards a spirituality of privatism.<sup>8</sup>

These are the roots, I would argue, for an understanding of Spirit baptism in our ranks that is becoming more recreational than missional. The effects of the charismatic movement on us, which pushed us closer to a ‘renewalistic’ understanding of the work of the Spirit rather than a ‘revivalistic’ one, have only become exacerbated with the crashing in of the “Third Wave,” generally, and the Vineyard and Toronto Airport, especially. In the process, the diversity of views among us and the numbers who hold them have grown.

In the last section of the paper by Gabriel, Stewart, and Shanahan, historical considerations are given for interpreting the

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<sup>8</sup> Ronald A.N. Kydd, “The Impact of the Charismatic Renewal on Classical Pentecostalism in Canada” *Pneuma* 18, 1 (1996): 55-67.

survey data, which features a novel trajectory for understanding the progression of thought on Spirit baptism in Canadian Pentecostalism. Gabriel, who identifies himself as the writer of this section, states his impression that the diversity of views on the relationship between Spirit baptism and tongues, as seen in the 2015 survey, while divergent from the 1980s, reflects well the plurality of views in early Pentecostalism. The trajectory he proposes is this: Before the 1930s, various views on the relationship between Spirit baptism and tongues were accepted. Then between 1930 and the 1980s, a stricter interpretation came into vogue, and since then we have returned to a less restrictive view – not officially, but *de facto*.

As to the specifics of Gabriel's argument, I am more interested in what evidence he finds for Canadian Pentecostalism than his conjecture that what happened south of the border applies equally to the north. (Perhaps the term "North American Pentecostalism" should be banned until we know our own history.) He thinks he has found initial physical evidence of a plurality of views about Spirit baptism in *The Promise* newsletter that was put out by the East End Mission in Toronto. He cites one testimony given in the five extant volumes of *The Promise* where a connection is made between tongues and Spirit baptism, and he also points to the lead article in the first edition of *The Promise* in May 1907. There James Hebden appears to stop short of making a definitive connection between tongues and Spirit Baptism.<sup>9</sup>

For three reasons, I would caution using this reference in *The Promise* as evidence of an early plurality of views on Spirit baptism. First, although James Hebden says, or seems to say, that he is not ready to state that only those who have spoken in tongues have been Spirit baptized, he immediately clarifies that all those at the mission have spoken in tongues when receiving the Spirit. His equivocation should be seen against the background of the ongoing speculation about what constituted evidence for Spirit baptism, whether understood as sanctification or empowerment, which began in the nineteenth-century Holiness Movement. After six months of the Toronto revival, he was reticent to say he had solved the debate.

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<sup>9</sup> Hebden's grammar is awkward: a double negative in the form of a question. For that reason, I am not clear what is meant by "We should not like to say that..."

Nevertheless, his statement “but that all who have received their baptism here have spoken in Tongues”<sup>10</sup> suggests a trajectory wherein baptism and tongues are positively correlated. Second, the centerpiece of the same first edition of *The Promise* is a long testimony by Ellen Hebden. In it she states that her Spirit baptism was initiated through speaking in tongues – even though that was not the phenomenon she desired. Such a testimony from the matriarch of the Hebden Mission would have reinforced the association between tongues and baptism for her readers. Third, in no subsequent extant edition of *The Promise* is there any example of one who received the Spirit without speaking in tongues.<sup>11</sup> In short, *The Promise* and the East End Mission in Toronto seem like an unlikely place to start an argument for a variety of views about Spirit Baptism in early Canadian Pentecostalism.

Admittedly, there must have been individuals in the early years in Canada who held alternate views about Spirit baptism, and understandably so. What movement begins with a set form of expression that is agreed to by all leaders in an emerging network? The clearest example of this is the early articulation by Charles Parham that all legitimate tongues were missionary languages (xenolalia) —a position he would maintain as many others moved away from it to a broader understanding of tongues.

Regardless of how one views pre-denominational Pentecostalism in Canada, what is of greater import for a paper on PAOC attitudes is the history of speaking about tongues in the denomination itself. To that end, Gabriel focuses on the presence of the word “regularly” in the “Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths” between 1928-1979: “the baptism of the Holy Spirit is regularly accompanied by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues.” Apparently, this terminology was adopted from the American Assemblies of God (AG) statement of 1918. Gabriel argues that in the AG this word meant “not always.” Therefore, in adopting the same terminology, the same understanding would be present in the PAOC. He connects the two countries by noting that some early

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<sup>10</sup> *The Promise*, May 1907, p. 1; col. 1

<sup>11</sup> A short paper written by Ben Wright, my Academic Assistant, charts the consistent association of tongues and Spirit baptism throughout the editions of the newsletter, whether the relationship is stated in testimony form, editorial comment, or exhortatory statements <http://pentecostalish.com/post/144603109084/a-response-to-initial-evidence-not-necessarily>

Canadian Pentecostals held credentials with AG and also that between 1920-25, the PAOC was a district of the AG.

Before we accept that this implies a more lenient view of Spirit baptism in the PAOC before 1978/1980, a few facts would have to be established. First, that the word “regularly” was understood in the AG as Gabriel understands it, i.e., as “not always,” rather than as “always.” Second, that the meaning of “regularly” as “not always” made it safely across the border. This suspicion should be easy enough to test. During the period in the early 1920s when the PAOC was a district of the AG, R.E. McAlister was publishing the Canadian *Pentecostal Testimony*. One would expect an explanation among all of the teaching about Spirit baptism in the early years of the national magazine that the word “regularly” actually meant “not always, or usually,” as well as commentary about the implications for counseling seekers of the baptism who had not spoken in tongues (e.g., “Don’t be discouraged, because tongues is not always the sign of Spirit baptism. Your experience is just irregular.”)

The graduate students who I have assigned to study the early years of the *Pentecostal Testimony* have yet to find such a clarification. What they do find are regular reinforcements of the connection between tongues and Spirit baptism. My own preliminary research into the first Canadian newsletters from each of the three cities that laid the groundwork for the movement that was emerging: Toronto, Winnipeg, and Ottawa (*The Promise*, *The Good Report*, and *The Apostolic Messenger*, respectively), is uncovering the same type of unanimity.

Gabriel suggests that the use of “regularly” in the doctrinal statements of both the AG and the PAOC could lead to the conclusion that when the 1978 Doctrinal Statement Study Committee proposed to the General Executive that “regularly” be replaced by “must always,” which was approved by the General Conference in 1980, that they wittingly or unwittingly changed its original meaning. As he says, more research is needed. I agree, for even if speaking in tongues is no longer required, surely research into Canadian beginnings still is.

What my students looking at the early years find is something like this: the simplicity of an earlier notion of Spirit Baptism, taken

from Acts 2, which drew meaning from Peter's Pentecost sermon, where he set the phenomenon of tongues within the eschatological context of Joel's "in the last days." Tongues was the sign of the promise of the Spirit, an eschatological marker of the last days, which enabled its recipients to do something before Jesus returned. For them, it was both the sign of the soon return of Jesus and evidence that the church had now been enabled to carry on the witness of Jesus with empowered proclamation and signs and wonders.

### **A BREIF REJOINDER TO WELLS, HOLM, AND JOHNSON**

**ANDREW K. GABRIEL & ADAM STEWART:** We must again highlight the support of the national leadership of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). When our paper was discussed at the Society for Pentecostal Studies in March 2016, everyone took note of the support and presence of PAOC national leadership. One person noted that not every Pentecostal denomination would support or engage scholarship that studies the denomination itself. Furthermore, Randall Holm's response reminds us that the PAOC itself was not always open to such inquiry. The present climate of openness is, we think, a sign of health, maturity, and theological vitality within the PAOC.

David Wells offers some resistance to our sociological interpretation. While we do not dispute Wells's personal observations regarding the variety of clergy found within the PAOC, it is important to point out that, currently, no sociological evidence exists to support the existence of the kind of typological division of clergy proposed by Wells. But, assuming momentarily the existence of such a typology, we suggest that the three groups of clergy Wells identifies would constitute diverse expressions of the generic evangelical subculture. Hence, we believe his observations are consistent with our sociological interpretation. Furthermore, we would add that there is, at present, no actual evidence to suggest that the three proposed groups of clergy answered the survey questions any differently than one another.

Wells wonders if perhaps "the denominational schools in the various districts" impacts the regional diversity of opinions regarding Spirit baptism. This may be a factor, however, it is noteworthy, for

instance, that the same PAOC college serves the Saskatchewan district and the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario district and that clergy from these two districts responded quite differently regarding the relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism.

Consistent with our historical interpretation, Holm remarks, “Pentecostals, prior to any firm institutionalization, were far more forgiving in cementing a direct causal relationship between tongues and Spirit baptism.” It seems that Van Johnson would not contest this general statement.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Johnson does question whether the diversity that existed during the early years of Pentecostal denominationalism within the Assemblies of God (USA) was also a feature in Canada, specifically within the PAOC. Johnson explains that he has not personally found evidence from early Canadian Pentecostalism for a plurality of views regarding the relationship of Spirit baptism and tongues. Johnson agrees with us that more research is necessary.

Unfortunately, there is a relatively small amount of extant Canadian literature to serve as historical evidence to help adjudicate the question at hand. For example, to my knowledge, we have only one extant copy of *The Apostolic Messenger*, two copies of *The Good Report*, and five copies of *The Promise*. As a key piece of evidence, Johnson points to the *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony*, of which we have many copies. One should not expect to find much diverse opinion regarding the matter in this publication, however, since it was controlled by (i.e., edited by) R.E. McAlister, who made his views regarding Spirit baptism clear in the first article of the first edition: “No one can truthfully say they have received the Baptism according to God’s Word without speaking in tongues.”<sup>13</sup>

Despite Johnson’s reservations, given the transnational nature of early North American Pentecostalism, we believe it is reasonable to conclude that early Canadian Pentecostal (including PAOC) clergy held views regarding Spirit baptism similar to their American

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<sup>12</sup> We would not go so far as to say (as Johnson suggests we do) that the views of PAOC clergy in 2014 “reflects well the plurality of views in early Pentecostalism” (emphasis added). Rather, we state that there are some similarities.

<sup>13</sup> R.E. McAlister, “The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,” *Canadian Pentecostal Testimony* No. 1 (1920): 1.

counterparts. Furthermore, there clearly was more room for doctrinal diversity in the early days of the PAOC than in later years as many oneness Pentecostals remained affiliated with the PAOC until the 1940s, at which time trinitarian beliefs became a prerequisite for membership.<sup>14</sup>

We thank Wells, Holm, and Johnson for their thoughtful and gracious responses. Thank you also to the editors of *CJPC* for including the papers from our panel discussion in this volume.

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas A. Robinson, "Oneness Pentecostalism," in *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation*, ed. Michael Wilkinson (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 46.