

Contributions of Pentecostal Women in Higher Education

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Keywords: Pentecostal theological education - Pentecostal colleges - female contribution – students - faculty

Abstract

Over the past two decades, there has been a notable increase in the number of female students enrolling in Pentecostal Bible colleges globally. Factors which have contributed to this growth included the increased participation of women in higher education, particularly since the 1970s; the expansion and institutionalisation of Pentecostalism; and congregation members who sought more formal education and training. From humble beginnings as ministry training centres to regulated government institutions, the Pentecostal distinctives offered by such colleges appeal to many female students. Most Pentecostal denominational colleges chose to remain within church networks perpetuating the Pentecostal spirit, ethos and practice. Thus, preparing students, not only vocationally but also providing a holistic and transformational experience, through the power of the Spirit. Simultaneously, colleges provide opportunities for the next generation of female academics to become role models for female students. While many scholars have researched the experience of women in theological education broadly and others have explored key female leaders in the Australian Pentecostal movement, little work has focused on the reflections and experiences of female Pentecostal theological students and faculty in Australia. Utilising qualitative data and interviews with students, faculty and alumni of Alphacrucis College, its affiliates and comparable colleges this paper will briefly explore the contribution of Pentecostal women to Australian Higher Education.

Introduction

Historically, Pentecostal women have been more readily accepted in ministry leadership positions than other denominations. This is also generally true of Pentecostal colleges and denominations. During the 19th century, opportunities for women to undertake theological training varied depending on the denominational stance. There isn't a long history of training women in preparation for ministry and missions in formal theological institutions in Australia.

It is noted women have participated in theological education studies since 2016.¹ However, the egalitarian approach and despite the eschatological urgency of Pentecostalism, particularly, encouraged women in preparation for the work of the ministry. Since the early days of the Pentecostal movement, ministry training and the participation of women have had a significant albeit unacknowledged contribution.

Pentecostal theological education has arguably attracted interest on account of one story of the early beginnings of Pentecostalism which emerged from the context of Charles Parham's Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, USA.² This set Pentecostalism apart from other traditions and mainline seminaries which did not afford women the same opportunities. Initially, the ministry training was both rudimentary and informal, focussing on missionary agendas, evangelism and church planting. Over time, the mission and vision statements of colleges became more prominent and reflective of the values of the broader church movement and the higher education sector.

This paper explores the contribution of Pentecostal women as students and faculty within Pentecostal higher education institutions noting how they shaped and were shaped by their experiences. The term contribution is understood as the role or part played by a person in bringing about an outcome or helping something to advance. The contribution of students is analysed and characterized through the following lenses:

1. Demonstrating obedience to the call of God
2. Continuing the ethos and Spirit of Pentecostal teaching and doctrine to include female participation
3. Creating space and opportunity for the voice of women to be heard

Similarly, the contribution of female academics/leaders is assessed and characterized through the following lenses:

1. Serving and perpetuating the vision and mission of the College and the Church broadly
2. Serving as mentors
3. Demonstrating, through role modelling, a place of women

1. Background to Pentecostal Education

For over 100 years theological education has formed part of Australia's religious landscape. Closely aligning with mainstream churches, "local theological colleges were opened from the

¹ Kara Martin et al., "Women in Theological Education in the ACT in Twenty-First Australia," in *Theological Education: Foundations, Practices, and Future Direction*, ed. Andrew Bain and Ian Hussey (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), 161.

² James Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1988).

mid-nineteenth century.”³ As Charles Sherlock notes, “overall, the picture which emerges of Australian theological education is one of long-established, academically robust and distinctive dimensions of higher education.”⁴ It was in this religious landscape that “Bible colleges were founded [across Australia] typically following the American model of lay education for missionaries and church workers.”⁵ The overarching purpose of theological education was to prepare men desiring to enter ministry for ordination. The picture of colleges that emerges is one of single purpose aligned with a patriarchal, ecclesial structure.

Over the past two decades, there has been a notable increase in the number of female students enrolling in Pentecostal bible colleges across the world.⁶ The increase in women’s participation in higher education, Treloar suggests, “mirrors the large increase of women in the post-secondary education sector since 1970 and signifies the participation of theology in the dramatic changes in the social dimensions of gender of the latter twentieth century.”⁷ Treloar attributes this expansion to the involvement of Pentecostals, as Pentecostalism has become more institutionalised: “its people have sought formal education and training. At the same time as Australians have generally become better educated, Pentecostals and other Christians have wanted to become better educated theologically.”⁸ This has had an impact on church leadership. Despite the increase in females undertaking theology and ministry degrees this has not always translated into church leadership positions. The low numbers of women becoming pastors limits the degree to which they have an impact on the dominant culture of Pentecostal churches. The absence of women in any positions of influence and decision-making leaves a notable deficiency in potential mentors and role models for younger women.

The development of Pentecostal bible colleges in Australia have emulated Pentecostal church patterns of institutionalisation. They began as practical ministry training centres empowered by the missional focus of Pentecostal movements, and the urgency of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. They were also influenced by the anti-intellectual stance of the broader Pentecostal church community. This stance has remained a point of tension between the colleges (academia) and the Church. External forces, such as the tightening of government regulations and changes in the religious environment, shaped the progression and maturation of Pentecostal bible colleges, influencing curriculum content, student profiles and graduate

³ Charles Sherlock, *Uncovering Theology: The Depth, Reach and Utility of Australian Theological Education* (Adelaide, SA: ATF Theology, 2009), 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵ Adelaide in 1913, Sydney in 1916, Melbourne in 1920 and Perth in 1928. *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶ David Esterline et al., *Global Survey on Theological Education 2011-2013: Summary of Main Findings For WCC 10th Assembly, Busan, 30 Oct - 8 Nov 2013*, 2013, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ete/global-survey-on-theological-education/@@download/file/GLocal%20Survey%20Report%20WCC%20Sept%2018.pdf>.

⁷ Geoffrey Treloar, “Towards a Master Narrative: Theological Learning and Teaching in Australia since 1901,” *St Mark’s Review* 4, no. 210 (2009): 41.

⁸ *Ibid.*

destinations. Some colleges chose to become government-accredited, higher education institutions, aided by the availability of government loan schemes, such as FEE Help, to help eligible fee-paying students pay their tuition fees.⁹ Most Pentecostal denominational colleges chose to remain within church networks perpetuating the Pentecostal spirit, ethos and practice, while seeking accreditation. Over the course of the first five decades of t Alphacrucis College's history there are many examples of women who made major contributions in ministry and missions. Due to constraints this paper provides a snapshot of the contribution.

The development of Pentecostal theological education also gave rise to other challenges. Internal factors in Pentecostalism, such as anti-intellectualism and the lack of tertiary education requirements for ordination, have had an adverse effect on women pursuing ministry training. While this is not only a challenge for women, they are the focus of this article. The significance of this cannot be overstated. Everett McKinney explains:

In the early years of the modern Pentecostal movement, there was strong emphasis on the spiritual and practical dimensions of Pentecostal education ... early western missionaries who carried the gospel were not highly trained academically. This resulted in the establishment of training institutions that were geared to a relatively low academic level, but the curricula were built around a practical ministry-oriented knowledge of the Bible.¹⁰

Martin observes the impact of an anti-intellectual stance on the individual believer: "Pentecostalism is well known for its aversion to formal education ... Pentecostals are wary of education because they believe it to be destructive to the spiritual life of the minister... [and, more concerning] antithetical to genuine faith."¹¹ Michael Wilkinson further notes:

The ministers and people in the early history of the Pentecostal church were so preoccupied with the salvation of souls and the building up of a household of faith, together with days and nights of prayer, that with great victories in the spiritual realm they had not become conscious for a considerable time of higher education.¹²

It is apparent this notion of anti-intellectualism is prevalent among pastors and is perpetuated by the fear of losing the 'fire' of Pentecost in the theological classroom and the lack of tertiary education requirements for ordination. As studies show, the trend toward qualifications among Pentecostal leadership is not high. Therefore, it is interesting but not surprising that women who have undertaken theological study are not attaining higher positions in the

⁹ "Study Assist," *Australian Government*, accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/>.

¹⁰ Everett McKinney, "Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education: A Personal Journey," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3, no. 2 (2000): 263.

¹¹ Lee Roy Martin, "You Shall Love the Lord ... With All Your Mind: The Necessity of an Educated Pentecostal Clergy," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 97 (2016):1.

¹² Michael Wilkinson, *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 105.

church. Pentecostals historically viewed theology as the “antagonist of spirituality.”¹³

2. Methodology

Methodologically, the research for this paper included semi-structured, conversational interviews which allowed participants the opportunity to share personal stories. Participation of interviewees was entirely voluntary. Questions were adapted slightly according to the context, that is, according to whether they were alumni or current students. The strength of approach is the narrative-based, open-ended discussion which gives insight into lived experiences.¹⁴ This resonates with the Pentecostal practice of sharing testimonies.¹⁵ Public testimonies have been a characteristic of Pentecostalism since the movement’s commencement and revolve around personal faith stories. Originally, testimonies focused on the salvation narrative of an individual believer. In more recent times, testimonies have taken on a life of their own; often being given on church social media or websites, they provide viewers with an insight into what God is doing in the life of an individual believer. Imbued with Pentecostal language, they provide a connection point for other believers and those new to the faith. The use of this medium assists churches in reaching out to a wider community.

Additional sources of quantitative data include the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) survey outcomes. “The QILT are a suite of government endorsed surveys for higher education, which cover the student life cycle from commencement to employment.”¹⁶ Data from two of the national surveys is used in this paper; Student Experience Survey (SES) and Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS). Completion of the SES is voluntary, in 2020 “over 180,000 undergraduate students and 90,000 postgraduate students participated in the survey.”¹⁷ This survey collects information on the learning and teaching aspects of the student experience. The GOS, “is completed by graduates of Australian higher education institutions approximately four months after completion of their course.”¹⁸ Although the questions are prescribed institutions can request additional institution specific questions to be included in the surveys. These surveys are a rich source of data providing insights from the student’s perspective, during and upon completion of their awards.

3. The Contribution of Students: Early days

Grey and Austin note the courageous spirit imbued in the Australian Pentecostal pioneer’s intent on building a lasting legacy. This spirit was evident in the formation of Pentecostal

¹³ Gerald J. Pillay, *Religion at the Limits? Pentecostalism among Indian South Africans* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1994), 140.

¹⁴ Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011), 546.

¹⁵ Scott Ellington, “The Costly Loss of Testimony,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8, no. 16 (January 2000): 48; J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 412.

¹⁶ “Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT),” accessed March 1, 2022, <https://www.qilt.edu.au/>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

colleges and continues. As noted previously, early Pentecostal women pioneers prepared for ministry owing to eschatological urgency of the imminent return of Christ. Women moved from rudimentary training programs to established institutions of learning. Edith Blumhofer asserts that:

In the early Pentecostal movement, having the “anointing” was far more important than one’s sex ... A person’s call – and how other believers viewed it – was far more important than [ministerial credentials]. For a Pentecostal, one’s call to ministry is confirmed by the gifting. While denominational ordination is an important factor in validating one’s call, it is simply that, a validation of the ministry one is already doing through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

Eventually, for purely pragmatic reasons to grow or die, one of the first official Pentecostal ministry training schools was opened in Australia. The co-educational Queensland Bible Institute (QBI) was founded in Brisbane in 1935 by Charles Enticknap.²⁰ The official magazine of the Pentecostal Churches of Australia, *Harvest Grain*, also communicated the urgency of the need to spread the gospel message. The 1943 edition notes the contribution of Sister Meredith:

The Bible Training Course, conducted by Sister Meredith, has been most inspiring and helpful to all who have been privileged to attend and is open to all who desire a deeper knowledge in the word of God to fit them for His service. We pray that the Lord will abundantly bless our sister as she continues her labor of love in this department of the work.²¹

Clearly, women were not only attending theological training institutions but were also delivering the classes to both men and women. Pentecostal women in Australia took hold of calling as mission and entered bible college to prepare for lives of service.

For many women there was a desire to embrace spirit and pursue training. How women entered bible colleges varied and their stories reflect the unique ways they heard the divine call and responded to it. This response demonstrated not only the resilience but also the pioneering spirit of Australian Pentecostal women. This is clearly demonstrated by the example of Merle Nugent (nee Smith). Reflecting on her experience, growing up in a Pentecostal household, she speaks about the impact of one particular visitor, who stayed in her home:

I was filled with the Spirit when I was about 14. And we had a gentleman from Brisbane. His name was Conwell. He came and stayed. When Mr Conwell came, he was telling us about his son [Roy] in bible college in Sydney. I thought I would love to do that... It did

¹⁹ Sherilyn Benvenuti, “Pentecostal Women in Ministry: Where Do We Go from Here?,” *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* 1 (January 1997): 1–9.

²⁰ “Great Summer Bible School and Camp Meeting,” *Glad Tidings Messenger* 1, no. 4 (February 1935): 8.

²¹ Annie Sandlant, “Progress at Richmond Temple,” *Harvest Grain* 1, no. 1 (October 1943): 19.

something to me talking about the bible college that Roy was in. I thought well I would like to go to bible school. I was about 19 then I think.²²

This premillennial urgency of the end times was often used as a rationale for forgoing professional training altogether. Merle's parents commented "you're wasting your time – the Lord will come back before you get through."²³ Nevertheless, she was determined. She continues:

I talked to others who said they would like to go too ... So about eight of us all around Australia different states decided. First of all, we applied to every Bible College we knew about. They all rejected us because we spoke in tongues.²⁴

After being rejected by virtually every theological institution in Australia, Merle and her seven friends were finally accepted into the Sydney Bible Training Institute (SBTI). However, they were still marginalised in this environment. Merle recalls:

So, on we went and, when we got down there, we had to sleep in dormitories and no one wanted to sleep with us because they heard that we climbed up the walls, swung on chandeliers and all that sort of thing. Anyway, finally we were accepted, and all became ok ... [Then] one day all the boys got together, and we had what we called the powerhouse where we'd go and pray. So, the boys decided that they'd have a Pentecostal prayer meeting in this prayer house. So, they all got down there, and in the old days, I mean, you don't know what the Pentecostal prayer meetings were like. And the matron ... she heard the noise. They were all in an uproar. We didn't know why they were in an uproar. She hobbled down to the prayer room. She couldn't make herself heard. But finally, the prayer group was disbanded. We thought this is no good. We want a bit of freedom in college. So, we sent a delegation to the conference which was coming up in October.²⁵

At the 1947 annual AOG conference at Beulah Heights, these Pentecostal students asked the AOG Commonwealth Executive to open a bible college. The voices of Merle Nugent and others who experienced a sense of calling to college paved a way for others to follow and follow they did. The Commonwealth Bible College (CBC) opened in 1948, as the national training college of AOG. There were 34 male and 17 female students in the pioneering 'Van-Couriers' class which was a reasonable gender balance for that time period.²⁶ The calling of the original CBC students was imparted with a missionary zeal, aligning with the mission-focused Pentecostal movement. The editor of *Harvest Grain* laments those who did not respond, "many are called: but how very few really fulfil their calling? Great numbers have heard the call of God and have immediately responded as did the young man said: I go sir!

²² Merle Nugent, Personal Interview with Denise Austin (Eight Mile Plains, Brisbane: 14 January 2012).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Austin, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches*, 42.

And He [...She] went not."²⁷ The editor linked the call to ministry with the necessity of training at the bible college:

[W]ords cannot describe my joy at the wonderful progress of the Assemblies of God Commonwealth Bible College. Money cannot buy the priceless treasure of yielded and sanctified Australian manhood and womanhood consecrated to the Saviour as the student body of almost 50 members prepare for the time God's thrusting out under the anointed and able direction of their beloved Principal.²⁸

From the onset the call to college has been distributed to both men and women.

The mission of CBC to spread the gospel message is evident in the classes delivered including preaching and child evangelism. Both male and female students attended these classes, and they were exposed to lectures delivered by both men and women. An eyewitness account of a day at Commonwealth Bible College in 1948 made the following observation:

I find I was greatly impressed with the magnificent job that is being done in this initial year of our Bible College, and above all to pray for God to give us a Holy Ghost revival for Australia; and somehow, I believe the pioneer class of CBC will have a part to play in the answer to this prayer.²⁹

Significantly, it is notable that most of the staff at CBC were women holding positions of influence. The original CBC staff included: Frank Sturgeon (principal); Inez Sturgeon (assistant principal); Mildred Thompson (lecturer); Joyce Jolly (lecturer); and Alice Wright (registrar).³⁰ Fiona Clarke argues that during this era the main task of women in churches was as financial providers and caretakers through auxiliaries and mission societies.³¹ So, it may have been seen as an acceptable role for women to be involved in teaching in the college.

The notion of formalised training did not readily emerge until the mid-20th century in Australian Pentecostalism. In the early years women served as administrators and to a degree faculty. As the Colleges grew and became accredited the composition of faculty changed to predominantly male for a period of time. This aligned with the development of the College, growth of the denomination and the slow change of women joining the workforce and education systems.

4. Students becoming equipped for mission.

One of the students of the 1949 class was Evelyn Westbrook (née Brumptom), who had grown up on a sheep station at Mitchell in outback Queensland.³² In 1947, she was invited to attend

²⁷ "Harvest Gleanings from the Editor's Diary," *Harvest Grain* (May 1948): 14.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ An Eyewitness, "A Day at C.B.C.," *Harvest Grain* (May 1948): 26.

³⁰ "Faculty," *Yukana* (1948): 5–6.

³¹ Fiona Clarke, "'She Hath Done What She Could': Women's Voluntary Groups in the Methodist Church in South Australia 1945-1977," in Long, *Patient Struggle: Essays on Women and Gender in Australian Christianity*, ed. Mark Hutchinson and Edmund Campion, Studies in Australian Christianity 2 (Sydney, NSW: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1994), 129. – 138.

³² Cyril and Evelyn Westbrook, *Personal Interview with Denise Austin* (Buderim QLD: 4 October 2011).

the AGA's annual Christmas camp at Beulah Heights in Victoria. She explains her conversion, Spirit baptism and calling into mission this way:

It was on Christmas day, 1947, that Winston Nunes ... an African American ... was speaking at the camp, and he spoke about the second coming of the Lord. I had never heard of this in my life ... I felt as though two hands were lifting me to my feet, I think he'd said stand to your feet, and I looked around and there was nobody there. And I ran, literally ran down the sawdust path to the front to give my heart to the Lord. The next night again he spoke on the second coming and again I ran to the front. But I was speaking in tongues before I got there! ... I decided to go to bible college ... I went to the meeting, and I just felt, that's just what I want to do. We had neighbours' sons go to New Guinea in the war. And we used to write letters to them and things like this. And two of them died out there. And at the time New Guinea meant a lot to us. And in my heart that was what I wanted to do. And help those people who've helped our soldiers so much.

Ultimately, Evelyn and her husband, Cyril, spent the next 50 years as AGA missionaries to Papua New Guinea.

Students at CBC were trained in missions, church planting and evangelism. After graduation, many women went onto various forms of Pentecostal ministry. Another early alumna was Esther Florence Smith who comments that from the time she was seven years of age, she knew she would become a missionary and nurse.³³ As a young woman, she sought advice from AGA missionary statesman, T. L. Evans, who confirmed her call as a missionary. He said that she needed to go to CBC for training. After two years of study, Smith served as an AGA missionary to Papua New Guinea. CBC principal (1951-1961) and AGA Commonwealth chairman (1955-1959), James Wallace, continued to encourage female students in ministry. He states: "Young men and women here is the challenge of the day. You must be trained, prepared, equipped, anointed, on fire for God. We can win – but only if God has you entirely to Himself."³⁴ Women were included and inspired by the urgent call to mission.

The proliferation of local church bible colleges continued, and professional training gave way to lay people seeking full-time or part-time courses to learn more about the bible and seek personal transformation in their lives.³⁵ Shifting the focus from training pastors to educating lay people changed the dynamics of ministry studies. Waugh notes that "opening ministry education shifts the focus from the classroom to the context of ministry, from preparation for ministry to formation in ministry."³⁶ This shift in student profile had a flow-on effect, changing the way Pentecostal believers viewed the definition of ministry. Geoffrey Treloar points out that one outcome of this development is that "today only twenty percent of the students are

³³ Esther Florence, *Personal interview with Ben Clark* (Sydney: 11 March 2002).

³⁴ James Wallace, "A Message from the Principal," *Australian Evangel* 14, no. 1 (1957): 4.

³⁵ Philip Hughes, *The Pentecostals in Australia* (Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1996), 223.

³⁶ Waugh, "Open Ministry Education."

preparing for careers in full-time Christian ministry. The remainder are people intent upon understanding the Christian tradition as a basis for life and participation as Christians in other occupations."³⁷ Ministry was no longer confined to a position in the church but beyond it. This shift also moved Pentecostal churches away from their stance of isolating themselves from the surrounding culture (the world). Bible colleges developed programs or courses that would train students to work in other not-for-profit organisations.

5. Training women in the power of the spirit

A key question remains, how can you encourage women studies without polarising men? Most Australian Pentecostal bible colleges do not have specific programs or courses for women, but some do provide elective options. Ball observes:

[I]n all tertiary programs, there are regulatory limitations on innovative freedoms but in theology, the degree to which the local institutions have the freedom to develop and implement curriculum has these additional layers of restriction, which vary according to the tradition in which they stand.³⁸

Thus, according to Ball, Pentecostal bible colleges have more freedom to develop a curriculum because they have less hierarchical and ecclesiastical control in comparison to mainstream theological colleges. There is also the additional benefit of "no discrimination between ordination and general students."³⁹ Ball's observations support the notion that curriculum could be developed to enhance women as the subject of theological education.

By the end of the 20th century, the challenge for Pentecostal ministry training colleges faced was how to proactively nurture female leaders without facing accusations of feminist agendas. Elizabeth Miller posits:

[C]ontemporary female church leaders do not always reject feminism's call for gender equality outright; rather they articulate a version of this call that they find palatable, one that means it is problematic to label them as feminists. The version of 'equality' they outline is similar across churches: a woman must value and prioritise her husband, children, and family but her priorities can also encompass a career.⁴⁰

The participation and contribution of women has helped to shape the curriculum, subject development and leadership agenda in colleges.

6. Student voices today

By the 1990s, tighter government regulations in tertiary education forced Pentecostal training centres to become academically accredited institutions with qualified lecturers. As Denise Austin and David Perry note, bible colleges "transited into a more conscious engagement with

³⁷ Treloar, "Towards a Master Narrative: Theological Learning and Teaching in Australia since 1901," 41.

³⁸ Les Ball, *Transforming Theology: Student Experience and Transformative Learning in Undergraduate Theological Education* (Preston, VIC: Mosaic, 2012), 44.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Miller, "A Planting of the Lord: Contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Australia" (PhD, University of Sydney, 2015), 161.

the broader community and intentional alignment with government quality assurance.”⁴¹ Mark Hutchinson notes: “with rising education levels, however, Pentecostal women began to have concepts with which to engage the increasingly obvious disconnections between the Pentecostal language of freedom and the way it worked out in terms of women’s opportunities.”⁴²

A major turning point for the AGA national college came, in 1993, when David Cartledge was appointed as the in-resident president and Jeremy Griffiths became principal. David and Marie Cartledge has previously met and married at CBC, then pioneered and pastored churches across Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland before returning as president.⁴³ David was the longest serving AGA state executive and national executive member. Marie Cartledge was one of the most prominent ordained women leaders in the AGA movement, as national AGA coordinator for women’s ministries and head of Jimmy Swaggart Ministries in Australia.⁴⁴ With leaders who wholeheartedly supported Pentecostal women in leadership, the college developed accredited subjects focused on women in ministry. Denise Austin notes that, in 1993, “there was an impressive choice of eight streams”⁴⁵ including women’s ministries. CBC was renamed Southern Cross College (SCC) and was accredited by the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) of New South Wales, including Austudy eligibility. Advertising again highlighted the egalitarian endorsement:

In Australia’s Sky the Southern Cross Stands Out: The brilliant Southern Cross is a symbol of Divine destiny for this Great Southland of the Holy Spirit. Now another star is rising. The Assemblies of God National Ministry Training College has a new name, new leadership, a new direction, a new sense of destiny, and a new commitment to ‘Training men and women in the power of the Spirit’⁴⁶

The first way that women are motivated to enter ministry training is by viewing calling as the divine choice of God. Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr describes the call into ministry as a “secret” or “that inner persuasion or experience whereby a person feels himself [sic] directly summoned or invited by God to take up the work of the ministry.”⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the gender bias of Niebuhr’s assertions, there is a theological understanding of divine choice or appointment to a person’s vocation. A pertinent question is how believers hear the call into

⁴¹ Austin, “From Jerusalem to Athens: A Journey of Pentecostal Pedagogy in Australia,” 43.

⁴² Hutchinson, “The Contribution of Women to Pentecostalism,” 212.

⁴³ Mark Hutchinson, “David Frederick Cartledge,” *Australian Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements Online*, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://sites.google.com/view/adpcm/a-d-top-page/cartledge-david-frederick>.

⁴⁴ Denise A. Austin, “‘Flowing Together’: The Origins and Early Development of Hillsong Church within Assemblies of God in Australia,” in *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me Out Upon the Waters*, ed. Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 31.

⁴⁵ Austin, *Our College: A History of the National College of Australian Christian Churches*, 223.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁴⁷ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1956), 64.

ministry. Divine calling symbolises a dynamic relationship with God for both the individual and the community.

For Pentecostals, a call from God to enter ministry is a compelling motivation to undertake theological education. Maheshvari Naidu and Nokwanda Nzuzwa note this can come by way of hearing a “voice,” receiving a “vision” or purely receiving an invitation of employment into a church or Christian organisation.⁴⁸ The focus or main character in the narrative is God rather than the individual. Obedience to God within the service is an imperative. One student believes it means “doing what God asks you to do. A form of service to people and to God. Doing whatever God directs you to do, a heart for service.” It is the outworking of one’s faith. In this context, it is not important what the ministry service resembles if the believer is in the will of God. Serving others is part of God’s plan for His community. Furthermore, God’s direction should not be questioned. As another student explains:

I very clearly heard God say to go to Bible college. I had just finished my first year of Year 12 at home due to serious sickness. I knew I had another year of high school left but having that direction from God kept me focussed. I never would have thought that I would go to Bible college. It was the best decision I have ever made, to follow God’s direction.

A common belief is that God will open the necessary doors in response to obedience regarding His leading. Interviewees did not refer to their leadership but to God’s leading in decisions. A mature-age student notes that the expectation of pastors today is different from that in the early days of Pentecostalism when there was more emphasis on the spiritual and less on governance. She believes this shift has occurred because the profile of the congregation is now more professional and more educated. Furthermore, the structure of church has changed: “ministry was different, hiring a hall or tent, until you had cash on hand, or someone gave you a block of land to build.” Therefore, the process of institutionalisation has changed the dynamics of the Pentecostal church.

Ordination within many groups in the Pentecostal movement in Australia still has no formal educational requirements for either men or women, creating a tension between the church and the academy. This has raised questions regarding the authority of a pastor to lead a church and contributed to the anti-intellectual legacy attached to Pentecostals and their leadership. The emphasis of the ministry and the leading of the Spirit led to the dominance of prophetic authority over priestly [administrative] authority.⁴⁹ The appointment of a pastor unsurprisingly relied on seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁸ Maheshvari Naidu and Nokwanda Nzuzwa, “When God Beckons: Stories of the ‘Call’ in a Pentecostal Church,” *Journal of Social Science* 36, no. 2 (2013): 157.

⁴⁹ Byron D. Klaus and Loren O. Triplett, “National Leadership in Pentecostal Missions,” in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. Murray Dempster, Byron Klaus, and Douglas Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991). 225 – 241.

There generally remains a lack of theological underpinning to justify the inclusion (or exclusion) of women in ministry leadership positions. Thus, Pentecostals have been characterised by the lack of education and a tenuous relationship with theological education.⁵⁰ The response to this insight is that although many pastors still do not have formal qualifications, they have demonstrated successes through church growth and use this fact publicly as a justification for their position. Philip Hughes states:

Pentecostal pastors have considerable authority within their congregations. They are expected to lead, but they are also expected to demonstrate their right to leadership through the results they achieve. Authority tends to be located in the person rather than in the position held. The authority is given according to personal performance.⁵¹

Divine calling is an invitation from God to participate. The female students who chose God's direction believe they are assured of a good outcome although admit it is often not the way they imagined or desired. They believe they have something more to learn both personally and spiritually on this stage of the journey. The sense of God's leading and direction provides them with the courage to continue.

7. Faculty

The most effective way to train students in egalitarian leadership patterns is to model it within the classrooms. Peter Wagner states that bible college lecturers should "have the ability to impart life and vision and anointing to the students ... to provide impartation, not information."⁵² Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen states: "leaders and pastors will have to acknowledge that their revelational knowledge and ecclesial authority is not absolute, while teachers will have to admit that their academic freedom and scholarly knowledge are not absolute goods."⁵³ Everett L. McKinney adds that: "Every administrator and faculty member of a Pentecostal institution should have an articulated personal philosophy of ministry and education."⁵⁴ Female faculty model what it means to be a Pentecostal female academic and students subconsciously learn from this.

8. Leadership as ministry role models

So far, it has been established that women felt compelled to service. Training was open to women and occurred both informally and formally. These women served as role models to other women and continue to do so. During the 1980s, Edith Averill, wife of CBC principal

⁵⁰ Robert Brodie, "The Anointing or Theological Training? A Pentecostal Dilemma," *Conspectus* 11, no. 3 (2011): 48.

⁵¹ Hughes, *The Pentecostals in Australia*, 18.

⁵² C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake! The Explosive Power of the New Apostolic Reformation* (Raleigh, NC: Regal, 1999), 236.

⁵³ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Theological Education in a Theological and Missiological Perspective," *Journal of the European Theological Association* 30, no. 1 (2010): 57.

⁵⁴ McKinney, "Some Spiritual Aspects of Pentecostal Education: A Personal Journey," 263.

Lloyd Averill, started a Students Wives' Fellowship, as she had in Lower Hutt, New Zealand. She explains:

A few were students themselves but many of them were just supporting their husbands and caring for their young families. I felt they needed support, it also gave them the opportunity to participate in meetings and lose their inhibitions perhaps. Each one would give a little devotion and we had some very precious times. There was nothing before that for the wives ... They were a lovely bunch of girls, and it was a privilege just to be with them.⁵⁵

Edith also pioneered a new subject at CBC called "Women in Ministry" which had never been offered before. Given these limitations many formed their own bible study and prayer groups. Joining the international organisation Women's Aglow (now known as Aglow International) when it reached the shores of Australia in 1974.⁵⁶

Aglow is an interdenominational organisation, which allows ministries to develop suited to the needs and characteristics of its community. Edith Averill and Dianne Henderson opened the Blue Mountains Women's Aglow with Pentecostal women coming from as far as Orange and Lithgow to attend the monthly meetings. Ministry and leadership training began in each local church and continued at state and regional conferences. Anna recalls the impact of this development as she was asked to preach about women in ministry:

They nearly crucified me because women should not teach men. It was a meeting with Di Henderson (wife of Bob Henderson), she started up an Aglow – they were in the class with us or under us. They were teachers. She started up a Women's Aglow chapter in Katoomba because it didn't have one. That was a bit of a shock to us that the bible college didn't have that knock on effect in the community when students are working in the community – we should have had more impact but [were] too insulated ... Women's Aglow was an evangelism outreach and was the only place women could preach.⁵⁷

9. Contribution of faculty and leadership

The contribution of faculty is varied; it is both formal and informal. The practical aspects of teaching are balanced by the more subtle learnings imparted through mentoring and role modelling. Equipped and qualified female mentors are a scarce and valuable resource in Pentecostal ministry training. Kimberly Alexander and James Bowers argue that "Mentoring has historically been recognized as one of the most, if not the most important method of preparing the less experienced member of an organization for leadership."⁵⁸ Mentoring provides the vehicle by which to ensure accountability in ministry effectiveness. As James M.

⁵⁵ Edith Averill, *Personal Interview with Denise Austin* (Brisbane: 9 August 2012).

⁵⁶ "The History of Aglow International," *Aglow International Australia*, accessed July 19, 2020, <https://www.aglowaus.com.au/history-of-aglow>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Alexander and Bowers, *What Women Want: Pentecostal Women Ministers Speak for Themselves*, 91.

Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner suggest, leaders must “model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.”⁵⁹ This is a key factor in the success of female theological students who are looking for some infrastructure for both personal and professional development.

Mentoring is defined as a relational interaction whereby a person imparts advice, wisdom and support to someone else that advances their personal and professional development.⁶⁰ Michael Galbraith and Wayne James reveal that mentoring is an “essential component in the personal, education, and professional experiences of learners in community colleges.”⁶¹ Lucretia Yaghjian describes academic and spiritual mentoring as a “hidden treasure” embedded within theological education.⁶² There has been extensive research undertaken regarding the importance of mentoring relationships, particularly within educational settings.⁶³ Some work has focused on the advantages of female mentoring programs, owing to the more relational styles and issues of work/life balance.⁶⁴ Bruce Macfarlane and Damon Burg argue that inspiring the next generation of scholars is a crucial role for female academics in tertiary institutions.⁶⁵ The power of mentoring and role modelling as a mechanism for building capacity for leadership; shaping cultural values; and overcoming obstacles cannot be overstated. These features of the mentoring relationship help equip female graduates to transition successfully from college life and make lifelong contribution.

10. Conclusion

This article has touched briefly on the contribution of Pentecostal women, students and faculty, to Australian Higher Education, with a focus on Pentecostal institutions. This is an

⁵⁹ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Keep Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 15.

⁶⁰ Ralph Schroder, “Predictors of Organizational Commitment for Faculty and Administrators of a Private Christian University,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 17 (2008): 87.

⁶¹ Michael W. Galbraith and Wayne B. James, “Mentoring by the Community College Professor: One Role Among Many,” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 28 (2004): 690.

⁶² Lucretia b. Yaghjian, “Hidden Treasures in Theological Education: The Writing Tutor, the Spiritual Director, and Practices of Academic and Spiritual Mentoring,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 16, no. 3 (July 2013): 238.

⁶³ Tammy D. Allen, Lillian T. Eby, and Elizabeth Lentz, “Mentoring Behaviors and Mentorship Quality Associated with Formal Mentoring Programs: Closing the Gap Between Research and Practice,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 91, no. 3 (2006): 576–578; Stephanie Budge, “Peer Mentoring in Postsecondary Education: Implications for Research and Practice,” *Journal of College Reading and Learning* 37, no. 1 (2006): 71–85; Peter Felten et al., *Transformative Conversations: A Guide to Mentoring Communities Among Colleagues in Higher Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013); W. Brad Johnson, *On Being a Mentor: A Guide for Higher Education Faculty*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁶⁴ Sharon Gibson, “Being Mentored: The Experience of Women Faculty,” *Journal of Career Development* 30, no. 3 (2004): 173–188; W.M. Ooms, Claudia Werker, and Christian Hopp, “Moving Up the Ladder: Heterogeneity Influencing Academic Careers Through Research Orientation, Gender, and Mentors,” *Studies in Higher Education* 44, no. 7 (2018): 1268–1289; Katy Tangenberg, “Preparing for God Knows What: The Importance of Gender-Sensitive Mentoring for Female Students on Christian Campuses,” *Christian Higher Education* 12, no. 3 (n.d.): 203–214.

⁶⁵ Bruce Macfarlane and Damon Burg, “Women Professors and the Academic Housework Trap,” *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 41, no. 3 (2019): 262–274.

ongoing narrative as the stories of women who have participated and contributed to the growth and development of Pentecostal education, are recorded and shared. Pentecostal women have experienced a heightened sense of personal agency through their theological education journey. The history the Pentecostal approach to theological education provided insight into the development of colleges in Australia, which has emulated church growth. The inclusive nature of Pentecostalism extends to the colleges, ensuring the enrolment of both men and women. For students and faculty, attending or teaching in a Pentecostal bible college is responding and fulfilling a God-given call.