

## Main Street Mystics

### The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism

By Margaret Poloma

#### Praise for *Main Street Mystics*:

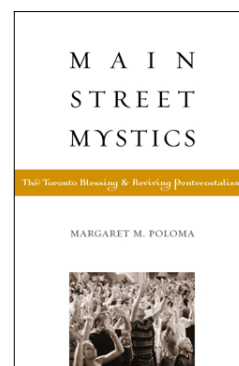
"This is a fascinating work, especially given Poloma's unique perspective, which combines the intimacy of first-hand and sustained involvement in the movement she is describing with the studied distance of a social-scientific investigator. The generous inclusion of quoted experiential material, much of it from sources not readily available, and her overall narrative approach greatly add to the book's accessibility, interest, and value. This well written and highly readable book will undoubtedly attract a wide readership." — David M. Wulff, (Wheaton College, Massachusetts)

"I've now finished *Main Street Mystics* and I think it's just great. No one writes this kind of on-the-ground ethnography with the verve of Margaret Poloma. She has leaped into a fascinating and significant current religious movement armed with an impressive grasp of religious history, and she tells a story well. A really fine and *timely* book." — Harvey Cox, (Harvard University) Author of *Fire From Heaven*

On January 20, 1994 the worshippers at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church began to feel the Holy Spirit move them. They began to laugh uncontrollably, collapse to the floor, stagger as if drunk. But what was truly startling in this occurrence—now commonly known as the Toronto Blessing—is that these manifestations keep appearing at the Toronto church and have sparked a worldwide charismatic revival. Visitors from around the world have come and started revivals in their home churches upon return. In *Main Street Mystics*, Margaret Poloma explains what is happening with this contemporary charismatic revival without explaining it away. From her unique position as both a scholar and a pilgrim, Poloma offers an intimate account of the movement while always attempting to understand it through the lenses of social science. She looks at Pentecostalism as a form of mysticism, but a mysticism that engages Pentecostals and charismatics in the everyday world. With its broad overview and up-close portraits, *Main Street Mystics* is essential for anyone wanting to understand the ever renewing movement of Pentecostalism.

**Contents:** *Interlude / Bibliography / Prelude / THE MYSTICAL SELF / The Toronto Blessing, Mysticism and Revitalization: An Introduction / The Faces of God in Revival: Music, Metaphor and Myth / THE MYSTICAL BODY / The Spirit at Play: The Body and the Mystical Self / Divine Healing: Memories, Relationship and Medical Maladies / Hearing the Voice of God: Prophecy and the Mystical Self / Water, Wind, and Fire: Prophetic Narrative and Recent Revivals / Digging the Wells of Revival: The Los Angeles Story / One in the Spirit: The Rise of the City Church / Mysticism in Service: Taking Revival to the Streets / Narrative and Reflexive Ethnography: A Concluding Account*

**Margaret M. Poloma**, professor emeritus of sociology at the University Akron, is also the author of *Assemblies of God at the Crossroad* and *The Charismatic Movement*.



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