

AN ECUMENIST OF THE SPIRIT: THE LEGACY OF DAVID CHARLES MAINSE¹

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Abstract

David Charles Mainse was uniquely qualified to ride the wave of a renewal movement in the late twentieth century that compelled him to minister well beyond the boundaries of his own denominational tradition. His passionate spirituality exceeded personal piety as he tirelessly built his television ministry into a national platform for evangelism. His bridge building to Canadian mainline denominations made him a veritable Pentecostal ecumenist. While he encountered misunderstanding from his own denomination, his loyalty, sincerity and commitment to the gospel witness resulted in a legacy of deep and lasting respect.

INTRODUCTION

In July 2014 at the 48th International Ecumenical Seminar in Strasbourg, France, Jean-Daniel Plüss opened his comments on “Pentecostalism and Ecumenism of the Spirit” with a personal anecdote of a time he joined a table of students for lunch. He overheard one student ask another, “Who’s speaking this afternoon?” The reply was, “A Pentecostal is coming!” Then someone else remarked, “Ahh, Pentecostalism is messy!” Plüss said he wisely decided to stay anonymous until he entered the classroom to present the lecture. Similarly, probably every audience to whom David Mainse spoke in Canada over his more than half a century of leadership knew that a Pentecostal was coming. And even for the classical Pentecostals, Mainse’s Pentecostalism could often appear somewhat messy.

A passionate spirituality, evangelistic fervor, loyalty to his classical Pentecostalism, and openness to those associated with the Charismatic Movement equipped Mainse to be the ideal candidate for the role that he was to carry out. He became a role model for a new generation of Pentecostal leaders to reach beyond their traditional boundaries in the interest of corporate evangelism and the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh. As time progressed, he was able to garner

¹ Ewen H. Butler, *Canadian Winds of the Spirit: Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic Currents* (Asbury, KY: Emeth Press, 2018). Used with permission.

respect across most denominational groups as the authenticity of his character and ministry became widely evident.

Born in Québec in 1936, but raised near Ottawa, Ontario, Mainse experienced conversion following a period of rebellion and anger apparently precipitated by the death of his mother when he was just 12. Even though he trained for ministry at Eastern Pentecostal Bible College (EPBC), Peterborough, Ontario and entered ministry with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), it can be argued that David (as he came to be known) never did see Pentecostal governance structures as fences to protect from pneumatologically aberrant views in the same way others may have seen them. While he was able to remain loyal to the leadership and doctrinal standards of his own denomination, he seems to have had an almost childlike and uncalculated perspective that no religious institutional label should ever be the means of preventing anyone from experiencing the love of Christ and the transformation of the Spirit. In that respect, Mainse's ecumenism can be viewed as more of an impulse than any kind of intentional agenda though he certainly did encourage ecumenical dialogue. Those who knew him best agreed that he was an exceptional visionary not at all intent on creating a personal empire but rather consumed with ensuring that every Canadian of any age, race, and socio-economic status first, to put it in simple terms, be told of Jesus and second, that the unity of the Spirit be evident across all denominational lines.

David was a Canadian religious leader whose life and active ministry spanned the Holiness, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. His roots reached deep into the Holiness Movement. He was perhaps the single figure within the PAOC with the most direct line to Ralph C. Horner and his Holiness Movement Church (HMC). His father, Roy Lake Mainse, was a HMC missionary who spent two lengthy terms working with the denomination's mission program in Egypt and was present when the HMC finally merged with the Free Methodists in 1959.² Discovering later that his uncle, Manley Pritchard (a well-known Hornerite preacher), had experienced the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues during the early part of the century but had kept quiet about it, Mainse concluded that his mother would have known about it

² Clifford Roy Fortune, "Ralph Cecil Horner: Product of the Ottawa Valley" (unpublished master's thesis, Carleton University, 1999): 202-205. See also Dr. Roy Lake Mainse, *A Happy Heart: One Man's Inspiring Story of God's Fulfillment in His Life* (Crossroads Christian Communications, 1988), 29-58.

which was the reason she was more accepting of the Pentecostal Movement, sometimes taking her son to PAOC meetings. In my lengthy interview with him in August 2012, Mainse did not seem to have a comprehensive grasp of the history of his family's denomination but only that he came out of a strict holiness tradition:

We belonged to a denomination called "The Holiness Movement," with about 50 congregations in eastern Ontario and Quebec which had sprung out of the Methodist tradition during the previous century... We were like some of the old Mennonite groups in some ways, though we were not quite as severe as they were about outward adornment. We did take our worship seriously and had prayer and family altar after each meal and again kneeling by our beds at night. And there was Bible-reading once a day usually after supper.³

However, Holiness experiential piety minus the trappings of external legalism would follow Mainse from his early days including his education at Brockville Bible College, a training institution founded by Horner to be a place where all would be "trained and baptized with fire to go and rescue the perishing masses,"⁴ to his later training for Pentecostal ministry at Eastern Pentecostal Bible College in Peterborough, Ontario. His deep passion for ubiquitous Spirit empowerment and the salvation of others regardless of their church affiliation would drive him to push the boundaries of established denominational expectations as far as necessary.

STRANDS OF ECUMENICAL SPIRITUALITY

Mainse's passionate spirituality never waned but continued throughout his early ministry years and beyond. The interwoven nature of Holiness, Pentecostal, and Christian and Missionary Alliance influences were brought to bear upon his maturing spiritual awareness. Reuben Sternall, one of the signees of the original PAOC charter in 1920, became a mentor to younger pastors including Mainse during the

³ David Mainse, *100* (Burlington, ON: Crossroads Christian Communications, 1999), 18.

⁴ Glen Lockwood, *The Story of Brockville* (Henderson printing, Inc. n.d.), 371.

1950s. Sternall had experienced the Spirit not from direct contact with the Azusa Revival or the Hebden mission but while a student at the CMA Bible College in Nyack, New York.⁵ Mainse found in Sternall a similar spiritual passion, simplicity, and faith. While he and his wife, Norma Jean were pastoring in Hamilton, Ontario, Mainse had been fasting and praying for his children to receive Spirit baptism. On one occasion, he returned home to find Sternall praying for his four children all of whom then experienced the Spirit with tongues, with one even being delivered from stuttering.⁶ Such was Mainse's spontaneity and openness to the work of the Spirit enabling him to look well beyond denominational lines.

It was Mainse's lack of historical attachment to any specific mainline denomination and seeming absence of religious prejudice that shielded him from the frequent "came out of" mentality that conditioned the attitude of many early Pentecostals who looked back to the undesirable formalism of their parent churches and who subsequently affixed themselves firmly to the Pentecostal way. His relationship with those churches was much more fluid and his ecumenical inclination very natural. This tendency was conditioned early on following his father's return from his second term in Egypt, having left his family at home for six years. Mainse's father worked for an influential member of the United Church of Canada (UCC) in exchange for caring for his family while he was away. Mainse recalls, "That was the beginning of the broadening of my ecumenical outlook."⁷ The apparent lack of a deeply entrenched denominational consciousness within his family background made him the ideal candidate for the ecumenical leadership role that he would take on. His parents allowed him to attend Sunday School at the local CMA church and sometimes at the Salvation Army. His father and other Holiness preachers in his denomination had felt "a kindred spirit with other holiness churches in our area,"⁸ a truly revealing recollection from a developing Pentecostal ecumenist. The older Mainse was able to forge a union between two Holiness schools,

⁵ When the early revival began to have an impact on the CMA college, the leadership looked upon it with some disfavor and forbade the formation of groups to pray for the Pentecostal experience. Meanwhile, Robert Sternall received the Spirit in 1910 while visiting in New Rochelle, New York. Aleta A. Piper, "Sternall Biographical Notes," November 1987, PAOC Archives in Rudd, *When The Spirit Came Upon Them*, 182.

⁶ Mainse, *100*, 137-138.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

Brockville Bible School in Brockville and Annesley College in Ottawa, representing two denominations. David regretted church divisions and schisms and applauded the era when “there were such things as church unions.”⁹ His passion for cooperation and mutual understanding never wavered even to the time of his death at the age of 81 in September 2017.

Mainse’s experience prepared him to become the key figure in the intersection of classical Pentecostalism with the Charismatic Movement as well as in broader interdenominational cooperation. Ian Rennie, professor emeritus of Tyndale University College, Toronto submits: “The constant emergence of new pulsations of the Pentecostal movement suggest that this great renewal was nowhere near completion, and as a result it began to produce leaders for the wider evangelical Protestant domain....”¹⁰ He goes on to assert that Mainse became one of the two most recognized and respected evangelical leaders in Canada, the other being Brian Stiller.¹¹

UNRELENTING LOYALTY TO AN UNEASY DENOMINATION

Until recent decades, the thought that there could be much common ground between an older Pentecostal group and non-Holiness, ultra-traditional mainline Canadian denominations, especially with respect to Spirit-baptism and tongues, was exceedingly remote for most adherents of the PAOC. Little did people within the denomination realize that one of their own ministers would be instrumental as both a renewal visionary and an ecumenical link with the other long-established churches. Mainse’s foray into the world of the Charismatic Movement was a risk that he did not seem to regard as severe enough to prevent him from the mission to which he believed he was called. Although the comfort level of some Pentecostals of his own generation with the direction he seemed to be going was often tenuous, in retrospect, Mainse’s humble demeanor, tenacious commitment, and integrity secured his place and reputation within the history of the PAOC and provided a base from which to launch further endeavors to cooperate with and promote ongoing renewal.

⁹ Ibid., 51, 53.

¹⁰ Ian Rennie, “Pentecostalism and Christianity,” *The Testimony* (June 2001), 7-8.

¹¹ Ibid. Stiller became influential through his leadership of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and was arguably more of a thoroughgoing evangelical than a Pentecostal or Charismatic leader.

He was able to maintain his ministerial credentials with the PAOC in excellent standing while striving to set up a non-denominational television and evangelism ministry. Many adherents of the older Pentecostal movement were initially ambivalent towards his ministry, unsure if what appeared to be a familiar and genuine Pentecostal approach would end up being an initiative that would compromise Pentecostalism itself. Yet Mainse received considerable financial and moral support from Pentecostals. The beginnings of his television ministry *Crossroads* had the warm support of the PAOC—a phase in its development when it was no threat to administrative leadership or its reputation as guardian of Pentecostal orthodoxy. Some of the denomination's leaders such as Homer Cantelon, who succeeded Mainse in his Sudbury pastorate and eventually became his district superintendent, were keen supporters from the outset.

Meanwhile, it seems that not everyone within the top leadership was as trusting and quick to lend such unrestrained support. The emerging television ministry initiative was seen as part of the evangelism arm of the denomination. General Superintendent Tom Johnstone and a few other key individuals, including his successor Robert Taitinger, were gracious in their backing which undoubtedly helped to reinforce Mainse's long-term loyalty to the PAOC. It is clear in retrospect that Johnstone was doing everything in his power to affirm Mainse's vision and to harness his enthusiasm and energy. Yet, it is not at all clear whether Johnstone was caught in the unenviable position of both wanting and needing to maintain Mainse's loyalty and ministry affiliation while knowing that pressure might be building at the executive table, as well as at the grassroots, if it had not already begun. Mainse remembers Johnstone as one of those "wide open" guys who had told him, "pure evangelism must not in any way, shape, or form be denominational."¹² The statement appears to be strikingly uncharacteristic of a senior Pentecostal denominational leader, leaving us to wonder whether some political patronizing may have been in the mix by unequivocally asserting that evangelism by its very nature must be inter-denominational. Meanwhile, Johnstone had asked Keith Parks, a fellow PAOC minister, "to keep an eye on me," Mainse recalled. The expansion of *Crossroads* was extending beyond Johnstone's ability to monitor. Parks was asked to keep watch because "this thing is coming

¹² Interview with Mainse, August 8, 2012.

into such prominence.”¹³ Later as Mainse remembered his attempts to reach beyond the boundaries of traditional Pentecostalism, he appears to be have been torn between two realities: the tendency for PAOC culture to be suspicious of any person achieving undue notoriety, on the one hand, and the necessity for prudence on the other. For him, his situation was not unlike that of David Wilkerson’s shaky relationship with the Assemblies of God as his Teen Challenge ministry experienced explosive growth.¹⁴

The relationship continued to be amicable but not without some discomfort as Mainse slowly began to reach out to individuals within the Charismatic Movement who, while they might be sympathetic and similar in their spirituality to PAOC adherents, were not inclined to come under its banner. His gentle personality and impeccable integrity endeared him to both adherents and leadership within his denomination, but it did not mean that the time in which his national television ministry was emerging under PAOC administration and eventually transitioning to an independent inter-denominational ministry was entirely smooth. Its original constitution was drafted with the assumption that any such program would be:

subject to the approval and direction of the Standing National Evangelism Committee of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada [and] its objects and purposes shall conform to the general stated objects and purpose of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada *and shall subscribe to its Statement of Fundamental and Essential Truths.*¹⁵ (emphasis added)

Concern over potential for aberrations of doctrine and practice was evident as it further articulated: “In order to avail itself of the opportunity of greater outreach and support, Crossroads personnel may become involved with non-P.A.O.C. opportunities, provided such activity does not contravene the initial and ultimate purpose of the telecast.”¹⁶

From the outset, the impulse of his mission was clearly national and ecumenical. The Charismatic Movement, then at its height, provided an ideal opportunity for Mainse to build a bridge to other

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Crossroads Constitution, PAOC Archives.

¹⁶ Ibid.

traditions. Thus, it became increasingly clear that the reach of *Crossroads* was creating angst about potential compromise, something that the PAOC would find unmanageable and would be obligated either to counter or ignore. Even the perception of any ministry within its jurisdiction not to be in line with its stated positions would have caused alarm. Early on, not only was it recommended that production costs be covered by PAOC churches within their specific viewing areas but that follow-up “shall endeavor to channel all contacts into area churches.”¹⁷ Older Pentecostal churches were seen to be the only appropriate worship venues where new believers ought to be directed. Nevertheless, in time, as more non-PAOC lay individuals and clergy became involved in *Crossroads* leadership following its incorporation in 1977, consternation began to be expressed to the denominational leadership by many adherents at the grass-roots level.

UNRELENTING COMMITMENT TO THE UNITY OF BELIEVERS

Years before Mainse had perhaps even considered the hiring of staff and having guests on his program from within the Charismatic Movement, he had been comfortable associating with leading figures in other denominations. It was a United Church of Canada minister in Sudbury who suggested to him the idea of setting up a telephone call-in centre that he eventually incorporated into his daily television program. He had become president of the city’s ministerial association and had “prayed over many buildings and pronounced many invocations and benedictions.”¹⁸ On Pentecost Sunday 1967, Mainse led a combined service at the main intersection of the downtown area with participation from all denominations, both Protestant and Catholic, carrying torches through the streets in what he saw a “great parade of Christian unity, the first time that churches of all Christian traditions had joined for an event of that type.”¹⁹ He recalls:

The torches symbolized the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost; but to me the morning symbolized God’s promise to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. All who love Jesus Christ are truly

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mainse, *100*, 131.

¹⁹ Ibid.

one in Him, regardless of their denominational differences.... It was going to happen in Canada. In fact, we bore witness to the events of that very day, it had already begun.²⁰

The event was covered by the local Protestant periodical, *Protestant Action*, in a report associating Mainse with lighting candles in the Catholic Church! A fellow PAOC minister that summer confronted him with the accusation that he was compromising and demanded that Mainse repent. Mainse's response was characteristic of his view that fear ought not be the *modus operandi* among Christians: "Instead of being angry at me, you should be making full proof of your ministry. And you don't [do that] inside the walls of your church.... You should be out there making contact with Roman Catholics and seeing them born again and filled with the Holy Ghost." Mainse felt vindicated when three months later, the pastor baptized five nuns.²¹ The courage of such an ecumenical perspective positioned Mainse for national influence and would help at least to moderate the outlook of an older Pentecostal mentality of isolationism to a more outward-oriented consciousness as well as penetrate the Canadian evangelical world. He would continue to move freely among evangelicals and, to a large degree, also mainline Protestants and Catholics in the following decades.

In effect, Mainse was leading the charge to open doors for a new generation of ministers and leaders to achieve more healthy mutual understanding among people of all Canadian denominations. His passion for evangelism superseded any thought that misunderstanding at best or offense at worst might result from his energetic initiatives. In honoring and reflecting on his ministry at the 2012 PAOC General Conference, Superintendent David Wells noted that Mainse pushed the boundaries.²² He was uniquely gifted in his ability to discern what opportunities he should capitalize on in order to make the most of them for evangelistic purposes. Notwithstanding his deep loyalty, it was neither his distinctive Pentecostalism nor any expressed desire to be identified with the Charismatic Movement that drove him, rather, it was his passion for all people everywhere. This fact was clearly and easily detectable through the constant, passionate reference to the importance of evangelism beyond all denominational barriers during my lengthy

²⁰ Ibid., 131-132.

²¹ Interview with Mainse, August 8, 2012.

²² Ibid.

interview with him.

On-air conversation focused neither exclusively on the PAOC and its churches nor on the unfolding events of the Charismatic Movement as much as on individual transformation. Mainse was surfing the wave of the Charismatic phenomenon and embracing it fully but not explicitly promoting it. He was impatient with all Protestantism that “couldn’t see the forest for the trees” but was so entrenched in its various traditions that evangelism was no longer a priority. In his own denomination, he was even more vocal about pastors who were not “soul winners.” In defense of his vision, Mainse continued to hold that “soul winners had understood what God had led us to do because you’ve got to break down barriers.”²³ His national and ecumenical vision was evident with his very first *100 Huntley Street* guest, Robert N. Thompson, a Christian politician and former leader of the federal Social Credit party, touting a line that would be repeated many times in succeeding years, namely, “Canada’s need to remember its beginning as a nation under God—‘a dominion from sea to sea.’”²⁴ It is noteworthy that the other two guests on the launch also seemed to anticipate the road ahead. William Prankard, another PAOC minister, was also venturing into non-Pentecostal territory and would eventually become a well-known faith-healing evangelist to many remote parts of the nation. The third guest was none other than David du Plessis who had surrendered his credentials with the PAOC’s sister organization, the Assemblies of God, in 1962 under pressure from the denomination’s leadership over his ecumenical engagement. To complete the eclectic lineup of participants, the program was co-hosted by Brandt Gillespie, an American Charismatic evangelist and Christian TV producer.²⁵

As Mainse invited those from other traditions with whom he had previous association, and in whom he had acquired confidence, to join in the new venture, he gradually moved away from direct contact with PAOC leadership. He remained convinced that divine guidance was at work as each person who came with the ministry in 1977 “had the direction of his or her life suddenly altered by God, to allow them to come on board.”²⁶ While few, if any, would have accused Mainse of intentionally misleading or creating confusion within the ranks of his own denomination, concern and tension developed over the next few

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mainse, *100*, 173.

months. It was unprecedented at the time for a PAOC minister to be working in such close cooperation with representatives from the three major Canadian denominations (the Anglican Church of Canada [ACC], UCC, and the Roman Catholic Church [RC]) and within an organization whose vision was active evangelism within a renewal context. In short order in 1977, Mainse invited Al Reimers (ACC), Bob MacDougall (RC), and Gordon Williams (UCC) to partner with him full-time.

Reimers was an Anglican priest whom Mainse had come to know while both were ministers in Sudbury and involved with the local ministerial association. Reimers had experienced baptism in the Spirit in 1965, having come into contact with it for the first time in 1963 at an Anglican Congress in Toronto just as the Charismatic Movement was beginning to impact mainline denominations across Canada.²⁷ A report given by the principal of the Anglican theological college in Seoul, Korea, about Koreans getting up at five o'clock in the morning for prayer and Bible study as a consequence of something called "the baptism of the Holy Spirit," had captivated his interest. Years earlier in 1954, Reimers had also been impacted while working with the World Council of Churches General Assembly where he had been assigned to work with du Plessis who was just beginning to recognize the work of the Spirit in the older churches.²⁸ It was equally uncharacteristic for a local PAOC pastor to have invited an Anglican priest (even one who was tongue-speaking) to his church, but Mainse pushed the boundaries very early by inviting Reimers to do just that.

But Reimers was a staunch supporter of people who had experienced the Spirit in the Charismatic Movement staying within their own church traditions, a position that adherents of the PAOC in general had difficulty comprehending. Representative of the position held by many other Canadian Charismatic leaders, Reimers argues:

...until now there has never been a spiritual movement that has touched the whole nation.... The Holiness movement of a hundred years ago affected several denominations. The Pentecostal movement of 1900 to 1925 touched individuals of many denominations, but the only visible effect was the transfer of members from the "historic" churches to the new Pentecostal

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

assemblies.²⁹

The distance between his perspective and that of the PAOC whose self-understanding was its mission to get people saved and released from “formalism and dead orthodoxy” and to experience the Spirit, could not be more distinct. It was this perhaps unexpected development soon after the Charismatic Movement began that caused some within the denomination to be concerned, if not alarmed. Reimers, however, delights in recalling that within a year following Dennis Bennett’s announcement in April 1960 that he had spoken in tongues, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and others in Canada were acknowledging that they had experienced the same:

... but they did not leave their “respectable” denominations and join the Pentecostals. They felt called to stay and pray within their own traditions in spite of being misunderstood. The loyalty has borne fruits, so that now, instead of new Pentecostal denominations being born (as happened when charismatics were forced out of their churches in the first part of the century), new life has come to the old churches including the Roman Catholic.³⁰

Mainse’s fearless affirmation of renewal wherever he saw it, regardless of denominational label, endeared him to people like Reimers who claimed they had experienced the Spirit.

Mutual conviction, regarding the necessity for unity if evangelism and social service were to be effective, led both Reimers and Mainse to decry long-term disunity and suspicion among Canadian denominations. Reimers was fully aware of the relative uniqueness of Mainse’s perspective as a Pentecostal minister that evangelism could only make use of and succeed in the new electronic age if there was cooperation among Christians. Reimers and likely most of the *Crossroads* interdenominational staff were also cognizant of the courageous stand that Mainse was taking: “Because of his ecumenical approach, David Mainse [was] taking criticism from some members of his own denomination but God has honored his insistence on cooperation” and reiterated that God had drawn the staff together in love

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

for one another and prompted nation-wide support for the program.³¹ Mainse's ecumenical bent clearly resonated with Reimers: "If God can do so much through these few workers who have agreed to be Christians first and denominationalists second, imagine what He can do as many other Christians adopt this attitude."³² Not every classical Pentecostal was inclined to frame the issue that way.

If there was a level of discomfort with an Anglican priest collaborating in a full-time evangelism venture with a PAOC credential holder, it was magnified with the hiring of a Jesuit priest, Bob MacDougall. A vibrant, buoyant individual, MacDougall saw himself as a Catholic Pentecostal. After being shot out of the sky during World War II and surviving a Nazi prison camp, he sought for a way to overcome the resulting fear and depression. In 1972, a fellow priest attended a charismatic prayer meeting in Toronto and claimed he was told to go home and lay hands on MacDougall. That night, MacDougall experienced a radical transformation, inner healing, spoke in tongues, and eventually claimed he was divinely directed to work at *Crossroads*.³³ Mainse had met him for the first time in Winnipeg through a professional football player friend whose priest he was at the time and where he asked Mainse to join him on an exorcism. MacDougall's loyalty to his Catholic faith was unmistakable. His obituary notice in 2004 reported: "From 1977 to 2000, he worked in the Charismatic Apostolate, first on the *100 Huntley Street* television show, then after 1984 as the Director and Host of the *Food for Life* TV ministry for six years."³⁴ The last venture was a separate Catholic charismatic ministry launched with support from Mainse.³⁵

Few things seemed to bother Mainse after his retirement from *Crossroads* as much as the memory of complaints from some of his detractors who happened to be former Roman Catholics and yet who strongly opposed the presence of MacDougall on the daily television program. The irony of their argument, Mainse claimed, was that while they insisted they still would not be "saved" had they stayed in the

³¹ Al Reimers, *God's Country: Charismatic Renewal* (Toronto: G.R. Welch, 1979).

³² Ibid.

³³ Mainse, *100*, 177-180.

³⁴ Obituary for Robert L. MacDougall, *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 27, 2004, http://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-91315/name-Robert_Macdougall/ (accessed July 15, 2014).

³⁵ *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, s.v. "Charismatic Movement: Development in North America" (Peter Hocken): 477-489.

Catholic Church, neither would they have watched his *100 Huntley Street* program had not MacDougall been on with him as a co-host in the first place. He maintained that MacDougall gave him the platform for reaching out to Roman Catholics, a strategy that created openness that would otherwise have been impossible. He spoke fondly of having “reached out through Father Bob MacDougall.”³⁶

The long-held view by some that those who became believers and experienced the Spirit would automatically leave their traditional denominational homes would have been unfair and unreasonable, according to Mainse.³⁷ His high view of the sovereignty of the Spirit allowed him to welcome people like Reimers and McDougall and to downplay lines of demarcation between church traditions. For him, people just do not establish their theology quickly. To become unduly concerned, for example, when a person has not left her Catholic faith immediately after becoming a believer and experiencing the Spirit within a Pentecostal context is to be blind to the gentleness required to nurture those newly born into the kingdom of God. Mainse was impatient with longtime Pentecostals thinking and acting in ways that demonstrated their willingness to keep denominational walls thick and protective.

If any mainline church representative was easier for classical Pentecostals to accept than another, it would have been Gordon Williams. With more immediate connection to the Wesleyan roots of Pentecostalism, Williams’ presence with *Crossroads* beginning in 1983 would have brought at least some comfort to older Pentecostals who now saw an exuberant pastor with an evangelistic fervor in the tradition of an old time Methodist minister. PAOC people had been aware for years that the UCC had been in steady decline since the 1960s while their own movement had grown significantly.³⁸ Williams was one with Mainse in his view that the proper use of television provided new hope for Christian churches, not in replacing them but in enhancing them.³⁹

³⁶ Interview with Mainse, August 8, 2012.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Diane Francis, “Gimme That Prime-Time Religion,” *Macleans*, (April 28, 1980): 48-49. Francis reported that UCC decline had been taking place since the 1960s when liberal attitudes had begun to take root in the church. Since 1965, its membership had dropped by 157,000, Sunday School attendance to 236,000 from 702,000 and that 254 churches had closed whereas Pentecostals had doubled their membership in the 1970s to 300,000.

³⁹ Ibid..

Williams started out as the Crossroads Toronto Area Director and later became assistant to Mainse as president, responsible for a biblical overview at the end of each telecast as well as frequently co-hosting the program.⁴⁰ He brought with him the mix of a pleasant demeanour, youthful energy and old-fashioned evangelism. Personalities like Williams attracted many Pentecostals who saw in them the same spiritual vitality that they remembered from a previous era of Pentecostal revival. But far from being a fundamentalist evangelist, Williams appears to have seen renewal as a potential bridge over the growing ideological divide within the UCC. He was alarmed that “answers for many now seem to lie in extremism. Conservatives provide simplistic answers to complex questions and liberals follow cultural mores with pious overtones.”⁴¹ It was belief in the sovereignty of the Spirit over doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences of many within the Charismatic Movement that bewildered Pentecostals and compelled them to question, if not reject, what could not fit their theological framework. Richard Quebedeaux had observed a few years earlier, “Protestants and Catholics, conservatives and liberals, do not automatically discard their own theological and ecclesiastical differences when they come together in this movement.”⁴² Mainse’s passion for the evangelistic enterprise and the experience of the Spirit impelled him to dispense with debate over any of these issues, thus making Williams and other charismatic figures ideal partners.⁴³ The self-understanding of PAOC leadership and most of the rank and file, however, involves the responsibility to protect its distinctive doctrinal tenets including its stated position on the Spirit’s operation against any such theological reductionism.

CONCLUSION

Although few of his PAOC colleagues would have been comfortable as yet with his line of argumentation, David Mainse did not hesitate to defer to biblical precedent, declaring that the apostle Peter

⁴⁰ Gordon Williams Evangelistic Association (biographical sketch). <http://gordwilliams.com/revgordonwilliamsc242.php> (accessed July 16, 2014).

⁴¹ Francis, “Prime-Time Religion.”

⁴² Richard Quebedeaux, *The New Charismatics: The Origins, Development, and Significance of Neo-Pentecostalism* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1976): 8.

⁴³ Mainse referred to them as 100 Huntley Street “irregulars” (Mainse, *100*, 188).

had no reluctance in stepping over the barrier of Jewish animosity toward the Jesus sect by preaching Christ to those in the Temple shortly after Pentecost. Mainse was always careful to point out that theological disagreements and any previous mistreatment of classical Pentecostals by mainline churches were never reason enough to be “separatists.” His philosophy of ministry was clear: “Peter did not avoid the matter of the guilt of the leaders of the Jews in the crucifixion of Jesus but he did not dwell on that. Rather he proclaimed boldly the message of Jesus Christ, that great harvest of precious souls would have never happened without bridge building.”⁴⁴ He concluded that there would already have been secret believers in the Temple who were “waiting for someone to come to their place of prayer not shouting at them from the outside but showing them respect and praying for them.”⁴⁵ In a more recent current affairs program interview, when asked to summarize the success of his ministry, Mainse responded that it was due to the God who was more interested in people and communications than he could ever be—a response that essentially defined him in his obsession both with his faith and the use of modern media to convey the Christian message, at the core of which he believed there was no “doctrinal divide.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Context with Lorna Dueck: Life Beyond the Headlines*, episode #1139, <http://www.contextwithlornadueck.com/episodes/david-mainse-crossroads-cts-tv> (accessed August 12, 2014).