

# Fruits of the Father's Blessing: A Sociological Report

Margaret M. Poloma, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus, The University of Akron  
Akron, OH 44325-1905  
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A sociological report of the revival at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship based on a 1995 survey of over 900 participants, a 1997 survey of over 350 respondents who agreed to participate in a followup survey, and ongoing participant observation by the researcher/author.

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### Prologue: 2002

The 2002 Prologue serves as an introduction to a widely circulated report originally titled *Inspecting the Fruit: A 1997 Sociological Assessment of the Toronto Blessing* (1997)<sup>1</sup>. Although no new statistics or tables have been added, the text has been revised in many places and a new Epilogue written for this manuscript. The title has been changed, replacing "Toronto Blessing" (a popular label given by the British press) with the "Father's Blessing" that reflects the Church's preferred emphasis on the Father (rather than on Toronto). This independent sociological study lends considerable empirical support to the claim that the revival at the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (TACF), with nightly meetings continuing for over 8 years, has changed many lives.

It is most appropriate that these preliminary reflections are being written while attending the *The Father Loves You* conference at TACF. More than perhaps any other conference, *The Father Loves You* intentionally focuses on the simple but powerful word God has been speaking at TACF for the past 8 ½ years. The conference reflects an important finding from the 1995 TACF survey in which 91% of the respondents reported they "had come to know the Father's love in a new way" as a result of the renewal. The Father's Blessing has been and continues to be reflected in a "heart knowledge" (a deep and convicting personal experience) of the love that God has for His children.

Over seven years have passed since I first visited the little church in a nondescript strip mall where the revival in Toronto was birthed. It has been nearly as long since I collected the first wave of survey data in 1995, and five years since I collected the follow-up data and wrote the report on the two survey waves.<sup>2</sup> This research has built on my ongoing work as a sociologist who has studied the Spirit Movement (Pentecostal, Charismatic and now Renewal streams) for over 20 years.

Although 2002 marks three years since my last visit to TACF, I have remained in close contact with many of the tributaries of the revival river, especially in the

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<sup>1</sup>The unpublished monograph was revised and published as "Inspecting the Fruit of the 'Toronto Blessing' for *Pneuma. The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* (20) 1998:43-70.

<sup>2</sup>I have published a dozen professional articles on the recent revival, presented over a dozen papers at conferences, woven my research findings into countless lectures and classes given at universities throughout the United States, and am now completing a sociological account with a working title of *Reviving American Pentecostalism* (to be published in 2003 by Alta Mira Press).

Cleveland, Akron, Canton area of Northeastern Ohio. I have been and continue to be personally refreshed by my participation in Shiloh Church in North Canton, Ohio, where the Blessing has been richly manifested for nearly six years. My research, reading, and personal experiences have led me to various other tributaries and streams of the river of revival, including Pasadena's Harvest Rock Church, Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, and the Smithton Outpouring. Some of the streams continue to flow with a mighty force, others seem to have changed direction, and still others seem to have dried up. I have seen some tributaries merge with the larger river and new ones spring from the refreshing waters of revival. Despite such changes, the message of God's love at TACF remains constant.

I reviewed the findings originally reported over five years ago in light of my experience at this *Father Loves You* conference seeking to locate the focal message and mission of the revival in Toronto. I was amazed at the consistency and simplicity of God's word and work. Perhaps it is best summarized in Ephesians 3:14-19, the scripture passage that first brought me to TACF in 1994 to check out the Blessing for myself.

*For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (1 Cor. 3:14-19).*

As I reflect on that passage again in light of this week's experience, my involvement with the renewal for nearly 8 years, and the survey findings that follow, I can say that the message of Toronto--that of the Father's Blessing-- is a profoundly simple one. As TACF Senior Pastor John Arnott frequently says, "God is nice" - and he loves us!

Margaret M. Poloma, Ph.D.

*The Father Loves You* Conference-Toronto. May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002

## **Introduction: 1997**

### **Sociological Methods of Fruit Inspection**

Shortly after my first "in-process" report on the Toronto Blessing was released through the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, Pastor John Arnott referred to me as

a fruit inspector. That is probably a good description for a sociologist who has been researching the move of the Holy Spirit for nearly 20 years. As a sociologist-fruit inspector of the renewal/revival, I began my work by participating in and observing services, at TACF and other locations, and by monitoring hundreds of testimonies appearing on the Internet that suggested the renewal was producing good fruit.

These original observations were further substantiated by a survey done in 1995 with the blessing and assistance of Pastor John Arnott and the cooperation of nearly 1000 persons who took time to complete the questionnaire. Some 25 percent of the survey respondents added lengthy personal testimonies, animating the cut-and-dried fixed-choice questions and providing valuable additional information. Data from the 1995 survey was later supplemented with a follow-up questionnaire sent to original respondents who indicated a willingness to be part of any subsequent data collection. In the summer of 1997 I received over 360 responses to another detailed questionnaire that allowed me to trace what has been happening in the lives of some of the original respondents. I feel privileged to be perhaps the first (certainly the one who has invested the most time and resources) social scientist to study a major revival.

Before I proceed with a brief description of the nature of sociology and of the research methods I employed, I would like to share how it is that I came to do this project. In many ways, the Lord seemed to have long been preparing me for a "time such as this." After my conversion (reprofession of faith and recommitment of my life to the Lord) in the mid-1970s when I was a young professor of sociology at the University of Akron, I felt called to stay in my discipline--the same discipline of study that led me to become an agnostic as a graduate student. God soon seemed to lead me away from other sociological work in process, back to doing research in the sociology of religion --specifically to the study of the charismatic movement. My first book in the sociology of religion, *The Charismatic Movement: Is There a New Pentecost?*, was published in 1982. Before the ink was dry, I began to sense another stirring. This time it was to do a detailed sociological study of the Assemblies of God, a work that was some 7 years in the making. *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* was published in 1989. From there, (wrongly) presuming that the Spirit-filled movement in the United States was over, I went on to study prayer and then, spirituality and health. I still saw some glowing embers in the Spirit movement, but there did not seem to be enough heat to generate another research project. Although I still considered myself a charismatic Christian, I knew that we in the West were not moving in the power of the Holy Spirit the way others were in developing nations.

When one of my friends first told me about her visit to the Toronto Airport Vineyard (as TACF was then known) in the summer of 1994, I was rather skeptical and

indifferent. I had seen too many charismatic comets dash across the sky leaving little change in the larger world. (In fact, I took a vacation in Toronto in August, 1994 and never even considered visiting TACF.) It took a direct call of God to get me to check out the renewal a few months later.

The direction to visit Toronto came through prayer and “divine-coincidences,” as often happens my life. In mid-November, the Lord spoke to me powerfully in personal prayer that I didn’t have a clue about how much he really loved me. Although I knew the Lord had spoken, I had no idea what to do with that word. The following Saturday evening I decided to go to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, a charismatic church in Akron, Ohio that I had visited many times before, for the Eucharistic service. Much to my surprise, the priests had just returned from Toronto and had set aside the usual lectionary readings (scriptures assigned for that particular day) to focus on Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians (Ephes. 3:14-21). The passage was read a couple of times and then became the focus for the sermon. I was fixated on the words, “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. . .” This word of God’s love, so I was told that night, was the message of the so-called Toronto Blessing. Within two weeks I visited TACF and began my spiritual journey and research odyssey of watching the renewal unfold in my personal life and in the larger church community.

Most of my work is directed toward publication in secular journals and will culminate with a book on the 1990s renewal/revival published by a secular publishing house. First and foremost I sense a call to inform the academic community, including seminary professors and theologians, about what is happening in this move of the Holy Spirit, providing a social scientific chronicle for future scholars. There are numerous excellent popular narrative accounts on the Toronto Blessing, and I have little of substance to add to what these authors have shared. For the most part, my work complements what has been written by authors like John Arnott, Wesley Campbell, Guy Chevreau, Mark Dupont, Melinda Fish, Ken and Lois Gott, Roger Helland, Richard and Kathryn Riss, and others whose names may have momentarily escaped me. At the same time I realize that the many people, some of whom have cooperated with my research, may never pick up a professional social scientific journal but are interested in the hard cold facts produced through survey research. Much of the substance of that which I painstakingly detail through precise figures and numbers has already been reported in narratives found in books, in personal testimonies given during renewal services and on the Internet, and in *Spread the Fire* magazine, among other places. Although our methods of inquiry and analysis differ, those of us who have labored at length in the fields of the renewal (whether through spiritual discernment or through systematic analyses) have reached a similar conclusion--the fruit passes inspection.

## What is the Sociological Perspective?

Doing Christian sociology is much like riding a unicycle. There are many who feel that the godless discipline of sociology has nothing to say to Christians, while there are sociologists who insist that one cannot be an openly committed Christian and do good research. As the late Dr. George A. Hillery, Jr., my early spiritual mentor and founder of the Christian Sociological Society, once said to me, “Your work will please no one, but continue on with it. It is God’s calling on your life.” As best I can discern, the Lord seems to have called me to take the sociological approach--one that has been cynically called “a painful elaboration of the obvious”--and trust, with God’s grace, that it has something to say to the church community!

Sociology represents a particular perspective or way of viewing the world. It includes a focus on how our societies and cultures are socially constructed by the people who live in them and how, in turn, these social constructs of laws, customs, and institutions “act back” on their creators to shape and define who they are. Sociology, thus, assumes that the social world (including our religious beliefs and institutions) is created by people whose thought and behavior is shaped by that which came before them; they then modify the social world which will shape those who come after them. Simply speaking, the leaders of and pilgrims to TACF both act upon the renewal and are acted upon by it. In renewal language, the Holy Spirit does act upon the hearts, the minds, and even the bodies of those who gather for renewal services, but people tend to respond in ways that are familiar and culturally specific (i.e. Christian, and more specifically, evangelical Protestant).

This report uses a sociological approach with its strengths and its limitations to assess the effects of the so-called “Toronto Blessing.” It is outside the sphere of the sociological perspective to call upon either God or the demons to explain what is happening in the renewal. Nor can sociology as a scientific discipline proclaim judgment about whether a given outcome is “good” or “bad.” (Often what is “good” for one group of people may be “bad” for another.) It strives for objectivity, and the information it gathers must be empirical (i.e., capable of being measured using the tools of social science). It is subjective only in that sociology relies on people to tell their stories through narrative or filling out questionnaires, accounts that are based on personal judgments. As a researcher, for example, I cannot “prove” that people told me the truth when they claimed to be more in love with Jesus than ever before as a result of the renewal, but nor do I have any reason to be skeptical of such self-reporting.

Social scientific methodology is both a strength and a weakness in any attempt

to discuss the ongoing renewal/revival. Using a scientific perspective does not permit the researcher to expound on the basis of personal opinion, philosophical presuppositions, or theological beliefs. The sociological approach can be an affront to believers on at least two main issues. First, it cannot include the non-empirical explanation of divine revelation to account for religious events. From a sociological perspective, theology--and even the Bible itself--has been produced within a social context by human actors. Second, sociology treats all religions and religious phenomena in a similar manner. For example, when studying divine healing, there is no way to test sociologically the often-held Christian position that shamanist or psychic healing is the work of the devil while Christian healing is an act of God. Sorting out the work of God from that of demons--or even proving that the supernatural world exists--is beyond the capacity of the sociological perspective and its empirical method.

The limited scope of sociology, thus, should be apparent. Although sociology can provide an objective analysis of certain facets of the revival, it clearly lacks the sensitivity to deal with the deeper mysteries of the Holy Spirit. What sociology can do is to describe the effects or “fruit” of a social phenomenon, including what has been happening to people through the renewal. It can provide a tool to determine whether individuals perceive their lives as better as a result of the renewal, whether their relationships with family and friends have changed, and whether their experiences have empowered them to reach out to others in the larger community.

As Jesus (Matt. 7:16-18) wisely instructs us: ***“By their fruit you will recognize them. . .A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”*** Sociology, as briefly described above, does offer a method to study the tree and its fruit, leaving the reader to make the judgment about whether the “fruit” that is produced by the Toronto Blessing is in fact “good” or “bad.” It offers a way to break the deadlock between defenders and critics by presenting evidence about the impact the renewal is having in the lives of people who have tasted of its fruit and judged it to be good.

Although I believe the patterns of response to the renewal described in this report represents thousands of others who have visited TACF and other renewal sites but have not participated in this study, I have no way of telling the exact number. Thus, I am unable to assure you that the percentages reported here represent a random representation of all visitors to TACF. As with all surveys, people were free to respond--or not respond--and this freedom always effects any attempt to secure a truly random sample. Were those who were more satisfied with their experiences more likely to respond to a questionnaire than those who were not? Or were those who were less satisfied more likely to fill out a questionnaire (since it provided an

outlet for their frustration with the renewal)? I have no way of knowing the answer to such questions of potential bias. All I can assure the reader is that this problem of representation is common to all surveys. Social scientists usually believe that it is better to collect some data on topics of interest --even if the sampling is not as representative as one would like--than to have no factual information at all.

What I can say about the sample is that it represents a wide variety of people, reflecting the groups I have observed during my many visits to TACF. (I will provide a more detailed description of the diverse sample in Part I of this report.) Based on the parable of the sower and the seed, I am sure that many seeds of renewal have fallen along the trodden path, on hard rock, as well as among thorns, never having the chance to grow and produce fruit. But I am also convinced, based on my research, that many seeds have fallen on good ground and have developed into healthy plants bearing good fruit. I hope to provide the evidence of such fruit in Part Two. Finally, in Part Three (replaced with a new Epilogue in 2002) I will use some basic sociological insights coupled with survey data to suggest some directions in which the renewal may be heading.

One final note about terminology and my perspective. Proving whether TACF and its offshoot movements (including the move at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola) are in “renewal” or “revival” is beyond the scope of sociology. (I prefer to use the term interchangeably, sometimes as a hybrid “renewal/revival.”) From what I have personally experienced, seeing with my own eyes and hearing with my own ears, I am convinced that what we are witnessing across the globe is the move of God. The attribution of God to this movement, of course, is being proclaimed by faith, not through the tools that sociology provides me. As much as possible, I will assume the stance of a sociologist in this report, trying to stay with the objective facts that I have collected through this research. Yet behind this written report is not only much tedious sociological analysis but a great deal of prayer, offered for me by others and coupled with my own frequent crying out for guidance and direction. I trust that the Lord has heard these prayers and that this report will, in some small way, advance the work that the Holy Spirit is doing in our midst during these last months and days of the 20th century.

### A Word of Thanks

Scores of readers have reviewed earlier monographs and papers I have written from the original survey, and I owe a debt of gratitude to each who offered comments and criticisms. It would be impossible to acknowledge each of your contributions. There are a few individuals, however, whom I would like to publicly thank for their assistance.

Most important, for without his permission I would not have embarked on this project, I wish to thank Pastor John Arnott. Rarely, in either church or secular settings, have I received such a beautiful blend of selfless cooperation and complete freedom to operate as a social scientist as I have from John. As a sociologist I would not have felt comfortable in the role of an apologist for TACF, although some outside the movement have perceived me in that light. I have always tried to be an independent scholar, and John has respected my need to assume such a position.

I wish also to thank, Father Roger Ames from St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio, for the encouragement and support he provided as I embarked on this study. Special thanks also to Pastor Jose Ortega-Betancourt, who has challenged me to continue with this project, even when I was inclined to give up and move on to other pressing tasks. I am also indebted to Beth and Jeff Metzger, whose weekly home renewal meeting has provided me with a spiritual oasis where I don't have to analyze, only to be refreshed by the sweet presence of God. And finally, thank you to all those who participated in this study. You have provided the essential materials for my "fruit inspection." Without your cooperation, this report would not exist.

It is my prayer that the information and interpretation I provide here will be, in some small way, used by God to further the coming of His Kingdom. May the Holy Spirit be with you as you read this report, bringing to light and leaving in memory only the knowledge He wishes to impart.

***Margaret M. Poloma, Ph.D.***  
***October 1, 1997***

## Part One.

### Sample, Demographics, and Physical Manifestations

#### Describing the Methods and Sample

Sociological methods of collecting data include surveys, interviews, and other forms of self-reporting as well as participant observation by the researcher. I have used all of these methods, but will rely primarily on the results of two interrelated surveys. The first was a sample of 918 respondents who completed a questionnaire distributed through one of the following sources: the August 1995 issue of *Spread the Fire*, the October 1995 “Catch the Fire Again” conference program, and the November, 1995 “Healing School” program. Approximately 25 percent of the respondents included supplemental information through letters, diary entries, e-mail messages and tape cassettes. This qualitative data is used throughout this monograph to illustrate and help further describe the “hard” data reported in the responses to the survey questions.

Questionnaires were returned from 20 different countries, with the majority of the responses coming from the United States (54%), Canada (26%) and England (11%). Although these three countries do supply most of the visitors to TACF, other countries--especially non-English speaking Asian ones--are noticeably missing from this sample. Visitors represented over 40 denominations and sects, with more than one in four (28%) indicating their church is either independent, nondenominational or interdenominational. Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents are members of Pentecostal denominations or sects, 15 percent are either Anglican (Canada or United Kingdom) or Episcopal (U.S.A.), 11 percent are members of Vineyard Christian Fellowships, and 6 percent are Baptists. Seventy-four percent reported that their pastor had visited TACF. The modal profile of the average respondent thus far is that of a North American charismatic who belongs to a non-denominational church.

The demographic profile of the respondents is skewed toward being married (71%), female (58%), middle-aged and having completed a minimum of 16 years (equivalent to a college degree) of education (63%). The average age is 45 years (with a median of 44), and the mean education is 15 years of formal schooling, with a median and mode of 16 years. Eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents were church pastors and another 4 percent were spouses of pastors; 30 percent indicated that they were church leaders. The demographic profile indicates that those who completed the questionnaire tend to be well-educated and mature individuals, the majority of whom are involved in church leadership--persons who would appear to be

in a good position to evaluate the Blessing. It is least likely to represent the one-time visitor who spends an evening observing but never returns.

In May of 1997 a follow-up questionnaire was sent to 715 (78%) of the original respondents who had provided a useable return address and indicated they would be willing to cooperate with further research. Another 25 of these forms were not delivered and returned to the sender due to address problems, further reducing the sample to 690 persons or 75 percent of the original sample. Of the 690 questionnaires that were sent out and presumably received by the original respondent, 364 useable follow-up questionnaires (53 %) were returned. The attrition reflects well-known problems in doing follow-up research such as this where respondents must be located sometime after the original inquiry.

Since I have information on all of the original cases, however, I was able to compare the 364 follow-up cases with those who declined to provide an address, whose provided addresses were unusable or those who failed to fill out and return the follow-up form. I selected 30 items to check for differences between the two groups ("followed-up" and "not-followed-up"). These items measured demographics, manifestation types and levels, personal attitudes toward renewal, and reported effects of the respondents visit to TACF. Only four items out of the 30 demonstrated small but statistically significant correlations that reflected possible differences between the two groups.

Three of the differences were demographic; one reflected a personal effect. Of the demographic differences, men were slightly more likely to respond than women ( $r=.08$ )<sup>3</sup>; older respondents were slightly more likely to respond than younger ones ( $r=.12$ ); and those from England were less likely to respond than those from the U.S. and Canada ( $r=.09$ ). Persons who reported having received a healing from a clinically diagnosed mental disorder were also slightly less likely to respond than those who had reported no such healing ( $r=.08$ ). Those familiar with statistics will recognize that these correlations are rather small in size, but all are statistically significant at least at the .01 level. Perhaps more important, 26 of the items (including those measuring reservations about the renewal, a closer relationship with God, physical healing, other perceived life changes, increased activity in outreach and evangelism) produced no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Statistical correlations are being used throughout the monograph to show the relationship between two variables or survey questions, thus providing additional information for interested readers. The notation  $r=.00$  (positive relationship) or  $r=-.00$  (negative relationship) is used within parentheses following the comparison item. The closer the numeric value is to 1, the stronger the relationship between the two items. All relationships cited throughout the monograph were found to be statistically significant at least the .05 level.

The follow-up respondents were asked about their relationship to the renewal at the time of filling out the first questionnaire by indicating which of the following categories provided the best description: they never considered themselves to be involved in the renewal (2%), were involved in 1995 but are no longer involved (6%), are limited in their involvement due to the unavailability of renewal services in their locality (10%), are involved locally but not at home church (31%), and are involved in the renewal at their home church (51%). Eighty-seven percent (87%) had attended at least one renewal conference, with 52% of the follow-up respondents visiting TACF in 1996.

Based on these statistical tests, I am satisfied that the follow-up sub-sample is an adequate representation of the larger original sample. It seems fair to conclude that while the follow-up sample had a normal amount of attrition, it does not significantly differ from the original sample on most important characteristics. Even the percent of those who are marginally involved reflects a similar percent who were less than full participants in the renewal found in the first phase of the study. The results of the comparison of the two samples permits us to explore with confidence the issue of change between Time 1 (the original study) and Time 2 (the follow-up) and to assess whether the fruit reported in an earlier in-process report has continued to last.

### **What about those Manifestations?**

If there is anything that has drawn the attention of the faithful, curious, and the critics alike to the ongoing renewal, it has been the strange physical manifestations. Although they have been part of earlier revival movements and have been experienced to some extent ever since the beginning of the Holy Spirit Movement in Los Angeles in 1905-07, they seemingly never have been as intense or of such long duration. The faithful claim the shaking, jerking, laughing, roaring and weeping as outward signs--modern-day sacraments, if you will--indicating that the Holy Spirit is at work within the individual. The critics denounce the manifestations as demonic in origin and purpose. The curious are left to fend answers for themselves, often walking away without being able to discern what may be happening.<sup>4</sup>

Testimonies given by revival participants are often accompanied by physical

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<sup>4</sup> For a sociological discussion of the process by which meaning is attached to the manifestations, see Margaret M. Poloma, "The 'Toronto Blessing' in Postmodern Society: Manifestations, Metaphor and Myth." In M. Dempster, B. Klaus, and D. Peterson (ed.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*. (1999): Regnum Books International.

manifestations. Many respondents who filled out the structured survey also submitted testimonies in which they described their manifestations before sharing how God had moved in them. The following, submitted by a middle-aged American woman, serves as one account of what can be happening as visitors to TACF rest on the floor after an evening service:

Then I saw a picture of Jesus weeping and weeping. It hit me that I was blaming God for all the bad stuff in my life. I began to weep, as I never purposively desired to blame God. I loved God with all my heart. I repented and asked for His forgiveness. Almost immediately my body started rocking and shaking. I felt like something was coming from my belly. I grabbed a pillow as I felt like something was coming out of my mouth. Then this strange language (“tongues” as I understand it) came forth with uncontrollable sobbing. I cried and talked in this strange language. I laughed and laughed. I couldn’t understand how I could be sobbing and then laughing. This went on for 1 ½ hours. I could think in English, but I couldn’t speak in English. I opened my eyes, thinking it would go away, but it didn’t. I took a drink, and it was still there. I was getting very exhausted, but I could tell it was toning down--and I felt more peaceful than I had ever felt in all my life. The first words in English that finally came out were “Thank you, Lord. I love you Lord. There really is a Spirit of God. He is alive!” I was ecstatic.

But you know, the most wonderful thing is that for the first time in my Christian walk, I feel victorious--not defeated. I am joy-filled, no longer negative. I have a desire to share the love of God with everyone and anyone. That was two years ago. And it has never died. I am alive in Christ (Case #264).

Experiences are all different and somewhat complex, although often there is a simple message at its core. Within this woman’s report we find mentioned several manifestations, indication of her emotional state, and also a release of glossolalia or “tongues,” often regarded by classic Pentecostal to be the “physical evidence” of Spirit baptism. Of particular significance we can also see a report of a lasting change brought about by a new awareness of the immanence of Jesus’s presence that has persisted for over two years.<sup>5</sup>

In this section I will be exploring two descriptive issues: (1) the incidence of the physical manifestations and (2) the emotional response associated with the different manifestations.

### Manifestations: Before, During and After

The pilgrims to TACF were not strangers to the seemingly unusual charismatic manifestations, including resting in the spirit, intense somatic manifestations, deep

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<sup>5</sup> Other detailed testimonies can be found in John Arnott’s *Experiencing the Blessing* (2000).

weeping, tongues, holy laughter, becoming inebriated in the spirit (drunk), and “birthing” (a more particular bodily manifestation), that have been prominent in the renewal. With 95% percent of the respondents describing themselves as “charismatic or pentecostal Christians” and 85% reported speaking in tongues before their first visit to TACF, the renewal seems to be a source of revitalization for the ongoing movement of the Holy Spirit that began earlier this century.

Seventy percent (70%) of those who completed the questionnaire had experienced resting in the spirit and 39 percent reported experiences of holy laughter before the first visit. The range of reported types of physical manifestations before TACF was between none (7%) and more than ten (3%), with a mean (average) of 4 and a median of 3 different physical manifestations reported.<sup>6</sup> In analyzing the responses to the question about the manifestations experienced while at TACF, the mean dropped slightly to 3.5 while the median remained the same. During the relatively short period of time following the visit to TACF and the completing of the first questionnaire, there was a decided drop in the incidence of physical manifestations to an average of 2.5 different manifestations, with a median of 1. **These findings suggest that the physical manifestations are not a constant--they wax and wane in the lives of Spirit-filled believers.**

There are some small differences due to demographic factors in the selection of the most salient manifestation. For example, Pentecostals ( $r=.09$ ) and those from new religious denominations, including the Vineyard and New Frontiers, ( $r=.09$ ) were more likely to report that the experience of roaring had the most impact than those from mainline churches ( $r=-.10$ ). Those from mainline churches, however, were more likely to report the importance of resting in the Spirit ( $r=.15$ ) than those from the other three groupings. Small age differences were also found, with younger people more likely to report being drunk in the spirit ( $r=-.07$ ), weeping ( $r=-.09$ ), and having intense bodily manifestations ( $r=-.07$ ). Older persons were more likely to select resting in the spirit ( $r=.12$ ) and tongues ( $r=.13$ ) as the salient manifestation than were younger people.

Although interesting, these individual pieces of survey data do not tell the entire story. It would appear from the figures cited here that visitors were not overdosing on manifestations. There was much more going on that could not be seen by the curious onlooker, and I will use other questions to demonstrate the fruit that

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<sup>6</sup> The mean score represents the average number of reported physical manifestations (in this case 4). The median score represents the score for which an equal number of respondents fall above and an equal number fall below (in this case 4). The mean score is easily affected by extremes in the range; the median provides another measure for scores of central tendency.

was in formation in Part Two. The manifestations, however, remain an important sign of the renewal--in the words of mental health physician, Dr. Grant Mullen, “a flashing light announcing ‘Spirit at work. . .Spirit at work. . .Spirit at work.’”

The high incidence of a range of manifestations (not to be confused with frequency or how often each manifestation had been experienced) before visiting TACF is an indicator that many of the visitors were seasoned Spirit-filled Christians. Most respondents had experienced several of the manifestations over a period of years long before the TACF renewal, albeit probably not with the same duration and intensity as occurring at TACF. Upon returning home, for many, there was a decrease in the manifestations, reflecting perhaps the lack of opportunity to attend renewal services or the more domesticated version of renewal found in home churches. Many people in renewal with whom I have spoken over the years have indicated that it is impossible to sustain an intense level of manifestations while working ordinary jobs and maintaining ordinary family responsibilities. It would appear that the intense experience of manifestations is “for a season” for most pilgrims.

The follow-up data further suggests that the expression of manifestations is in constant flux. Respondents were given a list of seven common manifestations and asked to indicate for each whether there was an increase, decrease or no change since filling out the first questionnaire. As can be seen from the table below, for some manifestations there is a positive net change while for others, the net change is negative.

**Change in Manifestation Level (From 1995-1997)**

	Decrease in Activity	Increase in Activity	No Change	Net Change
Resting in Spirit	33%	19%	48%	-14%
Tongues	3%	12%	62%	9%
Holy Laughter	41%	18%	41%	-23%
Deep Weeping	26%	37%	37%	+11%
Drunk in Spirit	40%	23%	38%	-17%
Other Bodily Acts	30%	40%	31%	+10%
Other Audible Acts	27%	31%	42%	+ 4%

The findings seem to suggest a shift in common renewal manifestations. During the period from 1995-97, there seemed to be less reports of laughter, being drunk in

the spirit, and resting in the spirit while there was an increase in the use of tongues, the experience of deep weeping and other bodily and audible acts. (This trend away from the early seemingly more dramatic and playful manifestations toward the more sober and somber manifestations seems to have continued beyond 1997.)

In the interest of conserving valuable space, questions about the bodily and audible manifestations were condensed into two separate items from a longer list of manifestations used in the first survey. The figures presented in the previous table, therefore, are unable to provide specific information about which of the bodily (shaking, jerking, jumping, rolling, etc.) or audible (roaring, shouting, barking, wailing, etc.) manifestations are on the increase.<sup>7</sup> The previous table suggests an increase in somatic and audible manifestations reported in the 1997 survey, including loud groaning and deep bending/shaking, that may be related to the rise of prophecy and prophetic intercession. On the other hand, audible sounds of roaring or barking, manifestations that attracted far more attention than the infrequent phenomena warranted, appeared to be occurring even less frequently now than in earlier renewal days (at are virtually nonexistent at the time of this revision).

There have been some attempts, particularly on the Internet and in chat rooms, to construct a system of meaning for the unusual manifestations, but such efforts have not been particularly productive. The manifestations do find an apt analogy with that of “flashing lights” indicating that God is at work. A particular outward sign, however, does not appear to point to the exact nature of the divine activity. Pilgrims have experienced healing while laughing or weeping, while speaking in tongues or being inebriated in the spirit, while shaking and while resting on the floor. **There is little indication that a common function or purpose can be attached to any single manifestation included in this survey.**

It was apparent, however, that people were feeling different emotions with different physical manifestations. The sounds of joy were often contagious and those of pain could torch feelings of compassion. One of the first questions I began asking visitors to TACF is what they were feeling during their experience with a particular physical manifestation. The next section will explore the predominant emotions that seem to be associated with eight of the most common manifestations.

## **Emotional Responses to Physical Manifestations**

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<sup>7</sup> One new manifestation making its appearance since the surveys and becoming somewhat common are various renditions of the syllable “ho.” Sometimes clipped, sometimes loud and long, and often sounding like the cry of a martial arts practitioner, the increase of this sound appears to have accompanied the rise of the prophetic.

Although the renewal at TACF has been referred to as a “laughing revival,” there has always been much more than laughing going on. In an attempt to tap the varied emotions that lay beneath the effervescent renewal services, I asked respondents to select the physical manifestation experienced at TACF that left the most lasting impact.

As may be seen from Table 1 found at the end of the monograph, resting in the spirit and bodily manifestations (shaking, jerking, rolling, jumping, etc.), both with a frequency of 22 percent, were tied for first place. Deep weeping ranked second, being selected by 16 percent of the respondents as being the most significant for them. Speaking in tongues and laughing tied for third place, each with 9 percent. Being drunk in the spirit and “birthing” were tied for fourth position at 6 percent, and “roaring” in the last place with 3 percent. Perhaps this reported variance in experience is one of the most effective arguments against those who charge that the manifestations are produced by hypnosis and suggestibility. If only laughter were occurring or if only laughter were chosen as the salient manifestation, a hypnotic thesis applied to the manifestations might be more tenable. The manifestations are clearly varied--and so are the emotions that appear to accompany them.

After the respondents selected the single manifestation that left the most impact on their lives, they were provided with a battery of 30 emotional responses and asked to indicate which of them were experienced during the manifestation. Table 1 found at the end of the text provides statistical correlations for the manifestation and varying emotional responses..

### **Resting in the Spirit and other Somatic Manifestations**

Resting in the spirit (commonly and jovially referred to as “carpet time” at Toronto) was perhaps the most common of the physical manifestations. According to the survey findings, feeling a deep sense of peace ( $r=.23$ ) predominated during these times when people fell to the floor because of the power and felt presence of God. This experience was reported by 45 percent of the total sample. Of the 22 percent who selected resting in the spirit as an experience that left the most impact, some also reported feelings guilt ( $r=.09$ ) coupled with feelings of being able to forgive themselves ( $r=.07$ ). These emotional responses are possibly a reflection of inner or emotional healing that often occurred during these times. In comparison to the larger sample who did not select resting in the spirit as the manifestation of most lasting impact, those who chose “carpet time” were less likely to report feelings of anger ( $r=-.09$ ) or being out of control ( $r=-.15$ ). The negative correlations between these two emotions and resting in the spirit provide further support for the dominant feelings of

peace that seems to accompany this manifestation (see Table 1).

For those selecting other bodily manifestations as having the most personal salience, the emotional responses seem to be varied. Not surprisingly, some reported feeling out of control ( $r=.07$ ), but for many the bodily manifestations provided a cathartic outlet that is not readily available in modern western society. Those who experienced somatic manifestations were less likely to report feeling depression ( $r=-.10$ ), grief ( $r=-.15$ ) or sadness ( $r=-.09$ ) and they reported a sense of being able to forgive themselves ( $r=-.07$ ) reflecting once again inner or emotional healing that might have been in process.

### **Tears, Laughter and Divine Inebriation**

Although the revival at TACF was sometimes referred to by the press as the “laughing revival,” both weeping and laughing were always present. As the years unfolded, perhaps more sounds of tears than laughter can be heard, particularly during times of intercessory prayer. Both weeping and laughing, however, are indicators of catharsis and both can be signs of healing (as discussed in Part Two).

Thirty-two (32%) percent of the total 1995 sample reported experiencing deep weeping at TACF, with 16 percent selecting it as the manifestation leaving the most lasting impact. As might be expected, the most common emotion they were experiencing was grief ( $r=.39$ ). In addition to grief ( $r=.39$ ), those who chose weeping as the manifestation that left the most impact were also likely to report feelings of sadness ( $r=.29$ ), depression ( $r=.14$ ), shame ( $r=.12$ ) and frustration ( $r=.09$ ). They were less likely than the larger sample (at least during this manifestation experience) to feel gratitude ( $r=-.09$ ), happiness ( $r=-.20$ ), or joy ( $r=-.21$ ). **Yet despite the painful emotions associated with weeping, these respondents chose it as the one that was most memorable, again presumably because of its healing cathartic properties.**

Many who sowed in tears reaped in laughter. Thirty two (32%) percent of the total sample indicated that they had experienced waves of holy laughter during their visit to TACF, but interestingly only 9 percent selected that manifestation as the one that left the most impact. The feelings associated with this experience, as one might expect, were happiness ( $r=.17$ ), joy ( $r=.22$ ), strength ( $r=.09$ ), peace ( $r=.08$ ) and love of God ( $r=.09$ ). When compared with the larger sample, those experiencing holy laughter were more likely to report feelings of embarrassment ( $r=.09$ ) and being out of control ( $r=.12$ ), and less likely to report feelings of fear ( $r=-.09$ ), grief ( $r=-.13$ ), guilt ( $r=-.08$ ), sadness ( $r=-.11$ ), or a sense of sinfulness ( $r=-.09$ ). **For those experiencing and selecting laughter as the most meaningful manifestation, the experience seemed to be one of total refreshing.**

Another seemingly cathartic manifestation was divine inebriation during which the person was so filled with the presence of God that he or she appears to be drunk. Twenty seven percent (27%) of the total sample reported having had this experience, but only 6 percent selected this manifestation as leaving the most impact. Their emotional state seemed much like those engaged in holy laughter--they felt happy ( $r=.11$ ), joyful ( $r=.10$ ), and peace-filled ( $r=.08$ ) but also out of control ( $r=.08$ ) and weak ( $r=.10$ ). Compared with the rest of the sample, they were less likely to report feelings of frustration ( $r=-.08$ ), grief ( $r=-.13$ ), or sadness ( $r=.10$ ).

### **Other Manifestations**

Although 87 percent of the total sample reported speaking in tongues, only 23 percent indicated that they used the gift of tongues during their visit to TACF. Many of those who did (9 percent of the total sample), found their most meaningful experience to be associated with tongues. This experience was correlated primarily with feelings of joy ( $r=.09$ ). Those who selected tongues as the manifestation leaving the greatest impact were also less likely to report feelings of confusion ( $r=-.07$ ), being out of control ( $r=-.13$ ), or of being weak ( $r=-.12$ ).

Although on the surface “birthing,” where women and men lie on the floor crunching and groaning as if in labor, may seem like just another bodily manifestation to the uninitiated, preliminary interviews suggested the need to keep this manifestation distinct. Birthing seems to have a prophetic dimension that was not commonly reported for other somatic activities. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the total sample reported having experienced birthing, with 6 percent selecting it as the manifestation leaving the most lasting impact. The emotions reported reflect the travail and sorrow of giving natural birth. The birthers reported feelings of confusion ( $r=.09$ ), embarrassment ( $r=.08$ ), fear ( $r=.11$ ), and grief ( $r=.08$ ). They were less likely than the larger sample to report feelings of happiness ( $r=.09$ ), joy ( $r=-.09$ ), and peace ( $r=.10$ ) to be associated with this manifestation.

“Animal sounds” became a center of controversy and criticism when they first appeared at TACF revival meetings, but they were never common manifestations. In time they seemed to diminish in frequency and intensity until now they are almost nonexistent. The surveys covered the time when the animal sounds would have been at their height. Twelve percent (12%) of the total sample reported roaring like a lion (the most common animal sound), but only 3 percent selected it as the manifestation leaving the greatest impact. The emotions reported for the animal sounds seemed to fit well with suggestions that they may be associated with the prophetic. Testimonies of those who have had the experience often reported a sense of anger coupled with

divine victory over some evil or injustice. The predominant emotions linked to roaring were anger ( $r=.22$ ) and of strength ( $r=.16$ ). Those who roared were less likely to report feeling weakness ( $r=-.07$ ) or peace ( $r=-.09$ ) than those choosing other manifestations as being “most significant”.

### **An Important Note**

Increasingly social scientists have recognized the importance of the body in western cultures where the study of religion has become “disembodied.” As already noted, the manifestations reported by visitors to TACF were regarded as “signs” that some form of healing was happening within persons reporting this experience. This interpretation fits well with observations made by behavioral scientists about the possible positive effect of somatic manifestations in the healing process. The subject of healing as a holistic process is the subject of Part Two that follows.

A word of caution, however, is in order when interpreting the results presented here that attempt to link bodily manifestations and emotional states. It appears as if different emotional states are associated with different manifestations. This does not mean, however, that individuals can be typed as “roarers,” “laughers,” “weepers,” or “drunkards.” Often, as we have seen in the quotation at the beginning of our analysis, several manifestations may occur in rapid succession and/or most have experienced more than one manifestation.

A more telling statistic on the emotional state of visitors to TACF is found in the question asking respondents to share what they were feeling as they were leaving the renewal center. The overwhelming choices were love of God (89%), peace (89%), love (85%), joy (83%), gratitude (82%), happiness (81%) and satisfaction (79%). Relatively few felt anger (7%), depression (8%), guilt (7%), shame (6%), or manipulation (3%). Although these positive emotions were not always selected in association with the manifestation leaving the most lasting impact, they do provide a necessary corrective for making too much out of the manifestations and their correlative emotional responses. The manifestations, as we will see in Part Two, are but one piece in the larger renewal mosaic.

## Part Two: Inspecting the Fruit: Healing and Empowering

In the broadest sense, the primary fruit of the Father's blessing can be described as being that of healing and of empowerment. **Healing**, as the term is commonly used in writing on alternative healing practices, is a restoration of wholeness to the spirit, mind, body, and emotions. It includes, but is not limited to, physical "curing" which focuses primarily on the body and alleviating mental distress and disease. The heart of healing, as will be demonstrated through the survey responses, is one of spiritual healing which establishes or deepens the pilgrim's relationship to God. **Empowerment** encompasses an awareness of and release of special gifts and abilities for the service of others. While healing focuses on a person's spiritual relationship with God, with self and with others, empowerment often provides supernatural gifts that enrich a person's ability to reach out in love to others. Healing and empowerment are thus two distinct yet interrelated facets of the Father's Blessing. Together they make possible a more complete living out of the Great Commandment of loving God above all things and one's neighbor as oneself.

The two interrelated themes of healing and empowerment provide a frame to report the key findings for questions that asked about the effects of the Blessing in both the original and follow-up surveys. The two concepts are distinct, yet clearly interface. Healing and empowerment are ongoing dynamic processes, shaped even more by a recent increase in reported physical healing. As healing becomes a more common renewal experience, it is being promoted as a tool for evangelism. Many renewal leaders are now teaching that empowerment to pray successfully for healing is an important tool for spreading the good news of God's love.

God is healing men and women at TACF - making them whole in mind, body, spirit, strengthening and repairing significant human relationships, and then sending them forth, empowered by the Holy Spirit to share with others what they have been freely given.

### Healing and the Hebraic Worldview

It has often been noted how contemporary Christianity accepts a worldview that is far more Greek than Hebraic--a worldview that impacted Christianity from its inception and increased in influence during the Enlightenment and the onset of Modernity. Christianity's acceptance of Aristotelian categorical logic (rather than a

more narrative Hebraic logic) has deprived modern thought of much of the paradox and mystery that is inherent in the Scriptures. Many modern scholars have noted the effects that extreme rational thought has had on both liberal and conservative religious faith in demythologizing miraculous biblical accounts. While most religious conservatives would defend without question the healing miracles reported in the Scriptures, some have been openly skeptical of the gift of healing for today. Religious liberals, on the other hand, have often debated the veracity of the biblical healing accounts, refusing to believe that divine healing happened then or that it happens today. The result of these two seemingly disparate positions is remarkably the same: both groups accept a Cartesian dualism that has separated the body from the soul, parceling out the body to physicians and the soul to ministers and priests. Christian conservatives and liberals alike have been remiss in pursuing divine healing as taught and practiced by Jesus.

The Spirit-filled Christian worldview has been noted by scholars to require different assumptions about reality than those common in the modern western, including contemporary Christianity. It accepts a tripartite but integrated person, made up of mind, body, and spirit and blurs the rigid boundaries set up between the natural and the supernatural. This worldview offers a holistic perspective that better reflects the ancient world of Judaism that did not neatly separate the spiritual from the physical. As Dr. Michael Brown notes in his excellent book on Israel's Divine Healer:

The ancient Near Eastern and biblical mentalities did not neatly separate the spiritual from the physical; thus the Lord (or the pagan deity in question) was expected to meet the needs of his (or her) devotees, providing them with forgiveness of sins, the ability to reproduce, adequate food and water supply, and health for their bodies. A God/god who could not heal would not be considered worthy of the name; thus virtually all Egyptian and Mesopotamian deities were invoked at times for physical healing and help. The deity was at one and the same time viewed as healer-savior-deliverer, a threefold conceptual cord not easily broken<sup>8</sup>.

It was into this ancient world that Jesus brought the good news of his Father's love -- a love that did more than "save" simply the soul. Salvation touches the whole person -- soul, spirit, mind and body.

In sum, although holiness and health enjoy the same etymological root (reflecting the ancient conviction that well-being and a right relationship with the deity go hand in hand), modern thought has separated health and wholeness from holiness. It was the 19th century Holiness movement (a precursor of the Pentecostalism) that provided a theology and practice that challenged the prevailing

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<sup>8</sup> Michael L. Brown, *Israel's Divine Healer*, p. 237. Zondervan Publishers: Grand Rapids.

cessationist norms about divine healing, which taught healing was meant only to establish the early church and was no longer for today. Of the hundreds of local independent Holiness congregations that were formed during the period of 1893 to 1907, many became part of the Pentecostal movement, which in turn impacted the Latter Rain movement (1950), the Charismatic movement (1960-80) and the ongoing “Third Wave” during which Spirit-filled Christianity has become more fluid and less dogmatic. In terms of belief, practice, and reported experiences, Spirit-filled Christians, although representing different nuances in healing theologies, have been on the forefront of the restoration of the gift of healing to the Church.

### **A Spirit-Filled Model of Healing**

Sociologist Meredith McGuire, a medical sociologist and sociologist of religion who has done research on Spirit-Filled Christians, noted how their understanding of healing differs somewhat from the secular use of the term--a departure that places their worldview more in line with Christianity's Hebraic origins. McGuire stated: “It is not necessary to have a medically diagnosable condition in order to experience healing. . . More important. . . is that healing ‘works’ first and foremost as a spiritual experience; physical and social-emotional changes are hoped-for, but secondary, aspects.” According to McGuire, “. . .the key criterion of healing is the process of *becoming closer to the Lord*” (italics added for emphasis).<sup>9</sup>

I deliberately chose a sociological frame for divine healing rather than a theological one to avoid the controversies that frequently develop, even among Spirit-filled leaders, in theological discussions about healing. McGuire's description and implicit model comes from her research on charismatic Christians, and her rich description of “qualitative” (as distinct from quantitative or survey) data are remarkably accurate and useful for organizing the healing fruit of the Blessing. It was McGuire's model that Lynette Hoelter and I used to analyze the survey data on healing published in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.<sup>10</sup> The model includes measures of revival ritual, manifestations, and emotions, demonstrating how they work together in effecting four interrelated kinds of healing: spiritual, inner, mental, and physical. An ever-deepening relationship with God is central for this model. A summary of these findings based on the TACF survey findings follows.

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<sup>9</sup>Meredith B. McGuire, *Ritual Healing in Suburban America*. 1988. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J.

<sup>10</sup> Margaret M. Poloma and Lynette F. Hoelter, “The ‘Toronto Blessing’: A Holistic Model of Healing.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (Fall):1998.

## Spiritual Healing

***Spiritual healing*** involves a greater intimacy with God--an increased wholeness (and holiness) in a believer's relationship with him. The greatest healing, of course, is what evangelicals refer to as being "born again"--the time a person first invites Jesus into his or her life, thus beginning a relationship meant to deepen in divine intimacy and love. The 1995 survey of visitors to TACF reported that one percent of respondents had made first-time commitments and another 29 percent had recommitted their lives to the Lord during a visit to the TACF revival.

Malcolm, a 48-year-old Anglican from England who wrote a letter to accompany his survey, is one of the respondents who reported recommitting his life to the Lord while participating in the renewal services. Malcolm had accepted Christ as his Savior 30 years earlier and had gone on to have a successful Christian ministry. Over the years, according to his account, "I ruined everything I did. It's difficult to compress the daily anguish and much more over more than 20 years into a few lines, but believe me, I could go no lower." Malcolm's initial contact with the Blessing occurred in London through Eleanor Mumford, a Vineyard pastor's wife whose ministry had been torched by her visit to TACF, but he "left in disgust." Malcolm asserted that God continued to pursue him when John Arnott came to London several months later, but Malcolm reported again "walking out" of the meeting (although he did return for prayer). Malcolm goes on to share what happened when he visited TACF not long after this contact with the renewal in London:

Well, no sooner had he (the unidentified man who prayed with Malcolm) ) started, than the Spirit of the Lord came on me; I was filled with the most incredible sensation--and was sent crumbling to the ground. Although he was a total stranger, the Spirit enabled him to pray such specific prayers for me, my past relationship with God, forgiveness, healing, guilt, self-loathing, condemnation, and even for my family far away--though there was no way he could have known that I was from another country.

I cannot describe the wonder. . . The party started and gets better daily. Instant delivery from drugs, depression, and sexual sin; a transformation so radical that friends, colleagues and scores of my high-school students started making enquires about what happened to so change me. Healing of sleeplessness (which had led me to an addiction for illegally-obtained sleeping tablets); even a change to my life-style, driving attitudes, work, language (gutter, marine-type tongue); deliverance from high anxiety and stress for which I was well known. The profound sense of total forgiveness, cleansing, and reconciliation with God. And now, a love for the Lord so deep that sometimes it literally aches; a passion for the souls of my school students and others who don't know Christ; a sense of praise and worship that has me singing songs of adoration as I wake up in the morning (Case #574).

Although most of the cases behind the numbers presented in this report may not be as

dramatically Pauline as Malcolm's, the healing and restoration is no less real. The cycle of repentance, forgiveness, and an increase in divine intimacy is ongoing, and it is often intimately intertwined with other forms of healing.

From its earliest days, the pilgrims to TACF were made aware of their sinfulness, their need for forgiveness and the call to greater holiness. Although sermons were rarely preached during the playful party days that characterized the earliest years of revival about the need to repent, repentance still occurred with regularity as people began to experience a greater intimacy with God. (Note in the table below that 81% of the respondents reported that they were made more aware of their sinfulness during their visit to TACF during this period.) Peter, a "born-again" middle-aged American pilgrim to TACF, described his experience as follows:

Certain besetting sins of lust of the eyes and imagination and fits of anger were being dredged up like garbage and being disposed of. Then I understood--just by passively receiving--that God has a relentless, unending love for me personally and for every other person in the universe. When I 'came to' (after resting in the spirit for some time) after one of these sessions on the floor, I said to Jim: "The reason Israel knew the face of God would kill them wasn't his righteous holiness and justice; it is because His total unfiltered love would burn you to a cinder! (Case #745)

Spiritual healing appears thus to be an ongoing process that is built on the particulars of the pilgrim's life. In order to tap this process, I used several indicators from the survey to reflect this phenomenon. Of particular importance were reports of a new sense of personal sinfulness, a fresh sense of God's forgiveness, and experiencing deliverance from Satan's hold. Ongoing repentance and forgiveness appears to be central to the healing process experienced at TACF. The following table reports results for different indicators or measures of spiritual healing and also reports the incidence of spiritual healing for both the 1995 survey and the 1997 survey. The figures differ somewhat (depending on the wording of a particular question used to measure a specific facet of spiritual healing and due to different questions being asked in 1997 than in 1995), but the results show clearly that spiritual healing is one of the unmistakable fruits of the renewal.

**It is significant that 92 percent of the follow-up respondents could report two years after the 1995 survey that their visit to TACF resulted in a "positive change in their relationship with God."** While the discrepancy between this figure and the 60 percent figure for those to claimed a "spiritual healing" suggests that many might not frame a greater love for God in terms of "healing," this disparity can be attributed to difference in semantics. Given the fact that the items used as indicators of what is being called "spiritual healing" all reflect activity that takes place in the person's spirit (as distinct from the mind, body, or interpersonal relationships), the

label seems to be a valid one to isolate this important phenomenon.

### Spiritual Healing Frequencies

Select Indicators	Survey 1	Survey 2
Received a new sense of sinful condition	81%	NA
Experienced a fresh sense of forgiveness	68%	NA
Delivered from hold of Satan on life	55%	NA
Experienced a spiritual healing	NA	60%
Positive change in relationship w/God	NA	92%
First-time commitment at TACF	1%	NA
Recommitment to Jesus at TACF	29%	NA
Came to know Father's love in new way	91%	NA
More in love with Jesus than ever before	89%	NA

What is of particular interest, especially in light of the discussion of survey data presented in Part One, is the effect that the manifestations and emotions have upon spiritual healing. All of the respondents attended at least one renewal service at TACF, and 97 percent received prayer at least once from a prayer team, with 3 percent receiving prayer more than 50 times. Between these two extremes in the range was a median of 8, indicating 50 percent of the respondents received prayer fewer than 8 times and 50 percent more than 8 times. The average was 13 times, and the mode (most frequent single number) was 3. I report this detail because the frequency of prayer by a prayer team was positively related to the experience of a wide range of manifestations ( $r=.18$ ) and to spiritual healing ( $r=.24$ ). **In other words, those who received more prayer at TACF were more likely to experience both a larger number of manifestations and spiritual healing than those who had less prayer.**<sup>11</sup> What is unclear from this bivariate analysis (using only two variables at a time) is whether some other variable is responsible for the dependent variable

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<sup>11</sup> Not surprisingly, based on the earlier discussion of the relationship between different emotions and particular manifestations, the number of times prayed for *did not* affect the experience of positive emotions (peace, joy, love, etc.). As reported in Part One, some manifestations were accompanied by what ordinarily might be considered “negative” feelings--being sad, weak, fearful, etc.-- but they were all part of a larger therapeutic process that was, in last analysis, seemingly a positive and healing experience.

(spiritual healing) and whether the manifestations or the prayer was more important in accounting for the dependent variable.

The question my co-author Lynette Hoelter and I attempted to answer in developing a holistic model of charismatic healing (using “multivariate analysis” that included more than two variables in the model) centered on different factors that were linked in bivariate correlations (using only two variables). It is prayer by prayer teams that best accounts for healing? The manifestations? Emotional responses? All of these items are interrelated, but attempts can be made to untangle the twisted knot through the use of statistical tests.

Employing what statisticians call “multiple regression,” (a type of multivariate analysis) we tested for the effects of prayer by prayer team members, range of manifestations, and positive emotional responses on spiritual healing. This procedure allowed us to determine which of these factors had the strongest relationship to spiritual healing experiences. We found that the single most important correlate for spiritual healing were reports were those of positive affect. **Feelings of peace, love, joy, etc.- what we called “positive emotional responses” -- demonstrated the strongest relationship with spiritual healing.**

Put another way, although there are statistically significant relationships between receiving prayer by the prayer teams, incidence of manifestations, and emotional response with spiritual healing, they are not of equal strength. For example, spiritual healing was experienced by some who did not receive prayer team members, supporting the observations that there are pilgrims who are impacted during the service (especially the worship time) without assisting prayer. Similarly some pilgrims experienced an intense spiritual healing without displaying any physical manifestations. Although survey data does not permit us to prove causality, it is likely that the positive emotional responses of peace, joy and love related to spiritual healing were brought about by a force outside the pale of empirical research - namely, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit clearly can move in hearts without mediation, with or without the assistance of a prayer team and with or without particular manifestations.

The statistical analysis does suggest, however, that God frequently uses external factors to deepen divine intimacy, including prayer by others and manifestations. Prayer by a prayer team was the second most important factor in the model to effect spiritual healing. Those who experienced more prayer were slightly more likely to report higher scores on the spiritual healing index than those who received less prayer. The manifestations (but not any particular manifestation) also contributed to explaining a higher incidence of spiritual healing. Those who reported a wider range

of manifestations scored higher on the spiritual healing index.

**In sum, we cannot say that any single factor--prayer by a prayer team, manifestations, or even positive emotional responses--are absolutely necessary for spiritual healing. They seem to work together to effect healing in most people.** What we can say with some certainty, however, is that all of these factors can be involved, often in tandem, in the process of healing for different people. While some may wish God worked in more cerebral ways, it is clear that He is using the prayers of nameless and faceless prayer team volunteers, the controversial manifestations, and intense emotional experiences to bring people closer to Himself.

At the base of the spiritual healing process is a recognition of personal sinfulness, repentance, forgiveness and deliverance, which seems to facilitate an increase in divine intimacy. The closer people come to the Lord, the more likely they are to say with Isaiah, :”Woe to me! I am ruined! I am a person of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the Kind, the Lord Almighty” (Is. 6:5). Acknowledging one’s spiritual poverty in turn seems to bring persons closer to God.

The process is ongoing, as the results reported in the Spiritual Healing Table indicate. Spiritual healing is more than a fleeting “emotional high” that leaves no lasting impact. Over 90 percent of those who responded to the follow-up survey indicated that they had a closer relationship with God in 1997 than they did in 1995. According to the model, restoring or deepening the pilgrim’s relationship with God is the most common form of healing. It is also the form that is central to understanding other forms of healing, especially for what has been called inner or emotional healing.

### **Inner or Emotional Healing**

*Inner or emotional healing*, sometimes also known as the *healing of memories*, has been in use by Christian lay and professional counselors for nearly five decades. Introduced in the 1950s by Agnes Sanford, an Episcopal laywoman, inner healing gained followers during the heyday of the Charismatic Movement (particularly in the Catholic and Episcopal sectors) and continues to be used in both Christian professional and church counseling. A number of ministries have been established to teach and administer inner healing, including that of Neal Anderson, Chester and Betsy Kylstra, Francis and Judith MacNutt, Leanne Paine, John and Paula Sanford, Ed Smith, and Siang Yang Tan, to name just a few.

Although the techniques of inner healing have been popular with prayer ministers and charismatic church counselors for decades, at TACF there was little time

to minister inner healing in a more traditional way in which the counselor was a cognitive instrument through which the Spirit was believed to flow. Due to the prayers demands of the thousands of people who might be waiting for prayer, pray-ers at TACF were encouraged not to use the traditional prayer counseling techniques in which they might first dialogue with the pray-ee. In the absence of dialogue, the Holy Spirit seemed to take over as Counselor, providing therapeutic imagery and sometimes prophetic insights to facilitate the process, usually without any active cognitive involvement of the one doing the praying.

Testimonies about inner healing are commonplace at TACF, reflecting the survey statistic reporting that 88 percent of respondents claimed to have received an inner or emotional healing as a result of encounter with the renewal. The following two short testimonies added to the 1995 survey returns provide illustrations of such testimonies.

But before I had a chance to say anything, he looked at me and said, 'Cathy, you have a great face.' I said 'thanks' (but thought if only he knew how ugly I feel). He didn't know, but the Lord did. Those words spoken to me by him (a member of the prayer team) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit healed me of that feeling. I have not felt ugly since then, my self-confidence has increased, and my gratitude to my Father Creator for His creating me has brought me more and more love toward him. (Case #244).

I returned to the TACF at the end of January 1995 and I was most blessed. That day I received the most significant touch from God that I have received in my four visits to the TACF. During Mary Audrey's teaching on forgiveness, the Holy Spirit showed me the root of my high blood pressure. It was about my (deceased) father's intense hatred for me. I was able to forgive him, and I knew the blood pressure had returned to normal. It was confirmed on the next visit to the doctor. (Case #050).

Inner healing has been described by Ruth Carter Stapleton (the late sister of former-U.S. President Jimmy Carter) as "the experience in which the Holy Spirit restores health to the deepest area of our lives by dealing with the root cause of our hurts and pain." It is two-pronged, as may be seen in the two quotations just cited: it involves an acceptance/forgiveness of self and an acceptance/forgiveness of others.

In retrospect I regret not asking more questions to tap different facets of what is being called inner healing (sometimes "healing of memories), for the experience was widespread at TACF renewal meetings. Its complexity is reflected in the Malcolm's testimony as well as the ones reported above. Although the measures used in the survey are somewhat crude, the findings provide important insight for this complex process we are discussing as holistic healing.

Spiritual healing could be said to be about the First Great Commandment,

namely loving God above all things--being empowered to love Him because He has first loved us. Inner healing is related to the Second Great Commandment, namely loving others as we love ourselves. Inner healing touches areas of emotional hurt, bringing with it long-lasting change that enables those who are healed to enter into more loving relations with others as well as with God. The interconnection of spiritual and inner healing is reflected in the mission statement of TACF that can be found on a large banner stretching across the back of the auditorium wall: "That we may walk in God's love and then give it away." The overwhelming majority of the respondents, as we have seen, have been refreshed by the Father's Blessing. As men and women experience a new sense of God's love, forgiveness, and spiritual healing, the survey findings suggest that they are better able to love and accept themselves and others.

The major survey results relative to inner healing are reported in the following table according to whether the statistic came from the original survey (Survey 1) or the follow-up (Survey 2).

#### Inner or Emotional Healing Frequencies

Measure (Personal/Relational)	Survey 1 1995	Survey 2 1997
Received an inner healing	88%	NA
More in love with spouse	88%	89%
Received an emotional healing	NA	57%
Retained emotional healing	NA	90%
TACF visit changed me	90%	NA
Others commented on change	70%	NA

In sum, the majority of the survey respondents found themselves changed by their visit to TACF's revival, usually indicating that others have commented on the changes. Experiences of inner healing were commonplace, often coupled with visions and manifestations. **It is noteworthy that 90 percent of the follow-up respondents indicated that they retained the inner healing reported in the 1995 survey.**

Inner healing is not simply about self, but it also impacts relationships. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of this fact is that 88 percent of those respondents in Survey 1 who were married claim that they had more love for their spouses as a result of their visit to TACF. This finding persisted in Survey 2 with 89 percent of the respondents continuing to claim the positive change reported in their relationship with their spouses. One of several qualitative accounts fleshing out this survey statistic

came from a forty-four year old man who described himself as “a francophone from the province of Quebec.” He shared how his marriage was transformed through the gift of laughter:

The first two times that I went to the Toronto church, my marriage and my wife were deeply suffering for the mistakes of the past. It was only at the last minute that my wife decided to come with me. That was not what she was looking to do; she was planning to leave me. It was miraculous. My wife has received a great gift of joy and ‘holy laughter’ which is reactivated each time that there is tension coming between me and her. And you can understand, my marriage and our hearts are on a continuing process of healing. Now we have a deep confidence and love for one another because the spirit of the Lord is exceptionally joining us together in everything (Case #400).

Often the spouse was the person to first note significant changes brought about by inner healing. A western-European Pentecostal husband in his mid-forties wrote:

The reason I waited so long to fill out the questionnaire was simple. I had experienced such a dramatic change in my life, I couldn’t believe it myself! The first person who recognized it was, of course, my wife. I was suffering from a deep anger caused by childhood traumas. During the time in Toronto, the Lord showed me the reason for my problem (I wasn’t aware of it) and started the healing process. It’s still not finished, but I never have any ‘explosions’ any more. Praise God! (Case #797).

In doing multiple regression analysis on the survey data to further test the holistic model we have been using to frame the healing data, both physical manifestations and emotional responses (as suggested by the testimony provided in case #400) are related to the inner healing process. Those who reported a wider range of manifestations and those who indicated having positive emotional responses associated with these manifestations are slightly more likely to report having received an emotional healing.

A much stronger relationship, however, is found between spiritual healing and inner healing, providing some statistical support for the interrelationship of the two components of the Great Commandment. **Those who reported higher scores on spiritual healing were also more likely to report having experienced an inner or emotional healing.** Those who experienced fresh touches of God’s loving presence were the most likely to also experience a holy self acceptance and an ability to love even the previously unlovable. In the words of one good friend who frequently testifies to the change TACF has had on his life, “I felt as if I were being bathed in ‘liquid love’--I don’t know how else to describe it. God’s love was flowing all through me! And He has changed me. I never really loved other people--not really. Now God has given me an incredible amount of love for others. I am a completely different person.”

## Mental and Physical Healing

Although I did not receive prayer that night (it was too crowded), I stood for a long time just waiting on God for something and asking Him why He didn't heal me of my eating disorder. Finally He said to me, "If you love me, why don't you obey me?" I didn't actually hear His voice, but the thought was strong and clear in my head. Then He gave me a spirit of obedience, together with the realization in my heart that my body was really His and I could no longer treat it badly. In mid-October 1994, I was at the TACF again and was delivered from bulimia. I have been free of that eating compulsion for over a year (Case #233).

I spent eight months hospitalized for clinical depression with suicidal tendencies. I got better through counseling, but I was only coping. Since I have experienced this move of the Spirit, I am healed of all pain of my past. It is gone! What counseling could never do, God did in a matter of minutes on the floor (Case #1501).

Spiritual and inner healing were common experiences--to some degree nearly universal--among participants in this study. There was also a smaller but significant group of respondents who claimed to receive either physical healing (21%) or healing from a clinically diagnosed mental health problem (6%) on the original questionnaire. The follow-up questionnaire included questions to ascertain whether healing lasted. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of the follow-up respondents reported a physical healing and 4 percent a healing from a clinically diagnosed mental health problem. Both items included a related question about whether the respondent was still free from the reportedly cured physical or mental health problem. All 27 percent of those who claimed a physical healing in the 1995 survey and 4 percent of those reporting a mental healing responded affirmatively two years later. No one reported "losing" the healing they experienced as a result of their visit to TACF.<sup>12</sup>

Existing data suggest that approximately one third of Americans use prayer for "healing and health maintenance" in cases of both acute and chronic illness. Prayer seems to be used as a supplement to biomedicine and not as a replacement for it. Approximately as many who use prayer for healing also claim they have, at least on occasion, received healing as a result of prayer. The TACF survey figures involve a particular time and situation rather than the broad time span covered in general survey questions on prayer and healing, so the two groups are not readily comparable. The groups are similar in that both TACF and general population groups affirm biomedical remedies but also use the power of prayer to heal.

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<sup>12</sup>This is not to suggest that everyone who claims a physical healing at a TACF service is actually cured. What these findings do suggest is that those who claim a physical healing after some time elapses (as in the first questionnaire) will most likely continue to experience the healing two years later (the time of the second questionnaire).

Those studying prayer and healing have yet to provide a satisfactory definition of prayer, and this problem is one that continues to haunt researchers as they attempt to study the effects of prayer on health. Just as prayer has been a somewhat illusive phenomenon for social and behavioral scientists who attempt to measure it, there were problems with measuring prayer in the TACF survey. The empirical measure used was the number of times a respondent received prayer from the prayer team. Bivariate analysis attempting to relate physical and mental healing to prayer found no statistically significant relationship between prayer by prayer teams and healing. Reports of physical and mental healing were not directly related to prayer by prayer teams, physical manifestations, or positive emotional responses.<sup>13</sup>

Both physical and mental healing, however, did demonstrate small but statistically significant relationships to spiritual healing and to inner healing. Reconciliation with God, with self, and with one's neighbor does seem to play a role in being cured of mental and physical maladies.<sup>14</sup>

As Meredith McGuire has observed, based on her qualitative research on Christian charismatic healing, the "relationship with the Lord" is the pivotal issue for understanding holistic healing as believed and practiced by Spirit-filled Christians. Her model, including the centrality of spiritual healing, receives some support from the quantitative data presented here. Spiritual healing seems to be one key (although not the only one) for explaining other forms of healing. **As people experience a closer relationship with God, they often experience the healing of old hurts and wounds, which may bring about curing of physical and mental maladies.**

Jesus tells us in John 10:10: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." What Jesus has promised His followers-- what many modern authors refer to as holistic healing--is being fulfilled in a particularly dramatic way through the on-going renewal/revival. This holistic pattern includes body, mind, spirit, emotions, and relationships, but it centers around a renewed and revitalized relationship with God.

As I conclude this section and reflect on moving to the next, I am reminded of Jesus's words to Peter: "Simon, Simon. Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned

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<sup>13</sup>The finding of only a very small relationship between spiritual healing and physical healing lends some support to the current teaching at TACF that healing is a gift that God wishes to give to everyone, that it can be used for evangelism, and that repentance/conversion is not an absolute precondition to receiving it.

<sup>14</sup>See John Arnott's *The Importance of Forgiveness* (Sovereign Word:1997) for his teaching on how "forgiveness is a key to blessing," including healing.

back, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31). Like Peter, many respondents have experienced their own weakness and the forgiving and healing love of God. Many are also experiencing a new and fresh empowering to strengthen their brothers and sisters

### **Empowerment and Service**

St. Luke’s Episcopal in Akron, Ohio, has as its motto: “Blessed to be a blessing.” There can be no doubt from the survey findings that the vast majority of the respondents who had visited TACF experienced great blessings in their lives. But have they moved on from simply receiving the blessing to being a blessing? Is the experience of the Toronto Blessing just another spiritual high reflecting a “spiritual narcissism,” as some critics have charged, or does it empower and lead to loving service? I explored this question in a preliminary fashion in the 1995 survey and then elaborated on the issue in the follow-up survey of 1997.

The preliminary and exploratory questions asked in 1995 indicated that there was both empowerment and limited outreach coming out of the Blessing. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the respondents indicated that they had experienced the love of the Father in a new way and 89 percent claimed they were more in love with Jesus than ever before. This heightened sense of God’s love is something that the vast majority of respondents were eager to share—at least with fellow believers. Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents invited Christian friends to come to TACF and 82 percent claimed that “talking about Jesus was more important now than ever before.”

A significant minority of the respondents who completed the 1997 follow-up survey reported they had become more involved in outreach and service to others as a result of their experiences at TACF. Keeping in mind that nearly half of the respondents were pastors or church leaders already heavily involved in their churches, 47 percent still indicated that they were more involved in their churches than they were before coming to TACF. In the follow-up study I had expanded the items that measured empowerment and outreach, summaries of which can be found in the following two tables. In the next table we see the figures on the increase in empowerment ascribed to receiving the Father’s blessing through the current renewal.

#### **Follow-up Respondents Indicating Increase in Empowerment**

Description of Empowerment	% increase	% decrease
Receiving prophetic words	62%	3%
Receiving words of knowledge	47%	3%

Prophetic intercession	48%	3%
Prayers used to physically heal others	34%	4%
Prayers used in emotional healing of others	49%	3%
Used in deliverance	27%	2%
Received prophetic dreams	41%	3%

It is important to remember that these figures represent an increase and decrease in the use of particular spiritual gifts. Some may be operating in these gifts who have not experienced any particular increase through the renewal while others may not be experiencing them at all. It seems clearly evident that many individuals believe they are moving in a much greater power of the Spirit in 1997 than in pre-renewal days. They are more likely to experience various forms of prophecy and to be used in healing and deliverance ministries.

#### **Follow-up Respondents Indicating an Increase in Service and Outreach**

Description of Indicator	% Increase
Personal outreach to the poor and homeless	24%
Increased almsgiving to the poor	35%
Increased giving to missionary activities	44%
Other works of mercy (e.g. visiting imprisoned)	20%
Offering assistance to friends	64%
Offering assistance to acquaintances	57%
Visiting the Sick	34%
Service to the church	55%
Leading others to Christ	25%

But is this empowerment having an impact on outreach and service? Additional questions were asked about other forms of ministry to others in the 1997 follow-up survey as shown in the above table. Respondents to the follow-up survey were asked to select from a list which of the areas of service they had become more involved in as a result of the blessing. The preceding table presents the basic evidence dealing with this important issue of living out the Great Commandment of love and the Great Commission of evangelism. **It would appear, based on this summary of survey**

findings that a sizeable minority have increased their outreach and service as a result of their personal encounters with God at TACF. Many are more likely to be offering assistance to friends, family, and church members and they are reportedly giving more to missionary activities and to the poor.

## Sociological Model for Healing, Empowerment and Service

Before we close this discussion of empowerment and service, I would like to propose a model demonstrating the interrelationship of the issues we have been considering. We have been presenting findings on different facets of the renewal--manifestations, forms of healing, empowerment, and service--all of which are pieces of a larger mosaic which needs to be kept in focus.

In order to facilitate a more sophisticated statistical analysis, I created a 7-item empowerment scale and a 8-item service scale (using the items found in the respective tables).<sup>15</sup> The mean and the median for the *empowerment scale* was 3, indicating that the average person reported experiencing three of the seven empowerment measures. One in five (20%) reported having experienced none of the empowerment items; one in twenty (5%) experienced all seven. The mean or average for the *service scale* was 3.6, with a median of 4 (indicating that 50% of the respondents reported less than 4 outreaches and 50% reported more than 4). Sixteen percent (16%) indicated that they had engaged in no increased service or outreach as a result of the renewal; 23 percent reported an increase in six or more outreach activities as a result of the renewal blessing.

The proposed model includes seven items for testing through bivariate correlational analysis: the experience of physical manifestations, spiritual healing, inner/emotional healing, being healed from a clinically diagnosed mental disorder, physical healing, and the two new scales of empowerment and service. The correlations or relationships between the variables are found in the following table.

### Relationship Between Manifestations, Healing, Empowerment and Service

	Manifes	Spirheal	Inheal	Menheal	Physheal	Empow	Service
Manifes	1.00	.24***	.19***	NS	.07*	.16***	NS

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<sup>15</sup> The alpha reliability coefficient was .78 for the empowerment scale and .70 for the service scale, indicating that both formed solid indices. When including the last item found in the outreach table of "leading others to Christ," the alpha for the service scale dropped to .61, considerably weakening the index. The question regarding "Leading others to Christ" was therefore not included in the service index.

Spirheal		1.00	.46***	.19***	.15***	.16**	.19***
Inheal			1.00	.14***	.19***	.17**	.12*
Menheal				1.00	.12***	.13*	NS
Physheal					1.00	NS	NS
Empow						1.00	.32***
Service							1.00

Those more familiar with statistical correlations will see immediately from the table that most of the variables selected for the model are related to one another. **Of particular note, the range of manifestations ( $r=.16$ ), the experience of spiritual healing ( $r=.16$ ), inner healing ( $r=.17$ ) and healing of a mental disorder ( $r=.13$ ) are all positively related to being spiritually empowered.** Also of note is that spiritual healing ( $r=.19$ ), inner healing ( $r=.12$ ) and empowerment (.32) show statistically significant correlations with service or outreach. A careful study of the table will also demonstrate the interrelationship of the healing items discussed earlier in this monograph.

The question that I wish to explore in closing this section is this: which of the variables in the model have the greatest impact on empowerment and service? For this we turn to a procedure used earlier called multiple regression. It can be used to determine the relative importance of each of these items for increased empowerment and service.

First, I “regressed” the empowerment scale on the four types of healing and total number of different manifestations experienced. Although the simple bivariate correlations reported above demonstrate a relationship between three of the four forms of healing and empowerment (see previous table), results of multiple regression analysis show that only the relationship for spiritual healing and empowerment is statistically significant. **In other words, it is spiritual healing (rather than physical, mental or emotional healing, emotional responses, or manifestations) that is the primary source of greater empowerment.** Those who have experienced a strong dose of the divine mercy offered by the Father’s Blessing are more likely to experience empowerment than those who have not.

When I added the frequency of manifestations to the above equation, spiritual healing clearly remained the most important predictor of greater empowerment. However, the manifestations do appear to play a minor role as indicators of greater power. Some limited support was found in the multivariate equation to uphold the bivariate relationship between the manifestations and empowerment reported in the

previous table.

In sum, through the results provided by multiple regression analysis we can sort out two important findings: (1) spiritual healing (knowing one's sinfulness and experiencing forgiveness) is pivotal for greater empowerment in the subjects studied and (2) the manifestations appear to be what Dr. Grant Mullen has suggested, namely, a "flashing light" indicating that the Spirit is indeed at work empowering believers with spiritual gifts.

In another multiple regression analysis I focused on service and outreach to others. In this model I used the same variables as those employed to explore empowerment (manifestations and forms of healing), and added the empowerment scale to the list of independent variables. The question I was seeking to answer: is empowerment a catalyst in service to others even when other variables (manifestations and various healing experiences) are held constant? The bivariate relationships shown in the previous table suggest that spiritual healing ( $r=.19$ ), inner healing ( $r=.12$ ), and empowerment ( $r=.32$ ) are all significant correlates of increased service and outreach. The results of the multivariate analysis show that spiritual healing continues to demonstrate a small relationship to increased service (even for those who may have scored lower on the empowerment scale), but empowerment proves to be the leading predictor of service and outreach.

The results of this multiple regression analysis provide two important pieces of information about those who are more likely to reach out in service to others: (1) they scored higher on empowerment in being more likely to have experienced being used in prophecy, healing, and other spiritual gifting; (2) they scored higher on spiritual healing, indicating a greater awareness of their sinfulness and an experience of fresh forgiveness.

The findings presented here demonstrate that for many there is a relationship between being blessed and being able to bless others. The focus of the TACF renewal on knowing the depth of the Father's love appears to be bearing good fruit--fruit going beyond individual restoration to bless the larger community. At the heart of this process is what has been called spiritual healing, a recognition of one's sinful condition and the experience of divine forgiveness. Spiritual healing, in turn, is seemingly intertwined with inner healing and at times impacts both mental and physical health. In sum, spiritual healing appears to be an important catalyst for empowerment or being "clothed with power from on high", and empowerment in turn facilitates outreach and service to others.

#### **MORE ABOUT THE FATHER'S LOVE**

What hopefully has been done through the use of survey data and statistics in Part Two has been to demonstrate that the renewal at TACF has born much fruit in the personal lives of participants. The same story of the Father's love can be (fortunately) presented much more simply, as many of the respondents did when asked in the follow-up questionnaire to "describe one special blessing of this renewal in a couple of words." Most of these open-ended comments reflect the tedious analysis that I have shared here with readers. A sample of them follows:

My relationship with the Father is so much deeper; I could never be satisfied with the little I had before (Case #1465).

God is good. He is real--and powerful. And He really loves you and me. And it feels good to experience His love (Case #328).

Drawing closer to God and feeling His love so strongly that I can hear His word--through Scripture, through prayer, from friends, and from the teachings and word He sends personally (Case #301).

"Jesus loves; Jesus heals (Case #182).

"I have more love for God and more love for others -- and I hunger to have still more" (Case #243).

"Restoration of the Father's love and the prophetic for equipping and prayer counseling" (Case #1424).

These single-line responses represent hundreds of similar comments made by survey respondents that reflect the figures and statistics provided here. Similar accounts have been repeatedly given in narrative form and can be found in the testimonials presented in books and periodicals (especially in *Spread the Fire*, TACF's magazine about the renewal).<sup>16</sup> Anecdotal evidence (perhaps much less tedious to read and to share) about the Father's blessing is in harmony with the statistics shared here.

As Warren Marcus, film producer of *Go Inside the Toronto Blessing* succinctly summarizes in his introductory narration, "It's all about love." The Father's blessing is about God loving His children and making them whole. It is God's love that heals and empowers those who have been so blessed to go forth as a blessing to others.

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<sup>16</sup>The significance of holistic healing as a fruit of the Father's Blessing can also be found in Warren Marcus's video presentations on the "Toronto Blessing," especially in the first video produced in 1997. For those wishing to share the blessing with others who are more interested in narrative than statistics, I highly recommend *Go Inside the Toronto Blessing*, especially the 1997 video that presents visually and in story form much of what I have provided here as sociological analysis.

## **Epilogue: The Future of the Revival**

David Hilborn, Theological Adviser to the Evangelical Alliance UK and Co-ordinator of the Alliance Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals (ACUTE) has recently produced an edited collection of articles on the “Toronto Blessing,” titled *‘Toronto’ in Perspective* (ACUTE:2001). One of the contributors, Martin Davie (p. 42), made the following observation that I would like to consider in this closing section. Davie raises the question, “What have been the results of the Blessing?” and answers the question as follows:

Apart from the ongoing sociological research of Margaret Poloma, a very recent example of which is included later in this book, very little academic work seems to have been done on the long term impact of TTB in the seven years or so since it first emerged. In the absence of such research it is impossible to be more than tentative about what its deeper effect has been. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that the Toronto experience was a significant turning point in the lives of many individuals and Christian communities around the world, resulting in a closer walk with God, greater evangelistic zeal and activity, and the foundation of new churches and church plants. What has not resulted, however, has been the wave of revival hoped for by many back in 1994 and 1995. Both the church at large and the world outside the church have been largely unaffected by the Blessing and the decline of the Western Church continues as before.

There can be little question that the vast majority of the survey respondents experienced God’s love and power in a dramatic way at TACF. Ninety-four percent (94%) of the 1997 respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “At this point I feel more certain than ever that my experiences with God are real.” Only 6 percent agreed with or had no opinion about the following: “The renewal seems to have passed me by without ever having really touched me.” The vast majority remained certain two years after the original survey that the revival at TACF had a definite and lasting impact on their lives. At the same time the 1997 responses to other indicators reveal some ambivalence about the state of the revival at that time.

A majority of those who answered the follow-up survey were still “swimming in the river” (to use a popular renewal metaphor) in 1997, but I suspect that many of them have climbed out onto its banks. Already at that time of the second survey, respondents were divided about the status of the revival. Fifty-six percent (56%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the “power (of the renewal) seems weaker than it once was”, but 44 percent either agreed or had no opinion that the river was subsiding.

Respondents were nearly evenly divided as to whether the renewal had “impacted the larger church” in their country, with 51 percent responding affirmatively and 49 percent having either no opinion or giving a negative response. They are also nearly evenly divided about the role the critics have played to alter the course of the revival. Forty-five percent (45%) expressed the opinion that “the critics have played a significant role in preventing the spread of the renewal,” while 55 percent disagreed or had no opinion.

At the time of the 1997 survey, however, few were willing to yield claims that the river had dried up. Only a small minority of respondents (9%) agreed that the season of the renewal “appears to be nearly over” (with 10% having “no opinion”). The vast majority (82%) professed an unreserved hope that the best was yet to come. Clearly they were in anticipation of yet another revival wave. Although I do not have survey data to support the claim that the TACF renewal has entered the new phase promised by the prophets of the movement or reflected in the optimistic survey responses, writing this *Epilogue* in 2002, I do see signs of greater corporate empowerment -- particularly in the use of the gifts of prophecy and healing.

I must confess that if I had to cast my vote at the time of the original survey, mine would have been with the small minority of respondents who felt the renewal was “over” (although I would have done so with some fear and trepidation). My position would have lined up with another minority in the survey (37%) who feared “going astray and missing God’s best.” Perhaps it is this concern for “God’s best” that kept TACF leaders (particularly John and Carol Arnott) from succumbing to outside skepticism and criticism, preferring rather to keep their eyes on the central message of love. It is a message that continues in intensity and focus.

As a sociologist examining the research findings in 1997, I was convinced (and remain convinced) beyond doubt that the renewal/revival has touched perhaps millions of people. I was also convinced (and remain convinced), that the revival has barely touched the non-charismatic/pentecostal sectors of Christendom, much less the non-Christian western world. While revival fires may be raging in Africa, Asia and South America, as Davie has noted in the above citation, “Both the church at large and the world outside the church have been largely unaffected by the Blessing and the decline of the Western Church continues as before.” Since 1997 I have heard more assertions that the revival “is over” as former pilgrims (at least in North America and western Europe) have return to their “normal” lives. But I have also seen creative efforts to bring the Blessing to those outside the revival ghetto. The present evaluation thus is somewhat mixed.

Since January 1994, TACF has continued to provide a place and the space for the renewal fires to burn. During the recent conference I attended, it seemed like little had changed and much had changed. The power and presence of God was in some ways even

more apparent to me than it was eight years earlier. Yet as with all renewal conferences I have attended the last few years, I saw few familiar faces from years gone by. Is it possible that western Christians are so affected by our superstimulated larger culture that even those of us who have tasted of the renewal can take a “been there, done that” posture?

It was a pleasant but unexpected surprise, however, to see that approximately one third of those who gathered at TACF for the 2002 *The Father Loves You* conference were first time visitors, a rough statistic that reflects newcomers at other monthly conferences. The nightly meetings and monthly conferences with their ongoing testimonies of the Father’s love continue at the time of this writing without any sign of abating. Hearing of churches (including one in my home town) drawn only recently into the revival river also makes me cautious about writing a premature obituary for the TACF renewal.

It appears that God is still about the same work at TACF that He was when the revival first broke out on January 20, 1994 in the little church that then gathered in a nondescript strip mall just outside the airport runway. I am convinced that the findings of the 1990s survey would be reproduced again today with a different group of pilgrims.

As for those who seek fruits that go beyond individual spirituality, I would suggest (paradoxically and mixing metaphors) that many who are still in the river have put down deep roots in ministries and churches that are quietly thriving. Others who have climbed out of the river refreshed by the Spirit are also quietly ministering and doing outreach. I have considered some of the “institutional fruits” (including TACF’s Partners in Harvest) in the article I wrote for David Hilborn’s edited collection mentioned at the beginning of this *Epilogue* to suggest that new wine is quietly fermenting in new wineskins.

Just as the early commentators on the Azusa Street revival (which birthed modern Pentecostalism) could hardly have seen the numbers (an estimated one in four Christians) who would be drawn to Spirit-filled Christianity by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is probably too early to assess the impact of the TACF revival. My preliminary assessment suggests that the ongoing renewal has been a primary catalyst in the revitalization of the Pentecostal Charismatic approach to Christianity, reviving the old and bringing the young into empowering the young for Spirit-filled living.

What has become even more clear to me as I revised the old manuscript and pondered the survey data is that the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship has a ministry and a message that has changed lives and ministries. The simple message of the Father’s love is a revolutionary once it takes root in the human heart. Focusing on the Father’s love revealed through His only begotten Son through the power of the Holy

Spirit is the only way we can be empowered to live out the Great Commandment. Without the Great Commandment of love there can be no effective carrying out of Great Commission of evangelism. Both the survey data on individuals and observations of institutional fruit that has come about through empowered individuals suggest that both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission are being better lived out by those enriched by the Father's Blessing.