

# Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing

Edited by

CANDY GUNTHER BROWN

WITH A FOREWORD

BY HARVEY COX

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Contents

Contributors, xiii

Foreword, xvii

*Harvey Cox*

Introduction: Pentecostalism and the Globalization of Illness  
and Healing, 3

*Candy Gunther Brown*

## Part I. Europe and North America

1. The Global Character of Nineteenth-Century Divine  
Healing, 29  
*Heather D. Curtis*
2. Why Health *and* Wealth? Dimensions of Prosperity among  
Swedish Charismatics, 47  
*Simon Coleman*
3. Material Salvation: Healing, Deliverance, and “Breakthrough” in  
African Migrant Churches in Germany, 61  
*Claudia Währisch-Oblau*
4. Blessed Bodies: Healing within the African American  
Faith Movement, 81  
*Catherine Bowler*

5. Jesus as the Great Physician: Pentecostal Native North Americans within the Assemblies of God and New Understandings of Pentecostal Healing, 107  
*Angela Tarango*
- Part II. Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Borderlands
6. Latino Pentecostal Healing in the North American Borderlands, 129  
*Gastón Espinosa*
7. Santidad, Salvación, Sanidad, Liberación: The Word of Faith Movement among Twenty-First-Century Latina/o Pentecostals, 151  
*Arlene Sánchez Walsh*
8. Exorcising the Demons of Deprivation: Divine Healing and Conversion in Brazilian Pentecostalism, 169  
*R. Andrew Chesnut*
9. The Salve of Divine Healing: Essential Rituals for Survival among Working-Class Pentecostals in Bogotá, Colombia, 187  
*Rebecca Pierce Bomann*
10. Learning from the Master: Carlos Annacondia and the Standardization of Pentecostal Practices in and beyond Argentina, 207  
*Matthew Marostica*
- Part III. Africa and Asia
11. New Wine in an Old Wine Bottle? Charismatic Healing in the Mainline Churches in Ghana, 231  
*Cephas N. Omenyo*
12. Healing in African Pentecostalism: The “Victorious Living” of David Oyedepo, 251  
*Paul Gifford*
13. Reenchanted: Divine Healing in Korean Protestantism, 267  
*Sean C. Kim*
14. Miracle Healing and Exorcism in South Indian Pentecostalism, 287  
*Michael Bergunder*

15. Divine Healing and the Growth of Practical Christianity in China, 307  
*Gotthard Oblau*

Part IV. Global Crossings

16. Catholic Charismatic Healing in Global Perspective: The Cases of India, Brazil, and Nigeria, 331  
*Thomas J. Csordas*
17. Global Awakenings: Divine Healing Networks and Global Community in North America, Brazil, Mozambique, and Beyond, 351  
*Candy Gunther Brown*

Afterword, 371  
*Candy Gunther Brown*

Index, 379

# 5

## Jesus as the Great Physician: Pentecostal Native North Americans within the Assemblies of God and New Understandings of Pentecostal Healing

*Angela Tarango*

Eight days after being “saved” at a New Year’s Eve service in the mid-1930s in Montreal, Quebec, Rodger Cree, a 17-year-old Mohawk, experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit. He recalled, “I saw a ball of fire that was lodged in the ceiling—when that ball of fire touched my head, I began to speak in a different language, altogether. Supernatural.”<sup>1</sup> A desire to go into the ministry seized Cree, and he enrolled at a French Canadian Bible college. While growing up on a small reserve outside Montreal, Cree had experienced racial prejudice at a young age, which gave him cause to distrust and dislike French Canadians. Upon entering Bible college, he was tested: “I remember going to school and walking and I heard someone say (in French) ‘the savage has come.’ The Holy Spirit kept me from turning around—I learned how to deal with those people.”<sup>2</sup> For Cree, learning to heal from and overcome his own prejudices defined his religious experience as both a Pentecostal and an indigenous person. Even though Cree experienced physical healing later in life during a bout with rheumatic fever, it was the emotional and mental healing from hatred and mistrust that stayed with him. During the middle decades of the twentieth century, Cree was one of a handful of North

American native Pentecostal leaders who began to speak of pentecostal healing in terms different from those of their white counterparts; for native believers, pentecostal healing went beyond the physical; encompassed healing from hatred, mistrust of white North Americans, and broken promises and treaties; and focused on reconciliation and divine judgment.<sup>3</sup>

Pentecostalism offered a distinct religious experience for Native American believers, which differed greatly from other forms of Christianity. Christian missionary work to native peoples in the Americas has a long and painful history, and Protestant evangelical, mainline, and Catholic groups created a multitude of problems when they confronted native cultures during the classical missionary period (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). Historian William McLoughlin succinctly sums up these problems: "The three great stumbling blocks in accepting Christianity were its failure to address the basic issues of corporate harmony, bountiful harvests, and sacred healing."<sup>4</sup> By the time Assemblies of God (AG) missionaries began evangelizing indigenous peoples in the 1920s, centuries of colonization had wrecked traditional native life. The ideal of corporate harmony, or balance, was gone; native peoples lived on lands that no longer supported their traditional way of life; and the ills, both physical and mental, that needed healing were numerous. It is in regard to this last issue, sacred healing, that Pentecostalism offered native Christians the most unique experience in comparison with other Christian groups. Physical healing has long been a part of traditional native religions, and although Pentecostals were not the first Christian missionaries to preach divine healing, they heavily emphasized its embodied, miraculous form and made it a centerpiece of their belief. Other experiences that Pentecostalism encouraged, such as prophecy, direct connection with God, and visions, were also common to a majority of traditional native religions. Loud, boisterous music, singing, and ecstatic dance marked native modes of worship in traditional religions and in Pentecostalism. The indigenous peoples who chose to become Pentecostal entered a new world of belief, but in terms of bodily experience—singing, dancing, divine healing—they blended native and Pentecostal experiences.

The Pentecostal emphasis on sacred healing appealed to many native peoples and drew native believers to the movement. It also encouraged those believers to expand their definitions of healing. Indigenous Pentecostals believed in divine physical healing, but the early native leadership also emphasized a different kind of healing: mental and emotional healing rooted in reconciliation and divine judgment. Jesus became the Great Physician who healed hearts, bodies, and minds.<sup>5</sup> This chapter will explore how native Pentecostals expressed their views on healing and redefined pentecostal healing to meet their particular needs as colonized peoples—as indigenous Americans. In this sense, they were not so different from other minority groups that embraced pentecostalism, yet they defined their healing within a native worldview, using

native terms and native forms of understanding. In so doing, indigenous Pentecostals pushed the flexible boundaries of pentecostalism, worked out their own religious identities—identities that embraced their Pentecostal and native aspects—and, in the process, laid the groundwork for the racial reconciliation movement within the Christian Right, which gained prominence at the turn of the twenty-first century.

The history of native Pentecostals within the AG is a complicated one, and in order to explore the various themes of healing, this essay is divided into three parts. I begin with an overview of early AG missions to Native Americans. Then, I focus on white AG missionaries and their approach to pentecostal healing in order to highlight how they viewed healing differently from their indigenous counterparts. I continue by examining native AG missionaries who served their own people and explore the various types of healing that they experienced. I consider a wide range of healing experiences—from the healing of alcoholism to racial reconciliation. I close the chapter with a comparison to the racial reconciliation movement among twenty-first-century Charismatics and other evangelicals. The main goal is to broaden how scholars treat both native Pentecostalism and modern native religious identities as a whole.

It is crucial to note that most of my source material comes from Pentecostal archives—and therefore must be filtered carefully. Because of the paucity of sources on early native Pentecostals, and because the entire first generation of leaders is now dead (with the exception of Rodger Cree), I have striven to capture their voices where I can. The main source cited is the *Pentecostal Evangel* (*PE*), the weekly periodical of the AG. This source is problematic because it remained under white AG control throughout the twentieth century; therefore, it is biased toward portraying the AG in a favorable light. I have done my best to interpret with this bias in mind, and I have also utilized as many other sources as possible to capture the thoughts of indigenous Pentecostals outside the *PE*—mainly missionary tracts, a handful of personal writings, and interviews. At times, the sources have been infuriating in their bias and lack of detail, yet they are the only sources that give historians any glimpse of native Pentecostal life in the early decades of the movement.

### Home Missions

The Assemblies of God began its missionary work to native peoples in 1918.<sup>6</sup> As part of the AG's home missions program, white missionaries spearheaded Pentecostal evangelistic work among indigenous peoples. Missionary work to Native Americans never became as popular as foreign missions in the early years, yet a small subset of white Pentecostals embarked on missions to various tribes or served native peoples in urban areas. The actual numbers are unknown, but in the first decades (1930s–1940s), there were probably no more

than 50 missionaries, judging from articles in the *PE*. Home missions became more popular by the 1950s (probably due to the end of World War II), and larger numbers of home missionaries set off to minister to native groups in the western and southwestern parts of the United States. The majority of the missionaries were married, white men, while some were single women, who typically worked in pairs. They tended to be simply educated, and most of the early missionaries had little ministerial training.<sup>7</sup> These early white missionaries were self-selecting and self-directed, and always entered the ministry to native peoples because they were “called.” (Testimonies from this period emphasized a supernatural moment when a believer experienced a message from God, telling him or her to go spread the gospel among native peoples.) The AG’s Department of Home Missions did not exist until 1937, and even then, it mainly served to fundraise; it did not coordinate where missionaries chose to evangelize.<sup>8</sup> Even with the support of the Department of Home Missions, most missionaries had to raise their own money from supporters or from fundraising pleas in the *PE*. Thus, white AG missionaries often set off to reservations with little money, no language skills, and, probably, little idea of what they would encounter there.

White Pentecostal missionaries did make converts on the reservations during the earliest decades of evangelization (1930–1950), and many of those early converts formed the first generation of early indigenous leadership within the AG. In 1937, the *PE* notes, George Effman and his wife Lilian were conducting mission work among a tribe in La Push, Washington.<sup>9</sup> What the *PE* does not say is that Effman was of the Klamath nation, from the area near the border of California and Oregon, and he was probably evangelized by the earliest AG missionaries who worked in this region.<sup>10</sup> Effman is not the only influential native leader who emerged in this period. In April 1948, the *PE* recorded the first “Indian Convention,” a gathering of missionaries and indigenous Pentecostals on the San Carlos Apache reservation. One of the speakers was a young Navajo, Charlie Lee, who had been converted at an Apache revival and who, according to the *PE*, was “blessed with a fine voice to sing the gospel.”<sup>11</sup> The young Navajo student eventually became an influential leader, but at that time, Lee was simply a young Pentecostal exhorter. Another early leader was Andrew Maracle, a young Mohawk who became a missionary to his own people and was the uncle of John Maracle, the first Native American to hold a seat on the AG’s Executive Presbytery.<sup>12</sup> John McPherson, a mixed-blood Cherokee evangelist rose to prominence in the AG, and in 1979 he became the first national Indian representative.<sup>13</sup> Rodger Cree, the Mohawk mentioned earlier, was the only known member of the first generation of indigenous missionaries alive as of 2009, and he was still active in evangelistic work with his people.<sup>14</sup> Cree’s family was evangelized by a Canadian disciple of Aimee Semple McPherson during Pentecostalism’s early decades. Effman, Lee, Maracle, Cree, and McPherson were all in the vanguard of indigenous leadership.

### The Indigenous Principle and the Miracle Model Contrasted

The native Pentecostal experience remained different from the white Pentecostal experience in a multitude of ways. Indigenous Pentecostals found themselves within a large, mainly white denomination where they often had to fight fiercely to have their voices heard. In their struggle for autonomy, native Pentecostal leaders tried to live out and implement the “indigenous principle”—the idea that Christianity and thus Pentecostalism should be wholly rooted within one’s own culture.<sup>15</sup> Native leaders latched onto the indigenous principle after hearing about its success among AG missionaries in Latin America. Their century-long battle resulted in a native Pentecostal identity that was rooted in the struggle for the indigenous principle and autonomy for native believers within the AG. Despite decades of struggle, native Pentecostals remained a part of the AG and did not abandon Pentecostal Christianity. Instead, they established indigenous churches, helped to train fellow native missionaries, built and supported their own all-native Bible college, and gained national leadership roles within the AG (figure 5.1).<sup>16</sup> Despite roadblocks, pain, and difficulties, native Pentecostals carved out a place within the AG.<sup>17</sup>

White Pentecostals approached healing in a manner that was markedly different from their indigenous counterparts. For white Pentecostal missionaries, healings were essential to Pentecostal evangelization because they demonstrated the Holy Spirit’s active power in a believer’s life. They were dramatic and tangible evidence of God. White missionaries put much emphasis on dramatic and miraculous healings, much more so than their native counterparts. They felt that they had to “prove” the miraculous power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in order to convert indigenous people to the “Jesus way.” Spurred by reports of miraculous healings and revivals among the white population, especially during the Voice of Healing revivals of the 1940s–1950s, white missionaries fanned out across the reservations and reported back their own miracles.

Pentecostals believe that the era of miracles did not end with Jesus’ death, but that true believers can perform miracles as vessels of the Holy Spirit.



FIGURE 5.1. Native American leaders at an Assemblies of God General Council meeting (1949). Courtesy Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

The beginning of white missionary Alta Washburn's mission work coincided with the "great revival" of healing within American pentecostalism in the 1940s–1950s. According to historian David Harrell, "the common heartbeat of every service was the miracle—the hypnotic moment when the Spirit moved to heal the sick and raise the dead."<sup>18</sup> In the greater American pentecostal culture, believers flocked to these revivals and avowedly witnessed miraculous healings. The AG missionaries read of these events and prayed that the Holy Spirit would send great acts of healing to the reservations.

White missionaries often wrote of miraculous transformations that led skeptics into the Pentecostal fold. Early in her initial missionary posting on the Apache reservation in White River, Washburn experienced her first "great miracle" as a Pentecostal missionary. In the middle of a sermon on God's miraculous nature, an Apache woman ran in carrying a baby.

She literally threw the baby into my arms. The baby's little body was cold and stiff in death. She had just taken it from the hospital morgue and was on her way to the cemetery for its burial. Reckless faith, however, directed her to the church. She wanted us to pray her baby would live again! There I stood holding that little corpse. This had to be possibly the greatest challenge of my ministry. . . . As I prayed, I began to feel warmth return to that little body and the rigid little limbs became limp and moveable, I handed that baby restored to life into its mother's arms. All of us in that Sunday service were overcome with the knowledge that we had actually beheld the resurrection power of the Lord.<sup>19</sup>

According to Washburn, her congregants were awed, and she was unable to finish her sermon. After word spread among the Apaches, they showed up at the mission, and her ministry began to grow. Eighteen years later, a young man and his mother visited Washburn's parsonage in Phoenix, where she was serving the All Tribes Church. He asked for her blessing before his departure for Vietnam. The young man—Washburn claimed in her autobiography—identified himself as the Apache baby whom she had healed, and Washburn prayed over him that he might come back from Vietnam alive. A few years later, she heard that he had returned safely to the reservation without any battle injuries.<sup>20</sup> Washburn's autobiography is filled with reported miracles and the blessings of the Holy Spirit that she avowedly witnessed in her many years in the ministry. From her commentary on each incident, it appears that not only were the miracles affirmations of God's power but they also reminded Washburn of God's call in her own life. They affirmed the importance of her work.

Most of the reported miracles were not as dramatic as Washburn's "resurrection," and most usually involved accidents and physical infirmities. For example, a Navajo infant was burned badly by boiling water. The *PE* reported, "The skin had slipped several places and water was running from her body

where there was no skin. Little Marian was in great pain."<sup>21</sup> According to the doctors, the child would be in the hospital for four weeks for skin grafting, but instead of waiting for modern medicine to work, the missionaries implored their congregation to pray for the child's healing. According to the *PE*, she was healed within two weeks. In another case of healing, missionaries prayed over a young, disabled Apache woman. A week later, they returned to visit the woman and found that "Ardella had not had to use her crutches since the last time we prayed for her. She had been cutting wood and even had walked about one-half mile to a friend's home." The missionaries concluded, "God definitely healed this young lady and she has been able to remain true to the Lord."<sup>22</sup> One of the main themes of healing testimonials was the limitation of modern medicine and the medical profession. Miraculous healings often were sought and seemed to occur when medical care could not completely fix the physical ailment.

According to *PE* reports, many of those who were healed "stayed true to the church," as might be expected since they had, in their view, received a tangible experience of God's power, showing that God's salvation was material as well as spiritual.<sup>23</sup> In one case reported to the *PE*, a group of Christ's Ambassadors, teenage evangelists from the All Tribes Mission in Phoenix, visited with a young indigenous couple who was expecting a child. They had been told that the baby would not survive its birth. "The CA's told them of God's power to heal and prayed for the lady with her permission—at the same time that the Christians were praying for the woman, a fine, healthy baby was born to her." The father of the child was reportedly amazed at the miracle, and realized that it was "God who gave us our child."<sup>24</sup>

Healings proved crucial for successful missionary work, because the experience of healing appeared to reveal God's power to both the missionaries and those to whom they preached. Often, white missionaries did not speak the language of the people on the reservation, which led to a heavy reliance on native interpreters, but an apparently miraculous healing could speak to those witnessing it despite the language barrier. Yet, in spite of this mutual understanding, white missionaries and the white-run *PE* regarded healing differently from many of the native missionaries who came after them. For white missionaries, divine healing focused on the healing of physical bodies. Indigenous missionaries expanded the idea to include healing that encompassed righting not only physical and spiritual wrongs, but also mental and cultural ones in order to address their specific experiences as Native Americans.

Native missionaries, like their white contemporaries, emphasized the New Testament's message of the death and resurrection of Jesus in their religious work. But unlike their white counterparts, they interpreted the gospel according to their needs as natives. They reshaped it as a gospel of healing—not just from illness and alcoholism, but also from the bitterness of past wrongs and breaches of trust by white people in general and also by white missionaries. Native missionaries attempted to alleviate stereotypes and misconceptions of

indigenous people through articles and pamphlets that they distributed to the greater AG public. By interpreting the gospel for their own purposes and by disseminating to white Pentecostals information about their history and culture, native missionaries used their autonomy to fight long-held misconceptions of natives. In so doing, they subtly fought the use of racist language in the *PE*; demanded the development of indigenous pastors and leaders; pushed the AG to recognize that native-run indigenous churches were central to the evangelization of native peoples; and forced the AG to face its sometimes racist, often paternalistic history of missionary work. Native missionaries offered up a “performance of reconciliation” to their white counterparts and in so doing, “offer[ed] striking critiques of both past and present-day colonial practices.”<sup>25</sup>

#### Native Conversion Narratives

Healings often featured prominently within native conversion narratives. This section will explore the conversion narratives of indigenous leaders Jimmie Dann, Andrew Maracle, and John McPherson, who presented conversion as the major turning point of their lives. This is indicative of the importance that Pentecostals place upon conversion and the personal testimonial. The stylized nature of Pentecostal conversion narratives presents certain problems for the historian, however. As Grant Wacker has observed, all conversion narratives take the form of a “relentlessly stylized, three-step sequence”: the initial problem, the event of conversion, and the benefits that occurred after conversion. Because believers recount testimonials as a reflection of a spiritual journey, the authors, as Wacker puts it, “cast their words in a dramatic before-and-after framework in which the Pentecostal experience marked a transition from darkness into light. We simply never find an admission that things might have been the same, let alone better, before the transition.” Another major problem for the historian is that testimonials in print are invariably “shorn of their real-life context.”<sup>26</sup> Although the testimonial offers a narrative of a particular life and emphasizes specific events that fit into this narrative, there is no way of knowing the full context in which conversion occurred. Only the memory of the convert, a suspect memory that has reconstructed the event to make it fit into the language of Pentecostalism, survives. Even with these problems, conversion narratives are important sources for how Pentecostals have experienced episodes of divine healing.

Jimmie Dann grew up on the Shoshone reservation in Fort Hall, Idaho. A Sun Dancer in his youth, he sought spiritual power so that he might heal and lead his people from their poverty and troubles. Stationed in the Pacific theater during World War II, Dann worried about death. He asked himself, “If I am killed, will the Great Spirit take me to the Happy Hunting Ground?” Dann struggled in his attempt to find answers to his questions. Throughout the war,

he claimed that he kept practicing the Sun Dance to protect himself—it is likely that he just continued reciting his sacred prayers and songs—as the Sun Dance as traditionally practiced by the Plains tribes is always a communal, not an individual event. As he explains it, “On the islands where our unit was stationed I often slipped away alone and sang the songs of our tribal dances, begging the Great Spirit to keep me from harm.”<sup>27</sup>

Although Dann survived the war unscathed, he grew more disillusioned with the Sun Dance and, after returning home, turned to liquor. Prior to World War II, Dann had felt a calling to be a medicine man or a tribal leader, but now, unsure of what he believed, he turned away from all religion. In 1946, white AG missionaries appeared on the Fort Hall reservation. Angry that the “White man’s religion” had arrived, Dann did all he could to drive out the missionaries, physically threatening them and disturbing worship services. Twice, Dann faced the authorities for his actions. Three years later, a now-married Dann was out one evening with his wife, when for lack of anything else to do, she suggested that they visit the AG mission. He noted that “hate for the missionary still burned in my heart. But when we reached the church, a great desire for cleansing from sin came over me and in spite of myself I turned my car into the churchyard.” That evening, Dann converted to Pentecostalism and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. He wrote that God had placed a “burden” on him: “Now for the first time I could do something for my people. I could tell them of Jesus.” Dann later attended Southwestern Bible Institute and became a prominent traveling evangelist.<sup>28</sup>

Born in 1914, Andrew Maracle faced a harsh life on the Six Nations reserve in Ontario, Canada. His mother died in childbirth along with the baby. Because his father was a logger who traveled often, Maracle and his seven siblings were separated and sent to live with friends and relatives. In a childhood that lacked stability, Maracle moved frequently among family, friends, and strangers. At his first long-term foster home, Maracle became acquainted with the traditionalist longhouse religion and became an avid practitioner. Maracle recounts how the longhouse religion gave his life meaning: “Traditional dances were a form of worship and expression of thanksgiving for the seasons and their first fruits. To waste was wrong! Each individual was taught ‘he was a way or law unto himself.’ We were told to ‘Listen very, very carefully.’ I became infused with spiritual, cultural and political knowledge. I also clung tenaciously to my Mohawk language.” For Maracle, his Mohawk identity imposed an obligation to embrace and defend his nation’s traditional religion and language. He became, in his words, an adamant “defender of the faith” whenever he encountered Christianity. He antagonized the missionaries on the reservation until one day he wandered into an AG mission looking for a meal. By the end of the evening, he had converted and found himself “cleansed of sin.”<sup>29</sup>

Conversion did not immediately change Maracle’s life in the clear-cut way it changed Dann’s. Rather than becoming a missionary, he continued working



as a day laborer while testifying at church in the evenings. The major turning point for Maracle was a near-fatal accident in upstate New York (ca. mid-1930s). A large metal roller he was hauling with a horse team broke loose, spooked the horses, and landed on him. When Maracle awoke, he found himself in a hospital, paralyzed from the neck down. The doctors told him he would never move again. Determined that God would help him, Maracle lay in the hospital for six weeks praying. Then, his cousin Lansing Maracle and his pastor came from Canada to visit.

The pastor said: "Brother Maracle, we are going to pray for you. Do you believe that God is going to heal you?" My answer came without any hesitation. "I don't believe only God can but I believe He will heal me!" Pastor Freez reached out to place his hand on my head to pray, but before he made contact, another hand touched me and was gone! Praise "His" wonderful name. I was instantly healed by the power of God.

Maracle's doctor came to check on him the next morning and attributed his unexpected recovery to a miracle. After experiencing this healing, Maracle found a new purpose in life. He enrolled in the local Zion Bible College so that he could become an AG missionary.<sup>30</sup>

Dann recovered from alcoholism and the mental scars of the war. Maracle experienced physical healing from the injuries inflicted on him during his logging accident. Physical healing and healing from alcoholism or violence were common motifs in Pentecostal conversion narratives, for both whites and natives. Many indigenous leaders reported physical healings during their lifetimes, but for some native Pentecostals, healing went well beyond the physical. Consider the conversion narrative of John McPherson, a Cherokee. In McPherson's narrative, with conversion came a sense of reconciliation from racism and self-hatred.

Late one evening in 1943, McPherson, a young soldier, went out drinking with his wife Naomi. As he stumbled from one bar to the next, he spied a Pentecostal preacher on the street corner exhorting sinners to come to Christ. Although McPherson grew up in a Salvation Army home and his wife was the daughter of a Pentecostal preacher, neither had converted to Christianity. McPherson recounted: "We heard the melodic refrain of a song, and recognizing it to be religious in nature, stopped to listen for a moment. This time, I heard more than [*sic*] just a melody, I listened to the words of the preacher."<sup>31</sup> Despite his wife's dismay, McPherson knelt down on the street and prayed the "sinner's prayer" and, at that moment, a realization washed over him.

All my life I had labored under the stigma of being born an Indian. I had always been made to feel I wasn't quite as good as people with White skin. I was amazed after laboring under that stigma all my life

to find the One who so loved me that He died upon the cross for me. He wasn't ashamed of me or my copper skin. He wasn't ashamed of my humble beginnings or ancestry.<sup>32</sup>

From that moment on, John McPherson became Brother McPherson and, after the end of World War II, he embarked on a long career as a traveling evangelist and AG missionary.

For McPherson, with conversion came the realization that belief in Jesus offered healing. Even though there were times when McPherson encountered racism after his conversion, he believed that Jesus loved him. Divine love did not come with any conditions, and it was attainable for all who believed. For McPherson, his conversion experience was a powerful marker in his life because not only did his experience affirm his belief, but his perception of divine love helped him to cultivate a rhetoric of divine judgment and reconciliation that appears in writings from the later years of his ministry.

#### Addressing Misconceptions

Native missionaries knew that most white Americans, including their own AG brothers and sisters, held misconceptions about indigenous peoples, and they set out to address them. Their main venue was the *PE*, which native missionaries used to their advantage. First, they educated the greater Pentecostal public on the wrongs done to Native Americans, particularly the wrongs of the U.S. government. With the exception of a handful of outspoken early white missionaries, white Pentecostals rarely offered public criticism of the U.S. government for its Indian policies. Most white Americans did not know what life was like on the reservations and did not really understand the intricacies of Indian policy, so it was left to native missionaries to explain how badly the government had wronged them.

The two events that indigenous missionaries used to gain the public's attention were the Cherokee Trail of Tears and the Navajo Long Walk, events that showed the cruelty and indifference of the U.S. government. Notably, the two authors who were responsible for the articles in the *PE* and subsequent tracts were not only significant evangelists, but one came from the Cherokee tribe and the other married into the Navajo tribe.

John McPherson developed "The Trail of Tears" (first preached ca. 1950) article and tract from a popular sermon he often used while evangelizing. The tract contains both a creative retelling of life on the trail and the historical facts of the forced march. McPherson boldly asserted that the Cherokees removed by the government from their homelands in North Carolina and Georgia were a civilized people and included many Christians. He also noted that the nation had aided the U.S. government in its battles against the Creeks. McPherson

described the removal as especially brutal: "Men were seized in the fields; women were taken from their hearths; children were taken from their play and always if they looked back, the victims saw their homes in flames."<sup>33</sup> He continued by vividly describing the forced march, undertaken in harsh winter weather, and he emphasized the large numbers of women and children who died in the ordeal. McPherson's retelling is accurate according to eyewitness accounts written by a Baptist missionary who observed the violence.<sup>34</sup>

McPherson hoped that, by vividly retelling the injustices the government had inflicted, he would arouse the sympathy of his white readers and inspire them to become missionaries to natives. But the most informative part of the article, for my purposes in this chapter, is the closing paragraph, where McPherson presented the gospel as a means of reconciliation.

But I, as a descendant of one who walked the death march, can hold no malice against my fellow man. For what has happened to my people I can harbor no ill in my heart because I have been born again and washed in Calvary's flow. God, the perfect Judge, in His own hour will settle the account and His judgment will be swift and sure and just. The "Trail of Tears" of the Cherokee is history. It has been duly recorded in eternity's archives awaiting the position of the Almighty. Let the judge of all the world weigh the action and the actors who must explain more than four thousand silent graves.<sup>35</sup>

McPherson attested that, by becoming a Christian, he could move forward and leave behind his anger at the government and at the men who had inflicted so much pain on his people. In essence, Pentecostal Christianity had healed him from the wrongs of the past and allowed him to overcome his feelings of hatred. Note that McPherson strongly emphasized divine judgment—so while it may seem that the U.S. government and President Andrew Jackson escaped punishment for their misdeeds, he believed they would have to face God and answer for their actions. McPherson's tract serves as an example of an accessible account (in the mid-twentieth-century United States, the story of the Trail of Tears had mainly been relegated to history books) of the injustices the government committed against the indigenous peoples of the continent, as well as illustrating how McPherson and his native brothers reshaped the gospel.

Coralie Lee, the white wife of Navajo missionary Charlie Lee, wrote "The Long Walk" tract (ca. 1960s). Like "The Trail of Tears," it was published as both a *PE* article and as a pamphlet for fellow Pentecostals. Coralie was likely inspired by the stories that her husband Charlie Lee and his family passed down—because Charlie Lee came from a traditional sheep-herding family and his ancestors had been prisoners on the Long Walk. Also like "The Trail of Tears," "The Long Walk" emphasized the injustices of the federal government toward the Navajos, a piece of history that is less well known to the U.S. public. The tract described how the U.S. government, through its agent Kit Carson,

starved Navajos who resisted removal from their homeland. Lee painted a vivid picture of Carson and his men slaughtering Navajo sheep herds and cutting down fruit trees in order to break the spirit of the Navajos who were opposing their forced removal. Eventually, most Navajos surrendered and gathered at Fort Defiance. Next, they were forced to walk to Fort Sumner, where the government imposed an experiment on them.<sup>36</sup> The government forced the Navajos to become farmers and live in settled towns like the Pueblo peoples, and the experiment failed. Farming for a living was anathema to the semi-nomadic Navajos, who had long subsisted on a combination of sheep, goat, and horse herding and the fruits of their orchards. Eventually, the U.S. government allowed them to return to their homeland to herd sheep.<sup>37</sup>

Lee's purpose in writing her article was twofold. First, she hoped to educate Pentecostal readers about a major event in Navajo history. Second, she addressed the need for educated, indigenous missionaries and for money to support them. She stated: "The great need is for the Indians themselves to go to Bible schools and come back as missionaries, especially to those who are unreached as yet due to the language barrier. But most Navajos are not wealthy enough to pay for schooling and families are large."<sup>38</sup> Sister Lee, as the wife of Charlie Lee, understood that the most effective way to reach natives with the message of Christianity was by training native missionaries. Like her husband, she had fully embraced the "indigenous principle" and was willing to take the risk of asking the *PE* readership for support and money to implement an idea that the white AG leadership did not completely accept—an idea that Charlie Lee pioneered on the Navajo reservation and that was not widely practiced by white missionaries.

Besides educating the general Pentecostal readership on indigenous history, native evangelists used their writings to make their fellow natives seem less an exotic other and to clarify for their readers the special difficulties of reservation life. One article written by McPherson and Paul Kinel tried to dispel long-held stereotypes regarding natives. "Often the published material about Indians is either sentimentally unrealistic or brutally untrue. Indians were and are neither ignorant and blood-thirsty savages, nor misunderstood heroes. Indians are human beings, living interesting lives in accordance with customs and beliefs which, though ancient in origin, are greatly modified by several hundred years of contact with white people."<sup>39</sup> Unlike their white missionary colleagues, who generally emphasized the exotic or savage nature of the people they were evangelizing, native missionaries wrote about the essential humanity of the people they served. In the great majority of *PE* articles on home missions, white missionaries used now-troubling language to describe native peoples; they emphasized their "darkness," "heathen ways," and how they "savagely" danced in front of fires during traditional ceremonies while beating "tom-toms." Indigenous women were occasionally referred to as "squaws" and natives' "poverty" was continually emphasized.

White Pentecostals made no allowances for the significant differences in tribal cultures or customs, deeming them all to be “heathen.” It is worth noting, however, that such language was commonly used in reference to other missionized groups; Native Americans were not the only “heathens,” according to the AG. Any non-Christians were similarly portrayed.

In contrast to other *PE* authors, McPherson and Kinel pointed out the diversity of the indigenous peoples in North America, including differences of language and customs. They noted this in order to point out how difficult it was to evangelize natives without skilled missionaries who could speak the languages or money with which to develop such a clergy. In addition, the authors emphasized the terrible condition of the infrastructure of the reservations, and noted that it was a result of failed U.S. Indian policy (rather than implying that natives were poor through faults of their own). Money for repairs and building would aid in the spread of the gospel and make life better for people. Although the article ended with a plea for donations to the AG’s Indian Home Missions Department, McPherson and Kinel succeeded to a great extent (demonstrated by the fact that they managed to get their critical article published in the *PE*) in confronting old stereotypes—stereotypes that their white counterparts played upon in the same periodical.<sup>40</sup>

### Reframing Healing as Reconciliation

At the very heart of pentecostalism is its restorationist/primitivistic impulse, which allows believers to frame the gospel in terms of healing, miraculous events, and prophecy. For native missionaries, however, the focus on healing tended also to be internal, and more collective. They framed healing in terms of healing from the pains of racism or from the injustices of history. Several early native leaders reported healings they felt gave them power to navigate a new path in becoming a Pentecostal native. Both McPherson and Cree felt that the Holy Spirit healed them of their personal prejudices. This idea of healing was not an anomaly, but rather the norm among native Pentecostals; for them, the most important sort of healing was of the heart and spirit, in addition to the healing of the body.

Indigenous missionaries sometimes gave hints of their own view of healing in the articles they wrote for the *PE*. Klamath George Effman elegantly summed up native missionaries’ approach: “When Christ enters the life He gives a new heart. This removes from the Indian all the former hatred and mistrust for the White man. Christ is the Great Physician and He can meet both the physical and spiritual needs of the heartsick Indian.”<sup>41</sup> Even though Christ can “give a new heart,” as the majority of native evangelists believed, it was still hard to give up old prejudices, a point that Cree was careful to make.<sup>42</sup> Although he credited the Holy Spirit with helping him to overcome his hatred

of the French, it was at times painful and difficult, especially when the French did little to convince him that they were deserving of his love and forgiveness.<sup>43</sup>

Native evangelists were open about the pain of the past and the atrocities their people had suffered. Even though most embraced reconciliation, they always held those who “sinned” against their people to account. McPherson made this point strongly in his “Trail of Tears” sermon, which stressed divine judgment, and offered a way of turning the deep anger of his fellow natives into more productive feelings.

In recounting the migration into exile of the Cherokee in 1838, with its atrocities, its blood and death, we are appalled and rise up to protest the way the Cherokee were treated by fellow men. But I ask you, how have you treated the Christ, who left heaven and adorned in the robes of flesh, was born in a manger and later suffered and died that you might have life and have life more abundantly? He too walked a trail of tears, a journey of sorrows.<sup>44</sup>

At the end of his sermon, McPherson challenged his fellow natives to understand that Christ was someone like themselves. A poor man, despised by many, Jesus was eventually beaten and killed by his detractors. In other words, Christ was like the indigenous people, and because he was like them, he could truly understand and address the difficulties of their lives and history. McPherson believed that accepting Christ would change the harshness of native life and give his people hope, something he felt many were lacking on the reservation.

In advocating reconciliation and forgiveness, native Pentecostals’ interpretation of the gospel moved beyond the idea of spiritual salvation. For indigenous evangelists, salvation from sin and gifts of the Holy Spirit were not enough to solve the ongoing problem of being a native under a government that over the centuries had stolen their land and destroyed their way of life. Cree and McPherson understood that their fellow natives had to move beyond the wrongs of the past. Becoming a Pentecostal and embracing a gospel of healing and reconciliation was one way for indigenous people to do that.

The use of pentecostal healing as reconciliation did not end with the mid-twentieth-century AG native pastors. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the language of racial reconciliation began to appear prominently among indigenous members of new Charismatic and more broadly evangelical groups such as the Promise Keepers. Cherokee scholar Andrea Smith has written extensively on this phenomenon in her book *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (2008). Smith demonstrates that native members of the Promise Keepers tend primarily to come from Charismatic Christian groups, many from the Vineyard Christian Fellowship.<sup>45</sup> The racial reconciliation movement among native members of the Promise Keepers did not appear out of nowhere. Twenty-first-century Charismatic native

believers may have moved beyond the original denominations that gave birth to Pentecostalism, but they have not moved beyond the earlier ideas of healing. The native push for the indigenous principle, as it was known in the AG, is what allowed a modern native leadership to emerge within the new Charismatic movement, because indigenous AG pastors modeled how natives could carve out an autonomous space in a white organization. The AG's missionary work to native peoples is what planted the seed of pentecostal beliefs on many reservations in the first place.

The first generation of AG native evangelists, by reworking their understanding of pentecostal healing, sowed the seeds for the later twenty-first-century racial reconciliation movement among groups such as the Promise Keepers. Consider one of the many examples that Smith uses in her work: native Promise Keeper Jeff King. "He calls on all American Indian men to model Christ by forgiving and reconciling with their white Christian brothers and to let go of the bitterness incurred by five hundred years of genocide."<sup>46</sup> King's words, and the words of other native members of the Promise Keepers movement, such as Tom Claus, Ross Maracle, and Tom Bee, echo the language initially used by mid-century AG native evangelists such as Rodger Cree, John McPherson, and George Effman. The main difference between modern native Charismatics and first-generation AG native pastors is that indigenous Charismatics have moved beyond carving out a space within a denomination (the AG) to engaging evangelical and pentecostal Christianity at large.

The first generation of twentieth-century native AG missionaries and pastors set the standard for the native Pentecostal and Charismatic believers who followed them in the twenty-first century. As the first group of converts to pentecostal Christianity, it was they who began to define Jesus as the Great Physician—the one who could heal native Pentecostals of racial hatred and the bitterness of the past, as well as of physical infirmities. As this chapter has shown, these native Pentecostal leaders expanded the traditional pentecostal understanding of healing that white missionaries brought with them. Moving beyond physical healing, indigenous Pentecostals stressed that the Holy Spirit and Jesus could wipe away hatred, mistrust, and anger. For many native Pentecostals, this healing was fundamental to their ongoing engagement with the AG, where they continually ran into problems caused by the paternalism of their white colleagues. Without their focus on this new kind of pentecostal healing and racial reconciliation, it is doubtful that they could have stayed within a denomination that often put up roadblocks to indigenous advancement and leadership within the AG power structure. Knowing that the Great Physician could tend to their needs and pain buoyed many native Pentecostal believers as they fought the AG for official leadership positions and to implement the indigenous principle in its missionary work. Finally, the words of AG believers such as Cree, Maracle, McPherson, Effman, Lee, and Dann show how they inspired, directly and indirectly, the new generation of native leadership

in the new Charismatic and evangelical groups, and laid the foundation for the modern racial reconciliation movement.

## NOTES

1 Rodger Cree, interview, Springfield, Mo., 8 Aug. 2006; Cree does not give the date of his conversion, but judging by other events in his narrative, it likely occurred in the mid-1930s.

2 Ibid.

3 Although Cree is Canadian by birth and nationality, he became a missionary to several southwestern U.S. tribes and to the Lumbee of North Carolina after a bout with rheumatic fever during a missionary posting among the Cree people of the Hudson Bay. Weakened by his illness, but devoted to working among indigenous people, he found a second home among U.S. tribes in warmer climates. Cree speaks Mohawk, French, and English fluently; he also made it a point to learn to sing hymns in Pima when he was among that tribe. Cree is typical of most AG native missionaries; they ended up (at one time or another) ministering to tribal groups that were not their own (the main exception being the Navajo missionary Charlie Lee). This points to the modern development of a pan-Indian identity in general, which extends to Pentecostal Native Americans. Because they are such a small group within the AG, indigenous Pentecostals have tended to emphasize their cultural similarities as natives, not their tribal differences.

4 William G. McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794–1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 15.

5 White Pentecostals and Charismatics have demonstrated increasing interest in mental and emotional healing since the second half of the twentieth century, but the emphasis has been on personal traumas rather than social wrongs.

6 "Amongst the Indians," *Christian Evangel* (27 July 1918): 5.

7 Information such as education, age, and marital status was gleaned from the "Deceased Missionary Files" that the AG holds on past missionaries. However, not every missionary has a DMF, sometimes the files lack basic information, and they are not filed by type of missionary work (that is, home and foreign missionaries are all filed together). Therefore, I had to rely on the *PE* to gather the names of missionaries to Native Americans, and then tried to track down every missionary's DMF. A DMF could not be located for about half the missionaries listed in the *PE* from the early period.

8 For more on the structure of the AG's Department of Home Missions, see Gary McGee, *This Gospel Shall Be Preached: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 2003).

9 "A Forward Step to Reach the Navajo Indian," *PE* (11 July 1937): 9.

10 "George Effman," DMF, Application for Ordination, RG 8-27, shelf loc. 75/5/1, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Assemblies of God Headquarters, Springfield, Missouri (hereafter FPHC).

11 "First Indian Convention," *PE* (10 Apr. 1948): 11.

12 "Andrew Maracle," DMF, Application for Ordination, RG 8-27, shelf loc. 76/5/3, FPHC.

13 John T. McPherson with Phil Taylor, *Chief: My Story* (Tulsa, Okla.: Carbondale Assembly of God, 1995).

14 Rodger Cree, interview, Springfield, Mo., 8 Aug. 2006.

15 Gary McGee, "Assemblies of God Mission Theology: A Historical Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10.4 (Oct. 1986) 166-169. The most famous proponent of the indigenous principle (the person who gave the term its specific name), who was also Charlie Lee's teacher at Central Bible Institute, was Latin American missiologist Melvin Hodges, the author of *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), *The Indigenous Church and the Missionary: A Sequel to the Indigenous Church* (South Pasadena, Calif.: Carey Library, 1978), and *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1997). Charlie Lee (Navajo) took Hodges' ideas and popularized them among indigenous Pentecostals. Lee also founded his own mission in Shiprock, New Mexico, among the Navajo and created the first all-native, self-supporting, General Council-affiliated Native American Assemblies of God church (recognized by the AG in 1976).

16 The AG's first all-indigenous Bible college was originally founded by white missionary Alta Washburn in 1957. Washburn (one white missionary of whom native Pentecostals speak with deep fondness and affection) defied the AG hierarchy in establishing the Bible school, because the white leadership did not believe it was needed. Washburn's school was formally taken over by the AG in 1967. It is now called the American Indian College of the Assemblies of God (Phoenix, Arizona). The position of national Indian representative for the AG was created in 1979 to satisfy native demands for greater national visibility and was filled by John McPherson. Currently, the position is held by John Maracle (nephew of Andrew Maracle), who has also become the first indigenous member of the AG's Executive Presbytery. (Maracle was voted into the position in 2008.)

17 Miroslav Volf's "Materiality of Salvation: An Investigation in the Soteriologies of Liberation and Pentecostal Theologies," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26.3 (1989): 461, notes, "Thus, whereas Pentecostals are eager to help individuals in need, they are virtually blind to the need for changing the structures of their societal life." This quote succinctly sums up how white Pentecostals treated native Pentecostals within the AG. Although white Pentecostals were concerned for their indigenous counterparts, they did not understand how the white-controlled structure of the AG kept native leaders from assuming any sort of control over ministry to Native Americans. Native ministers sought to change the structure that oversaw missions to native peoples (they wanted more education for indigenous missionaries and a greater emphasis on native-run churches), but the AG did not feel that such change was warranted. That was when the native missionaries turned to the indigenous principle in order to show that the unwillingness of the AG to foster indigenous churches was not just problematic, but un-Pentecostal. In this way, native Pentecostals are radically different from white Pentecostals in that they have long used their pentecostal beliefs to attempt to change societal and ecclesial structures.

18 David Harrell, *All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 5-6.

19 Alta Washburn, *Trail to the Tribes* (Springfield, Mo.: self-published, n.d.), FPHC, 21-22.

20 Ibid.

21 "Healings Reported on American Indian Field," *PE* (27 June 1965): 27.

22 Lemy Pike and Hazel Pike, "Jicarilla Apaches Build a New Church," *PE* (17 July 1960): 16.

23 Volf, "Materiality of Salvation," 447-467.

24 "Phoenix Indian CA's Believe They Are Saved to Serve," *PE* (17 July 1960): 21.

25 Andrea Smith, *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 102.

26 Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 58.

27 Jimmie Dann, "I Received No Peace from the Shoshoni Sun Dance," *PE* (18 July 1954): 10.

28 Ibid., 10-11.

29 Andrew Maracle, "From a Log Cabin: An Autobiography of the Life and Ministry of Rev. Andrew Clifford Maracle," RG 17, shelf loc. 2/3/8, FPHC, n.d.

30 Ibid., 4, 7.

31 McPherson with Taylor, *Chief*, 48.

32 Ibid.

33 John McPherson, "The Trail of Tears," distributed by AG Home Missions, shelf loc. 9/3/6, RG 11-56, FPHC, n.d., n.p.

34 For Baptist missionary accounts of the Trail of Tears, see William G. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokee: Evan and John B. Jones* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

35 McPherson, "Trail of Tears," last page.

36 The majority of Navajos who went to Fort Defiance were elderly men, women, and children. Most young warriors were killed in skirmishes with Carson's men, and those who survived hid in Canyon de Chelly with the few sheep herds that escaped government detection. For a readable history of Carson and his battle with the Navajos, see Hampton Sides, *Blood and Thunder: An Epic of the American West* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 2006).

37 Coralie Lee, "The Long Walk," distributed by AG Home Missions, uncataloged, FPHC, n.d., n.p.

38 Ibid.

39 John McPherson and Paul Kinel, "The First Americans," *PE* (31 Aug. 1958): 14.

40 Ibid.

41 George Effman, "The First Are Last," *PE* (25 Feb. 1962): 12.

42 The language of Christ giving a "new, clean heart" is a striking foreshadowing of similar language that native Charismatics and other evangelical leaders would use in the twenty-first century during their affiliation with the Promise Keepers. This shows the continuity between the modern native leaders who joined the Christian Right and the early AG leaders, who predated them by almost a half-century. Smith, *Native Americans*, 99, calls this trend "performing reconciliations" and points out how it shows that indigenous peoples continue to defy

categorization when it comes to how they employ conservative Christianity for their own uses.

43 Cree interview.

44 McPherson with Taylor, *Chief*, 96.

45 Smith, *Native Americans*, 79.

46 *Ibid.*, 92.