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STORIES WE LIVE BY:
CONVERGENCES IN COMMUNITY NARRATIVES
OF MENNONITES AND PENTECOSTALS¹

NATASHA WIEBE

Abstract

This essay employs the art of narrative inquiry to explore points of convergence and divergence between Mennonites and Pentecostals. I recount three interrelated storylines constructed from my mennocostal experience: from memories of services and activities in my childhood Pentecostal church; from stories told by Mennonite family; and from writing and reflections of authors who share my Russian Mennonite heritage. These storylines are: (1) Pentecostal exuberance and Mennonite quiet; (2) Pentecostal soldiers and Mennonite peacemakers; and (3) Pentecostals and Mennonites as God's chosen people. I assess how these stories blend together to create larger narratives that impact behaviours such as worship, separation from the world, and evangelism.

Introduction

The most talked-about books among scholars of Mennonite literature include Miriam Toews' novel, *A Complicated Kindness*, narrated by the fictional Nomi Nickel; and Rhoda Janzen's memoirs, *Mennonite in a Little Black Dress* and *Does This Church Make Me Look Fat?* For me, the appeal of these books lies in how they blend storylines familiar from my Mennonite family and Pentecostal upbringing. When Nickel and Janzen mention Mennonite history in Russia, I am reminded of family stories of escape from the Ukraine in the 1920s. When Nickel and Janzen catalogue rules for good Mennonite living, I recall similar expectations for youth in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. When Nickel writes about the rapture, and Janzen about her childhood fear of the Antichrist, I remember being frightened by Pentecostal movies on

¹ This essay is used with permission, and will appear in a collection of essays entitled *Our Lives as Mennocostals: Personal Accounts of Mennonite and Pentecostal Convergence* edited by Martin W. Mittelstadt and Brian K. Pipkin (Pentecostals and Charismatics for Peace and Justice 13; Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, Forthcoming).

the end times. Nickel's and Janzen's narratives bring together Mennonite and Pentecostal elements, a blending I call *mennocostal*.² In celebration of my rich and quirky mennocostal heritage, this paper explores several convergences among Pentecostal and Mennonite storylines.

"Life is a story," says novelist Yann Martel. "You can choose your own story; a story with God is the better story."³ What stories do Mennonites and Pentecostals choose to tell? How do these choices affect our lives? This study describes three storylines I learned during Pentecostal church services and youth activities in southwestern Ontario in the 1970-80s. It compares these storylines to Mennonite counterparts expressed by family and creative writers who share our Russian Mennonite heritage. Finally, the study discusses some ways the storylines shaped interactions with others, both within our communities and without.

My approach is not theological. Rather, this study is a narrative inquiry. Narrative researchers assume that people, and their literary characters, "are storytelling organisms who ... lead storied lives.... The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world."⁴ To study my mennocostal experience, this study draws from my narratives, told through examples and vignettes. This is in keeping with narrative inquiry, in which the researcher's story always has a place to varying degrees.⁵ To provide context for and further develop points drawn from my experience, I turn to scholarship on narrative inquiry, conservative Christianity, and Mennonite literature. I also make connections to other personal narratives with Pentecostal or Mennonite settings. These narratives are set in different times and places, and by

² Natasha Wiebe, "mennocostal 1: singing in tongues." *Rhubarb: A Magazine of New Mennonite Art and Writing* 13 (2007) 39, and "Mennocostal Musings: Poetic inquiry and Performance in Educational Research." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9 (2008) n.p. <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/413/898>.

³ Paul Laity. "Yann Martel: 'My children aren't impressed that I won the Booker or that I wrote Life of Pi'" *The Guardian* (2016). n.p. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/04/books-interview-yann-martel-the-high-mountains-of-portugal>.

⁴ Michael F. Connelly and Jean D. Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry." *Educational Researcher* 19 (1990), 2.

⁵ D. Jean Clandinin and Michael F. Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 121.

referencing them, I do not mean to suggest that all Pentecostal and Mennonite communities are the same. Rather, I reference others when their experience echoes, and therefore deepens understanding of, my own.

Vignette 1: Singing in tongues

every summer my family travelled to a revival meeting in mennonite country and my sister and me ran through the gravel parking lot and pointed at cars painted black and squealed when we saw horses and buggies standing near the door inside we played *where's menno* the women were easy to find because they wore print dresses like laura ingalls and we counted their hairnets during the sermons except those by our favourite speaker mr yutzi he used to be mennonite like dad was once in fact mr yutzi used to be *amish* (he must have been really old fashioned) sometimes during the singing he would start to dance a little hop hop that charged the crowd and my sister and me danced with him and mom too but dad kept his eyes closed and talked to jesus who lived in his heart

best of all was the singing in tongues back home we didn't sing in tongues we talked in them speaking in tongues was a gift from god and in our church you got your prayer language like you got your moustache or period but if you were slow you didn't have to worry because we had starter sentences to help you let go and let god (*sell me a hyundai he bought a bow tie* say them a few times and you were off) speaking in tongues was noisy like altar calls when we rushed forward after Sunday night service to scrub sin with tears and glossolalia and like tongues & interpretation when mr lear wailed a message from the holy ghost in *gullamashundalla* his face ripening like a tomato and his arms stretched and flapping like kite strings in the wind (and mom translated in english *thus saith the lord* and my sister and me didn't know where to look) but singing in tongues was different you could tell it was coming when everything got real still (even the babies were quiet) it was that holy hushshhh when you could feel the spirit slide on by *ssssssshhhhhhhh*

then a high voice would begin to sing like icicles in the sunlight and willow leaves in the wind and soft ice cream in the dish the narnia voice would sing and mr yutzi would join it and mom and dad and my sister too and then we were a choir our voices *rising* and falling and *rising* and falling and *rising* and falling and i hear mom for a moment before she's swallowed by the sound and i hear dad and then he is gone i hear mr yutzi and my sister i hear everyone and no one and our voices are *rising* and falling and *rising* and falling and we're like my school-trip symphony but without a conductor and we're *crashing* and quiet *crashing* and quiet we're *crashing* and quiet and my skin my skin tingles because we sing parts from a blizzard's hymnbook we sing we sing we sing in a tuning orchestra's gooseflesh harmony⁶

Exuberance and quiet

While the Bible describes several gifts of the Holy Spirit, including “the ability to heal, to give prophecies, to speak in tongues ... and to perform miracles”⁷, for my Pentecostals, *the* gift was speaking in tongues. Growing in your faith included suddenly beginning to pray in a language given by the Spirit, just as in Acts 2 (although the above “starter sentences” suggest the experience wasn't spontaneous for everyone). I learned the importance of speaking in tongues from participating in Pentecostal services. The services that enthused the adults, the ones that made me cry and feel clean inside, often concluded with the congregation moving to the front of the church to pray, an activity during which *glossolalia* was prominent:

...during a good altar call mr lear gets worked up and begins to wail just like when my sister and me get spanked but he's feeling the fire of the spirit and not a burn on the bum and soon everyone begins to pray as loud as he does and your tongues-talk turns into a chant like you imagine the africans do around their fires in the bush before the missionaries save them and back and forth mr

⁶ Wiebe, “mennocostal 1,” 39; “Mennocostal Musings,” section 3.

⁷ Elijah G. Dann, “An Introduction to Christian Fundamentalism.” In *Leaving Fundamentalism: Personal Stories*, edited by G. Elijah Dann (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 11.

lear's *shundais* dance with your *lallamatikas* back and forth you go and your body begins to rock with the rhythm of your talk and maybe you fall back from the power of the spirit....⁸

Our noisy and communal practice of *glossolalia* is no doubt partly why we were occasionally called holy rollers and teased about swinging from chandeliers. We were the rowdy kids on the Christian block. This reputation served me well as a teenager, when I learned to deflect unwanted romantic attention from non-Pentecostal boys by asking if they, too, spoke in tongues.

Even as a child, I was aware that Pentecostals were known for exuberance in church.⁹ However, occasional visits to Opa's (Grandpa's) United Mennonite church suggested Mennonites were more staid. Hymns were sung, but no faster songs with drums and bass guitar. There was no *glossolalia*. And there was definitely no dancing (Why don't Mennonites believe in premarital sex? Because it might lead to dancing!). As Rhoda Janzen jokes, "in a Mennonite church...you sit very still and worship Jesus with all your heart, mind, and soul, only as if a snake had bitten you, and you are now in the last stages of paralysis"¹⁰ Such restraint is fitting for a community that has been defined by the "old axiom [of] 'Quiet in the Land' of keeping to ourselves, intentionally separated from a dominant culture."¹¹ However, the vignette challenges the storyline of quiet. It describes a recurring event during which a group of charismatic Mennonites were noisier and more spontaneous than Pentecostals. The vignette takes the community storylines of Pentecostal exuberance and Mennonite quiet, and flips them to tell a personal story that "run[s] counter to expectancy" and "breach[es] a canonical script."¹²

⁸ Wiebe, "Mennocostal Musings," section 5.

⁹ Dann, "Introduction," 11.

¹⁰ Rhoda Janzen, *Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: A Memoir of Going Home* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), 3.

¹¹ Randy Janzen, "Teaching Peace Studies from a Mennonite Perspective: Quiet in the Land Revisited," *Conrad Grebel Review* 32 (2014) n.p., par. 6. <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/publications/conrad-grebel-review/issues/spring-2014/teaching-peace-studies-mennonite-perspective-quiet-land>.

¹² Jerome S. Bruner, "The Narrative Construal of Reality" In *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 139.

Vignette 2: Sword drill

On Wednesday nights, my sister and me dress in our uniforms with the knights and horses on them and go to church group called *Crusaders*. We bumper-car around the gym with the other kids until Mr. Lear blows his whistle and calls

at-TEN-shun!

Mr. Lear is our commander but he's not the commander-in-chief because that's Jesus. Jesus sits on the red velvet throne by the gym wall. We all stand tall and salute him, and I feel a big balloon blow up inside. We march by invisible Jesus and put our quarter tributes in the collection plate. Sometimes, after *Crusaders*, the little boys take turns sitting on his invisible lap, but they jump up real quick because he might not like it (and Mr. Lear sure doesn't).

Best of all are the sword drills.
First we kneel with our Bibles
the sword of the spirit
against our left sides.

Then Mr. Lear says a verse like *Ephesians six verse thirteen* and we wait
a really
long
time.

Finally Mr. Lear says *charge!* and everything smears like a fingerpainting because we're flipping pages as fast as we can and I'm real fast because I've memorized all of the names of the books of the Bible but Grace is fast too and I know she's gaining on me because I can't hear her pages turning anymore and oh no she's starting to stand up and I'm on the right page but I haven't found the right verse but *stand up stand UP* says the voice inside and I jump up and sing out *The Lord says* to pretend I'm starting to read and get a head start.

Soldiers and peacemakers

My second vignette is informed by the storyline of the Christian soldier who fights alongside Jesus to rescue unbelievers from Satan. I absorbed this storyline during eight years in a Pentecostal children's group called *Crusaders*. We knights, ladies, maids, and squires earned badges for such things as building campfires and leading someone to Jesus. Our military theme was based on Ephesians 6:13-18:

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.¹³

The first vignette describes the soldier's duty to "pray in the Spirit," which we equated with *glossolalia*. The second vignette focuses on the sword. By describing the sword drill, or competition of "who can find the Bible verse first," the vignette shows the emphasis we placed on knowing the Bible. We believed that simply hearing scripture could cut someone to the quick and convince them of wrongdoing. Ironically, the narrator cheats at sword drill; the competition has overshadowed the purpose of better acquainting her with God's word.

As an adult, I learned that if good Pentecostals were soldiers, good Mennonites were peacemakers. As Rhoda Janzen writes, the "central tenet of [the Mennonite] faith was nonviolence. Mennonites refused to fight. This position . . . arose out of the deeply held conviction that Jesus modeled a different kind of life, one that would turn the other cheek, even to martyrdom." When describing a conversation about

¹³ Unless otherwise noted, Bible verses are from the New International Version.

Jesus driving the moneylenders from the temple, Janzen observes she had

never heard a single sermon preached on the Jesus whip ... I had imagined Jesus pitching a harmless hissy fit in the middle of the temple, cracking his whip for cranky emphasis.... Jesus wasn't actually *hurting* anybody. When I explained this vision to [my Pentecostal boyfriend], he laughed.... "Jesus *drove* those money changers out of the temple," he said.¹⁴

From other writers, I learned that non-violence or non-resistance meant more than not physically fighting. Poet Patrick Friesen says where he grew up, "Pacifism meant that you didn't argue or confront each other very often ... so you found ... subtle ways of getting around that. And I think that's where a lot of Mennonites learned how to write."¹⁵ Miriam Toews agrees, saying that "Mennonite stuff" like non-resistance got "under the skin," leading her to attach the anger she was not supposed to express to her characters.¹⁶ The essays and poetry of Di Brandt also challenge non-resistance by speaking out about such potentially-divisive issues as the silencing of women, abuse, and religious contradictions in her conservative Mennonite community.¹⁷

Like the different Mennonite communities of the aforementioned writers, my Pentecostal church avoided conflict. Although we were soldiers, our fight was with the devil, not each other. Good soldiers don't question their orders, and so it was common to curtail a conversation expressing religious doubt by saying, "God's

¹⁴ Janzen, *Does This Church Make Me Look Fat? A Mennonite Finds Faith, Meets Mr. Right, and Solves Her Lady Problems* (New York: Grand Central, 2012), 212.

¹⁵ Hilda Froese Tiessen, "Introduction." In *Liars and Rascals: Mennonite Short Stories*, edited by Hildi Froese Tiessen (Waterloo: University of Waterloo Press, 1989), 18.

¹⁶ Wiebe, "'It Gets Under the Skin and Settles in': A Conversation with Miriam Toews," *Conrad Grebel Review* 26 (2008): 121. <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/sites/ca.grebel/files/uploads/files/CGR-26-1-W2008-11.pdf>.

¹⁷ Wiebe, "Di Brandt's Writing Breaks Canadian Mennonite Silence and Reshapes Cultural Identity" In *German Diasporic Experiences: Identity, Migration, and Loss*, edited by Matthias Schulze et al., 479-89 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 479, 484.

ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts are higher than our thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Jacob Shelley says that when he raised difficult questions with Pentecostal churchmates, they “did not want to discuss things.... they wanted to set me straight.”¹⁸ This recalls one of Brandt’s poems in which the Mennonite narrator unwittingly identifies a contradiction in community beliefs. The father responds, “when are you / going to learn not everything has to make sense your brain is not / the most important thing in the world what counts is your attitude /& your faith your willingness to accept the mystery of God’s / ways.”¹⁹ Most communities manage dialogue about controversial matters to varying degrees; without harmony, a community may cease to exist. In my Pentecostal church and greater Mennonite community, two different storylines that helped maintain conversational boundaries included Pentecostal soldier (raise the shield of faith against the arrows of doubt) and Mennonite peacemaker (remain quiet about issues that could disturb community harmony). As sociologist Laurel Richardson observes, “Participation in a culture includes participation in the narratives of that culture.... Cultural stories ... instruct the young and control the adult.... They are not ‘simply’ stories but are narratives that have real consequences.”²⁰

Vignette 3: Military parade

On Saturday we pack into the church bus and sing *Oh bus driver speed up a little bit* and *100 bottles of Coke on the wall* and drive to another town for a rally with Crusaders from all over.

We cram into the hockey arena and compare badges and have sword drills and tie knots and watch the bible-quiz kids compete and then it’s time for the

parade. The grown-ups sheepdog us out to the parking lot and into our ranks and give bibles to my sister and other kids who forgot their swords. Some of us get to be in front and hold the church

¹⁸ Jacob Shelley, “Life Stages,” In *Leaving Fundamentalism: Personal Stories*, edited by G. Elijah Dann (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 131.

¹⁹ Di Brandt, *questions i asked my mother* (Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1987), 6

²⁰ Laurel Richardson, “Narrative Knowing and Sociological Telling,” In *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 32.

banner. The little boys point and the big boys shove and the big girls roll their eyes and put on lip gloss but

we all stand tall when we hear the drums call.

Dum. Dum.

Dum, dum, dum.

Thump says the pavement
under our feet.

Left. Left.

Left, right, left.

My stomach dances as
we mark time.

Left. Left.

Left, right, left.

Onward Christian soldiers
marching as to war

with the cross of Jesus
we pass the grocery store.

People honk, and point at us,
as through the town we tread.

My sister waves, and stares right back,
But I look straight ahead.

God's chosen people

By describing the energetic Crusader parade, the above vignette carries forward two storylines discussed previously: those of Pentecostal exuberance and militarism. The vignette also hints at another storyline: God's chosen people. My church expressed this storyline through songs that compared us to the Jews of the Old Testament, including "We're marching through Canaan's land."

Moreover, there were sermons that positioned us born-again Christians as chosen, including those on 1 Peter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”²¹ Showing awareness of our apartness, we referred to non-Christians as “the world,” basing this expression on verses like “you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:19), and “anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” (James 4:4). The vignette expresses the storyline of God’s chosen people by depicting the Crusaders as set apart: their procession is physically separate from the watching townspeople; they are dressed differently; and the narrator looks straight ahead, not engaging with onlookers.

To help us “be in the world, but not of it,” my Pentecostals developed a set of guidelines that included no alcohol, secular music, movie theatres, missionary dating (dating unbelievers), and divorce. In *A Complicated Kindness*, Nomi Nickel shares similar rules for her Mennonite hometown:

Five hundred years ago in Europe a man named Menno Simons set off to do his own peculiar religious thing and he and his followers were beaten up and killed or forced to conform all over Holland, Poland and Russia until ... some of them, finally landed right here where I sit....
.... Imagine ... a breakaway clique of people whose manifesto includes a ban on the media, dancing, smoking, temperate climates, movies, drinking, rock 'n' roll, having sex for fun, swimming, make-up, jewellery, playing pool, going to cities, or staying up past nine o'clock.... Thanks a lot, Menno.²²

When Nickel describes the Mennonites’ “peculiar religious thing,” she alludes to 1 Peter 2:9, the same verse my Pentecostals used to establish themselves as chosen. Di Brandt is more direct, saying Mennonites were

²¹ King James Version.

²² Miriam Toews, *A Complicated Kindness* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2004), 5.

not unlike the Jewish people in our wanderings, like the wanderings described in the biblical book of Exodus.... The Chosen People of the Wilderness.... That was our big story. We were like this tribe in the wilderness, surrounded by alien cultures....²³

In keeping with this tribal theme, my opa playfully referred to outsiders as “Philistines,” an arch-enemy of the ancient Jews. His Mennonite neighbours were more polite, referring instead to *dee Enjlanda* (the English), and this expression shows the importance that speaking German had in maintaining cultural separation from outsiders.²⁴

Remaining apart from the world could be challenging. The vignette shows this tension in my Pentecostal community. The children’s activities are shaped by outside influences: Crusaders is akin to Guides and Scouts, and the children sing a dealcoholized version of “100 bottles of beer on the wall.” The characters also challenge the notion of separation: The sister doesn’t take the parade too seriously, forgetting her Bible and engaging the worldly onlookers. Moreover, an alternate reading of the ending suggests the narrator stares straight ahead not because she is a good and focused soldier, but because she is embarrassed; the sound of the drums (“dum”) and the trite concluding rhymes build toward this interpretation. In these ways, the vignette strains against the Pentecostal storyline of being separate. Similarly, there are numerous examples that challenge the ideal of Mennonite separation. For instance, Rhoda Janzen writes that in Russia, Mennonites assisted with restructuring Jewish and Russian villages²⁵ and sold wagons to well-to-do Russians.²⁶ Moreover, Di Brandt suggests that Mennonite food – Dutch *Zweiback*, German *Sauerkraut*, Ukrainian *Borscht* – shows the countries that hosted Mennonites over the centuries “can’t have been all that hostile if we learned nearly all our

²³ See my “Interview with Di Brandt,” In “Restorying in Canadian Mennonite Writing: Implications for Narrative Inquiry,” Unpublished PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2010, 214.

²⁴ Henry Paetkau, “Separation or Integration? The Russian Mennonite Immigrant Community in Ontario, 1921 - 1945.” Unpublished PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1986, iii.

²⁵ Janzen, *Black Dress*, 229.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 233.

recipes from them!”²⁷ When Opa and other Mennonites immigrated to Pelee Island, Ontario in the 1920s, sharing their mother tongue with German American islanders made it difficult to maintain cultural apartness, compelling the Mennonites to relocate to mainland communities with larger Mennonite populations.²⁸

Today, most North American Mennonites are urban and assimilated.²⁹ For some, this means the loss of a distinct Mennonite identity; to others, it is the opportunity for Mennonite churches to reclaim defining principles like non-resistance and welcome newcomers from outside the heritage.³⁰ Since my youth, Pentecostals in southwestern Ontario have also redefined some ways they maintain apartness, tolerating such things as movie theatres, secular music, and divorce. Community boundaries shift. When the world outside changes, so does the community trying to maintain its apartness. Signals of community change can be found within the personal narratives of (former) members because individual experiences often differ from community expectations.

Conclusion

This study explores a trio of interrelated storylines constructed from my mennocostal experience: from memories of services and activities in my childhood Pentecostal church; from stories told by Mennonite family; and from writing and reflections of authors who share my Russian Mennonite heritage. These storylines are: (1) Pentecostal exuberance and Mennonite quiet; (2) Pentecostal soldiers and Mennonite peacemakers; and (3) Pentecostals and Mennonites as God’s chosen people. The storylines blend together to make up bigger ones. In my Pentecostal community, the overarching story was that of

²⁷ Di Brandt, “In Praise of Hybridity: Reflections from Southwestern Manitoba.” In *After Identity: Mennonite Writing in North America*, edited by Robert Zacharius, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 131.

²⁸ Wiebe, “Mennonite Memories of Pelee Island, Ontario, 1925 - 1950: Toward a Framework for Visual Narrative Inquiry.” *Narrative Inquiry* 23 (2013): 417-419. <http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/journals/10.1075/ni.23.2.10wie>.

²⁹ Royden Loewen, “A Mennonite *Fin de Siècle*: Exploring Identity at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century” In *After Identity: Mennonite Writing in North America*, edited by Robert Zacharius, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 37-38.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 40, 49.

salvation through Jesus:³¹ the Christian soldier fights in God's army against Satan (2) to bring people in the world over to the side of Jesus (3), and to help us in this quest, the Spirit gives the gift of *glossolalia* (1). In my greater Mennonite community, one story that has preoccupied creative writing is that of historical Mennonite diaspora,³² the 500-year search for a home (3) in which Mennonites could quietly practice their faith (1), away from mainstream sin and violence (2). The storylines are not just stories; they provide frameworks through which we act, shaping our worship as noisy or quiet; offering practices for "being in the world, but not of it"; and determining how we converse -- or not -- about subjects that challenge community beliefs or potentially disrupt community harmony. The stories we tell about experiences in Pentecostal and Mennonite communities may express and perpetuate official storylines, but also push back against their constraints.³³ One-size stories don't fit all. Contrary to traditional storylines, the "gift" of tongues may be coaxed into being rather than received spontaneously; radical worship practices may be learned from churches historically considered conservative; peacemaking may be redefined as non-violent activism rather than passive non-resistance;³⁴ and moving into the mainstream may renew, rather than destroy, churches once defined by shared ethnicity.

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³¹ David L. Rattigan, "Fantastic Voyage: Surviving Charismatic Fundamentalism," In *Leaving Fundamentalism: Personal Stories*, edited by G. Elijah Dann (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008) 55.

³² For example, see Robert Zacharius's *Rewriting the Break Event: Mennonites and Migration in Canadian Literature* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013) which explores the repeated narrative of forced Mennonite migration from Russia in Mennonite Canadian literature.

³³ Susan E. Chase, "Narrative Inquiry: Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voices," In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005), 667 - 69.

³⁴ Janzen, "Teaching Peace Studies," par. 14.

