

Carolyn Tennant

*Prophet and Mystic at the Helm of Pentecostal Education:
A Ballast in the Current of Change*

DEBORAH FULTHORP

Within the history of Pentecostal education, a handful of under-recognized women spoke and acted prophetically in ways that significantly informed the trajectory of academics in religious institutions. These women's prophetic words and actions retain their transformational power even today and continue to steer Pentecostal religious movements with distinctive theologies that support equal opportunities for leadership among men and women. One such woman, Dr. Carolyn Tennant, navigated the tides of academic leadership at a time when women's voices were under-represented. She worked at North Central University (NCU) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 1983 until 2013, as an administrator, professor, and noted leader, culminating in her role as Vice President for Academic Affairs (North Central University n.d.).

Paving the way for female leadership within the Assemblies of God (AG), Tennant was one of the founding ministers of the Network for Women Ministers in the Assemblies of God, serving on its National Task Force from 1998–2011. She continues at NCU as professor emerita and functions in crucial positions across Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God, ministering both stateside and internationally. Tennant is known as a scholar of Celtic Christianity. She integrates much of her research on its language, stories, and symbolism into her work. Her writings and publications span various fields of study but focus on the Holy Spirit's work in the Church at large. Her recent publication, co-authored with Joseph S. Girdler, *Keys to the Apostolic and Prophetic: Embracing the Authentic—Avoiding the Bizarre* (2019), answers key theological problems Pentecostals and Charismatics face within the milieu of these Christian movements. Together, the authors define the biblical role of apostles and prophets. Their inclusive definitions promote more egalitarian ministry roles that are often neglected, misunderstood, or even abused within Pentecostal institutions both academically and congregationally.

Daniel Castelo (2017, 37) defines Pentecostals as modern-day mystics who engage a praxis of the Spirit that mysteriously renews the mind and heart to move beyond intellect toward action. Tennant, as such, is a modern-day Pentecostal “mystic.” In her work as an academic and more, she embraces the Holy Spirit's movement toward holistic transformation as the fruit of ongoing communion with God. Through her prophetic voice, she releases others to do the same.

An Anchor of Faith

Carolyn Tennant was born on June 19, 1947, in Janesville, Wisconsin, to a strict home where her father of Swiss descent, Ralph Jenny, thrived as a successful businessman. Her mother, Beverly, who had German roots, served as a schoolteacher. Though her birth and upbringing seemed commonplace, Carolyn grew up with a strong work ethic passed along from her hardworking parents. The early influence of her parents, coupled with her own deep hunger for God, enabled her to rise above the barriers of gender stereotypes that were a challenge for women in the 1950s and 60s (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020).

Although Carolyn's family attended a mainline Methodist church, this did little to satiate her hunger for spiritual things. However, a trip to the Billy Graham Crusade in Chicago hosted by the church youth group drew her attention to the Christian faith in a way her local church did not. In particular, she was moved by the confessional call at the end of the program. Instead of allowing the youth to engage in the call to go up front and make a firm decision to follow Christ, the chaperones quickly "hustled [the youth] back on to the bus at the end of the service." Even so, this event, with its question of making a decision for Christ, had a long-term impact on Tennant. The call stayed with her through her teenage years, and she continually "harbor[ed] the thought of God."

It was her love for writing and bent toward the field of journalism that finally provided the chance for young Carolyn's faith to take root on its own in an unlikely time and place. Handpicked as one of two exceptional high school students in her state for a five-week summer camp on the campus of Northwestern University hosted by the Medill School of Journalism in Chicago, she found a solitary place at a small chapel and committed her life to God. While other student campers gathered elsewhere for a dance, she resolutely chose to pursue her hunger for spiritual things instead of typical teenage interests. This experience signaled a shift and became a focal point that guided her on her educational path.

Education

Tennant completed a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Colorado in Boulder in 1969 (North Central University n.d.). She notes that, after that, higher educational pursuits just seemed to drop in her lap.

After I received my BA in English Education (with a minor in Latin—after 4 years of high school Latin), I started working as an English teacher in a middle school and opportunities came for me to go on for a master's degree. I started just taking a couple of graduate-level classes that were paid for by the school district, and after I took the limit (when no more would be transferred in toward a degree), I thought, "Well, I might as well apply for the master's and have these classes count toward something." I then received a Colorado teachers' schol-

arship for a full ride to finish that degree. Honestly, my master's degree was almost accidental. (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020)

By the time Tennant received a master's degree, her work with Adams County School District No. 12 in Northglenn, Colorado, moved her into administration in their district offices. She oversaw state- and nationally funded programs for the district and designed and implemented teacher training. She received honors for running one of the top ten nationally validated Title I programs in the United States. Her expertise was valued, and she was called upon by multiple school districts and other institutions for her expertise. At the time, she had no intention of pursuing a doctorate, but one of her professors from Colorado University repeatedly suggested she apply. She finally prayed about it, put out a "farfetched fleece" asking God to "make it so I don't have to turn in any money to apply." Unbeknownst to her, her professor worked out the application fee. When she asked him, "What? No application fee? Why not?" He replied, "None of your business!"

Tennant's doctoral work was in educational administration, and her research focused on the utilization of proper classroom pedagogy with gifted children. She developed an original model which incorporated and expanded the "Guilford Structure of the Intellect Model" developed in 1961, as well as Bloom's "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Domain" (Reichart 1980). Further, her dissertation on "Thinking Skills and Gifted and Talented Children" refines a methodological approach to cognitive development that she uses constantly to this day in her counseling, mentoring, preaching, and teaching. Using the approach, she developed her ability to ask questions that led students and others into higher levels of thinking. Tennant focused on guiding students "how to think, instead of what to think" (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020). She attributes her doctorate to God's direction and foreknowledge. After receiving a PhD in education administration and supervision at the University of Colorado Boulder, outside school districts continued to pursue her expertise in education and cognitive learning. As a result, she resigned from her position with Adams County School District and opened her own business called the Institute for Cognitive Development.

Pioneering the Paths

Tennant is considered by many to be a pioneer for women within the Assemblies of God. She worked in positions of leadership at a time when women were rarely granted the opportunity to lead. As a single young person, she was discouraged when she asked her youth pastor about what women could do to serve in the church. He advised her that women mainly serve in volunteer capacities. She knew she was a leader, so this response influenced her to see herself serving in a “secular role” instead of leading in church ministries. Nevertheless, life experiences and other supportive people in her life would lead her back to service as a leader in the church.

Tennant’s husband, Ray, encouraged her to “become everything God intended” her to be (Tennant, LaHaye, and Benvenuti 2002, 19). After Ray was healed of a brain tumor—an extraordinary experience they both defined as a miraculous, supernatural healing—they began attending an Assemblies of God church. In her new church, led by the Spirit, she experienced the hand of God calling her to delve into scriptures about women in ministry. Through these woman-centered scriptures, Tennant felt that God sealed into her heart a call into Christian ministry as a woman. She left her active consulting business in education to accept a ministry position with the Assemblies of God church along with her husband. Tennant and her husband were called early on in their ministry to pour their lives into young people. They made a decision to forgo having biological children but instead mentored countless spiritual children around the globe, who call them mom and dad. Their active leadership in church ministry opened a door for NCU to call her regarding a vacant position as dean of student life. In 1998, she became the first female vice president to serve in an Assemblies of God institution of higher education (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020).

Turning the Ship Around

In three different vice president positions at North Central University, located in the heart of urban Minneapolis, Tennant took the helm and brought much-needed change to an institution challenged by the forces of urbanization and globalization. The rapid shift in

demographics within cities, including Minneapolis, forced private academic institutions to build walls or construct bridges into their communities. As to the state of academic institutions at that time, she wrote,

Even though schools may be in the heart of an urban context, they can be largely unaware of and remain blissfully untouched by the world around them. The glass bubble can provide an effective shelter. Students can trip over drunks on their way to class and only be irritated or full of pity. Either way, the end result can be the same. No action. What we all have to do is wake up to the real world around us NOW and decide what that means to our own comfortable world. It takes a stretch, a change, both personally and corporately. (Quoted in Villafañe et al. 2002, 76-7)

Many educational institutions were forced to decide whether or not to continue to cater to the privileged, suburban demographic represented by White middle-class America. The alternative was to contextualize their programs and reach out in service to the diverse communities that made up their local neighborhood. Tennant knew early on the importance of their institution's location in the city center of Minneapolis. According to Tennant, this allowed them "to shift into a more urban focus, provide training for various urban leaders and other Christian schools, and develop our own urban ministries major" (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020). Her leadership encouraged institutional transformation and pushed the university toward a contextualized curriculum. In her position as vice president of academic affairs, she led a team of department leaders that forged out a year-long overhaul of the academic majors offered to students, reflecting this emphasis on urban ministries (Villafañe et al. 2002, 74). This also provided a more focused opportunity for women and people from minoritized communities to take majors that reflected their own backgrounds and life experiences.

Tennant also oversaw the transformational process required to reorient the university's suburban faculty. She developed training programs to draw them out of their comfort zones and bring them face to face with their urban location. She describes one in-service day when she loaded up the bus with faculty and "drove around the neighborhood for an hour observing the changing people, shops, housing, and religious services." Many faculty held back tears, and others let go as they were forced to grapple with the changes and re-

alities of their neighborhood. Soon after this tour, the faculty quickly set to work instituting curriculum changes (Villafañe et al. 2002, 74). A former NCU colleague, Dr. Amy Anderson (pers. comm., May 10, 2020), attributed the development of a shared vision and unity of purpose to their time at faculty retreats which Tennant planned and led.

NCU's current dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Desireé Libengood, believes Tennant laid the institution's foundation for its current focus on diversity and equity. Tennant's programming and passion engaged faculty and staff with the reality of their urban context. She developed an urban curriculum through a half-million-dollar grant she obtained from Pew Charitable Trust. Entitled "City Gate," this program provided classes that taught students how to become active for good in the Twin Cities and other large US cities. With the grant, Tennant also conducted training for numerous urban workers and for other educational institutions across the country who wanted to develop their own urban curriculum. According to Libengood's research among institutions in the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, diversity and equity are hallmarks of award-winning institutions (Libengood, pers. comm., January 16, 2021). Engagement with their urban surroundings provides mission, vision, and purpose to students, staff, faculty, and administration in the institution. "The ethos of being an urban institution is why, quite frankly, a lot of us are there—because we are an urban-serving Christian organization. It matters to us—being in the city and part of the city. And that is her influence: to say we are going to stay here" (Libengood, pers. comm.).

Tennant's work challenged old methodologies within education and paved the way for new growth. She believed, "As we listen to our constituency groups tell us what their true needs are, it can change our learning sets. We have to find out what people want to know. We must then do the hard work of finding ways to empower them to handle the nitty-gritty problems of their world such as economic disparity, social injustice, and the political system" (Villafañe et al. 2002, 74). Though penned by Tennant in 2002, these words still inform the work and focus of NCU in the contemporary milieu of 2020. Tennant's influence remains a potent force at the institutional level (Braithwaite, pers. comm., December 19, 2020). For example, in the summer of 2020, following through on Tennant's call to contextual education and service, NCU stood poised and ready to meet the challenges of the Minneapolis riots following the brutal killing of George Floyd by police. NCU not only offered their chapel as a place to host

a memorial and the funeral services for George Floyd but created a scholarship for racial minorities under George Floyd’s name. In fact, current President Scott Hagan challenged every university president within the United States to “establish their own George Floyd Memorial Scholarship Fund” (Nietzel 2020).

Prophetic Moorings

In 2019, Carolyn Tennant partnered with one of her doctoral students—Kenneth Girdler—to publish a book entitled *Keys to the Apostolic and Prophetic: Embracing the Authentic—Avoiding the Bizarre*. Within Pentecostal and Charismatic circles, the terms “prophetic” and “apostolic” are used and abused abundantly. Movements such as the New Apostolic Reformation movement appropriate and misrepresent traditional-biblical views of these terms in order to create hierarchical structures with borderline cult-like followings and authoritarian figureheads. As this teaching and other off-shoots of “prophetic movements” cropped up, it became clear that academic attention to this proverbial elephant in the room was lacking. Tennant once again broke new ground. With Girdler, she conducted research that provided an anchor for Pentecostal movements in their stand against various dangerous and detrimental “prophetic” trends. These falsely aligned prophetic trends lead to issues ranging from church leadership abuses to failed presidential predictions and conspiracy theories. True to form, she boldly engaged the subject with careful research. The book opens with a clarion call for readers to reframe the terms apostolic and prophetic in a way that combines both Christian voice and action.

Now is the time to refresh and actuate both the apostolic and prophetic. So much calls for Christian voice and action: increased population with millions who do not know Christ; escalating crime, strife, immorality, and injustice; unbridled egotism, spiteful opinionation, and lack of love; growing fear and godlessness; shrinking church attendance and flagging commitment to spiritual things. Such are our challenges. (Girdler and Tennant 2019)

Overall, the book is a call for others to return to the biblical principles of the prophetic calling grounded in a person’s integrity or

“fruit.” Humility and service flow out of the life of a person following a prophetic calling. A person’s character, life, and rhetoric in private and public spaces matter. Prophetic calling and apostolicity, voice and action, are needed to address injustices within and outside the church. “Indeed, anointed apostles will not be sexist, play favoritism, cater to the rich or neglect the poor, be racist or intolerant, show cultural disdain, or participate in any factors that create unfairness or injustice” (Girdler and Tennant 2019).

Key characteristics outlined in the book speak to the function of these two biblical but often misunderstood leadership roles in the Church, especially those in Pentecostal circles. Those in apostolic roles are considered innovators, “finding new ways to forge hard ground” (Girdler and Tennant 2019). People leading apostolic initiatives actively pioneer the hard places with boldness, tenacity, vision, and much sacrifice. Some of the prophetic traits overlap for leaders, like boldness, tenacity, and sacrifice. The main attributions that distinguish leadership of a prophetic nature come with lucid, forthright, and truth-telling communication. This type of communication can take on multiple forms, such as storytelling, preaching, writing, publishing, or any creative way of communicating transformational truths from the heart of God. Ultimately, the mark of a true apostolic and prophetic leader in the Church results in a transformation of others instead of narcissistic aggrandizement of self (Girdler and Tennant 2019).

Tennant’s prophetic call and gifted actions happened early on in her faith walk. She uncovered her calling into ministry as a woman by allowing scripture to “read her” as she read through it. After she pored over the passage of 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul writes about the gift of prophecy and speaking in tongues, she heard God asking her if she desired the spiritual gifts. She was challenged toward a desire “that she might prophesy.” Although she affirmed a desire for spiritual gifts, she lacked knowledge about prophecy or what it meant. At the time, sound teachings about prophecy and people functioning with prophetic giftings rarely occurred in her Pentecostal circles. Again she sensed God leading her to read through the Bible and research all the places where the terminology concerning “prophets” or “prophecy” occurred. Secondly, she felt the same calling to study more in depth about all the prophets mentioned in the Bible. This experience marked her life and ministry and enabled her to use biblically-based, Spirit-led prophetic insight into situations to affect change. Over thirty years later, she intuitively speaks prophet-

ically and leads apostolically, as defined in her writings. She possesses many characteristics that define a prophet in her book: tenacity, boldness, sacrifice, discernment, and humility. She clearly calls others to a transformed life (Tennant 2020).

A Coracle with No Oars

With an “unparalleled” ability to mentor and guide students, her “Socratic” method of engaging learners also incorporates unforgettable examples of Celtic spirituality mixed with Pentecostal revivalism (Libengood, pers. comm., January 19, 2021). A Celtic and Revivalist scholar, Tennant created a spiritual development tool for students through the Celi Dé Seminar. This Celtic Honors seminar, equal to a graduate-level course, combined Celtic studies with Celtic Christian spirituality. Within the course description, author Stephen Lawhead’s historical fiction work is used for literary analysis, historical review, critical thinking, and theological application (Tennant 2011, 1). “In the Celi Dé Seminar, students study works of Celtic fantasy while also exploring Celtic faith, which inevitably fosters their spiritual development” (Libengood 2011). Tennant uses imagery from her knowledge of the ancient Celtic Church. In her work, the narrative of the coracle with no oars speaks for itself.

The Celtic monks were by no means opposed to adventure, and they liked to build larger coracles that would hold more people and set out into the ocean. This would be adventurous by itself, but additionally the coracles were rudderless and often the monks would take no oars or paddles. They hoisted their sails and caught the winds and the currents, believing that God would take them where they were supposed to go to share the gospel (Tennant 2016).

These and other ancient Celtic analogies, coupled with biblical texts, resonate within the hearts of Pentecostal and Charismatic students who embrace the idea of living a life guided by the wind of the Holy Spirit. Within her studies and lectures, she further integrates Celtic art, music, and history, their philosophical view of a holistic world, and combines Celtic monasticism with Pentecostal experience (Tennant 2011).

Christopher Fletcher, a former student at NCU, a filmmaker, and an associate professor at State College of Florida, recounted that Tennant’s Celi Dé Seminar was the single biggest influence on his own

spiritual life. His life was indelibly influenced by Tennant's classes and the integration of Celtic spirituality in her English courses. "By listening to the Holy Spirit, there is the ability to either learn more about what is true from other Christian traditions or even maybe pre-Christian contact [people. These people also] had a connection to God that Christians could learn from and that God was active and working in the world outside of the things that we're [Christians] normally aware of" (Fletcher, pers. comm., April 9, 2021). Tennant's influence and the correlations between Celtic spirituality and students' Pentecostal experiences also helped her to forge deep interpersonal connections with and among her students. She formed strong bonds with her students, such as Fletcher, who asked Tennant to officiate his wedding ceremony in 2010.

Ceremonial Honors and Launching Lasting Legacies

In 2007, in the silver anniversary year of her tenure at NCU, Tennant was awarded the Distinguished Educator Award from the Alliance for Assemblies of God Higher Education (Fletcher 2007). The Alliance honored her for her innovative integration of English literature, ancient Celtic Church history, a cognitive style of teaching, and emphasis on spiritual growth that unequivocally engaged her students.

Although the work she did for the institution was recognized with several honors and distinctions, the indelible work she did among her students left a lasting legacy. Affectionately known as "Dr. T" among students, she intentionally took students through a process of guided questions to aid in discovering their God-given talents and abilities (Libengood 2011, 22–3). She maintains a remarkable ability to connect with students. "A brief survey of Dr. Tennant's career with North Central shows her to be most definitely a teacher of excellence in every sense of the word. She can get students to think before they know what hit them. She is a teacher's teacher" (Fletcher 2007). The courses Fletcher took from Tennant broadened his critical thinking skills, influenced his spirituality, and placed him on a trajectory toward teaching as well.

According to former student and protégé Dr. Desirée Libengood, her first class with Dr. Tennant changed the trajectory of her life. With her skillful and uncanny ability to ask students questions, Tennant wrote, "Why aren't you an English major?" on the bottom of the

first paper Libengood completed for the class. Tennant called out an ability to write, which Libengood failed to see within herself. Libengood sensed the spirit in Tennant's prophetic voice pushing her to pursue writing. She changed from a major in nursing to an English major. In 2011, only ten years later, Libengood took over Tennant's position as a full-time English faculty member after Tennant's retirement. Currently, Libengood serves as associate vice president of academic affairs (Libengood, pers. comm., January 16, 2021).

The Winds of Revival

Considering herself a student of "Revival," Tennant strongly believes a genuine Church revival produces lasting change. Within the Pentecostal movement, revivals inspire experiential spiritual renewal. For Pentecostals, the spiritual experiences tend to be speaking in foreign tongues as occurred in the biblical account of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and exuberance in worship, among other things. Much of the contemporary Pentecostal-like revivals do very little to affect any transformation or activity outside of the four walls of a church building. Tennant addresses the problem in her doctoral class entitled "The Role of Church Revivals in Individual Transformation and Societal Change" (Tennant 2021, 1). This class and others taught at AG institutions such as Assemblies of God Theological Seminary look at historical revivals that brought cultural, gender, and societal change and then seek to learn from them. In turn, participants should be able to lead revivals to effect change in their own contexts.

A former doctoral student, Kristi Lemley (2020), attributes Carolyn Tennant with being one of the key people who helped her foster a love for revivals and a stronger love for God. Lemley felt the Lord directing her to ask Tennant if she could assist her in her ministry travels. Offering to assist Carolyn Tennant, Lemley learned much about herself and others. Lemley stated, "I will never forget the comment she made to me on our first trip, which was to Virginia. She said, 'Kristi, you need to step up into the mantle on your life. I can see it just over your shoulders. Step up'" (Lemley, pers. comm., January 24, 2021). By using the term "mantle," Lemley knew she spoke of the prophetic call on her life. Lemley, an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God, completed her doctoral project, which she recently published, and stepped into the role as the first non-pastor and female

sectional presbyter of the Illinois Network South Region Metro North section of the Assemblies of God.

Pentecostals aspire to experience personal spiritual renewal but many times neglect to understand Church history. On a podcast Lemley hosts called “Living in the Light with Dr. Kristi Lemley,” she asked Tennant to share what the Holy Spirit might be speaking to those in the church. Tennant imparted a powerful and poignant message. “I think that we are at a moment in history that is absolutely critical and that God is going to do some new and fresh things. If we want to be a part of that . . . we have to prepare ourselves to be open to new things—to do things that maybe we aren’t comfortable with right now. . . . Whatever God is saying, just do it!” (Lemley 2020).

Counterbalancing Structures for Women in Ministry

Within the early formation of the Assemblies of God, women held a pivotal role in church ministry. In 1935, women received ordination rites, but, by the 1980s, the number of women in church leadership roles waned and dropped from 15% in 1977 to 13.8% in 1987 (Assemblies of God 2020). The numbers of credentialed ministers continued growing, but the percentages of women dropped significantly and without fanfare.

Tennant moved forward with ordination when women’s influence was at an all-time low. She, however, attributes her licensing in 1982 and ordination in 1985 with opening the door for her opportunities at NCU. When he hired her, the president of NCU, Dr. Don Argue, told her, “You were the most qualified person for this job, and that is why we hired you. But I want you to know that I am very happy that you happen to be a woman because I was hoping to have a woman on my team” (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020). God used her to begin a counterbalancing process for more women to receive ministry credentials.

Her work at NCU, bolstered by her high qualifications, credentialing, and sense of calling, opened doors and forged the way for other Assemblies of God women. She pioneered multiple “firsts” for gender equity within the AG. She was the first woman to preach at a district council, the first woman in a vice presidential role within Assemblies of God institutions for higher education, the first woman on the national task force committee working toward a contextualized cur-

riculum within Assemblies of God institutions for higher education, and she was on the first national task force for credentialed women in ministry (*Report to the Executive Presbytery*, 2005, Executive Files Collection).

Tennant began her intentional work to support women with a calling to ministry as pastors and educators by partnering with her colleague, Dr. Deborah Gill, a Greek professor, to start a “Woman of the Cloth” fellowship group among credentialed women at NCU. Gill then suggested it move out to their ministry network in Minnesota because it supported a higher number of credentialed women. The response was overwhelming and supportive. This initiative took root at the same time AG Superintendent Thomas Trask commissioned Tennant for a task force to change the decreasing percentages of women in ministry. This task force, which initiated the start of the credentialed women’s network under the leadership of Dr. Beth Grant, changed the downward trajectory and increased the number of credentialed women within the Assemblies of God (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020).

In 1978, only 15% of ordained pastors serving in AG churches and institutions were women. In 1998, the percentage rose to 15.8%. For twenty years, percentages went up and down, incrementally, in small numbers. From the start of 1999 to 2019, the number of credentialed women increased by 10.6%. Currently, 26.4% of credentialed ministers in the Assemblies of God are women (Assemblies of God 2020). Tennant expressed, “The number of credentialed women was going down, and he [Superintendent Thomas Trask] did not want this to happen, so he commissioned the task force (led by Dr. Beth Grant) to try to change this. It was fun to be on that task force and work and dream and watch the numbers go back up” (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020).

Often, Tennant was the only woman in a room in her capacity as a leader within the Assemblies of God. Nevertheless, she remained “determined to live a robust life in the Spirit no matter what [was] happening around [her].” After being made to feel “invisible” in a preaching event where the pastor conducting the service failed to incorporate her properly even though she was the main speaker, she felt hurt. Experiencing the disparity between how men and women were treated first-hand within a denomination that claimed credentialed women were equally qualified and competent temporarily shocked her. Angry and hurt, she took her pain to God in prayer and received a valuable lesson.

When I had it all out, I felt like the Lord asked me a definite question: Are you called? I remember saying that it was sort of an unfair question. Yes, of course, He and I had just worked that all out, and my application for ministerial credentialing was in. Then I felt like He said, "Well, this will happen again, but you never have to be hurt by it again." I realized that I could spend a lot of hours every time I was slighted or offended working through all the feelings, but, eventually, I would need to get to the place where I forgave and forgot it and moved on. I would just waste a lot of time stewing over things when I could be using that time productively to advance the Kingdom of God. I didn't have control over how people treated me, but I did have control over how I handled it. So, I decided that no matter what happened in the future, I would not ever take offense and let it wound me. I was sure in my call from God and His acceptance of me, and that was all that really mattered. (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020)

She learned early in her ministry not to let how others treated her stop the calling on her life and even found advocates among the men and women she worked with closely. As time continued, her biggest advocates came from district and national leadership among the Assemblies of God. Still today, after preaching at various events, such as ministry conferences, retreats, or seminars, she receives overwhelming support through e-mails and various forms of communication from men and women seeking her counsel and advice. This support gives her considerable hope for the future of the Assemblies of God in matters of women serving in all areas of leadership (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020).

Though she shies away from using labels such as prophet or mystic to keep away misunderstandings, with a clear calling from God, a lifestyle of constant communion, and prayer, she moves with a prophetic voice.

I also believe that I can have ongoing communication and communion with God, and so I think of myself as being open to praying without ceasing. I feel that generally, when God speaks to me, I know His voice, and I desire to be obedient to Him and His Word. This grounding, therefore, leads to my saying and doing things, which I sense are within God's plan and are used by His grace and love to minister to others, bringing healing and help, guidance, and support. I think if I were to label myself as a mystic, I would always preface it with "Pente-

costal." I am a "Pentecostal mystic" who is very open to moving in the Spirit. (Tennant, pers. comm., August 28, 2020)

This clarity, intellect, and lifestyle make her iconic among Pentecostals in academia and for those she mentors. Former student Liben-good believes, "There's a little piece of Carolyn in so many women leaders in the AG today. Because she just has spent her time pouring into so many people who now reach across the nation and the globe and women who maybe would have stepped away or would have given up. . . . She writes and speaks into issues, and I think that helps as well" (pers. comm., January 26, 2021).

In a chapter she wrote about St. Patrick the missionary, she concludes, "the face of Christian history would have been different if it were not for the impact of Celtic missions work" (Tennant 2006, 88). This is very true of Carolyn Tennant's impact on credentialed women's place within the Pentecostal movement, particularly the Assemblies of God. This is also true for her impact on the framework for how Pentecostal institutions within higher education operate today. Her work and ministry transformed and impacted these institutions and those in the ranks of credentialed women. Because she navigated the tides of academic leadership when women were vastly under-represented in the Assemblies of God, her work and prophetic voice were and continue to be a ballast needed in the currents of change.

Works Cited

Assemblies of God USA. 2020. "Female Ministers 1977 through 2019." <https://ag.org/About/statistics>.

Castelo, Daniel. 2017. *Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Executive Files Collection, Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, MO.

Fletcher, Christopher. 2007. "Dr. Carolyn Tennant." *NCU Magazine*, Fall 2007. <https://www.northcentral.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ncu-magazine-fall-2007.pdf>.

- Girdler, Joseph, and Carolyn Tennant. 2019. *Keys to the Apostolic and Prophetic: Embracing the Authentic—Avoiding the Bizarre*. Louisville, KY: Meadow Stream Publishing.
- Lemley, Kristi. 2020. “Prepare for Revival.” *Living in the Light Podcast*, December 15, 2020. https://open.spotify.com/episode/6WkiptxcwU-Wgj6s2rjNMB?si=FYRiCX9SQxmi6vC5yn6D8Q&dl_branch=1.
- Libengood, Desirée. 2011. “Leaving a Lasting Legacy.” *NCU Magazine*, October 27, 2011. https://issuu.com/northcentraluniversity/docs/ncu_magazine_fall_2011/22.
- Nietzel, Michael T. “The George Floyd Scholarship Movement Is Gaining Ground.” *Forbes*, June 17, 2020. <https://bit.ly/2Sv4R1x>.
- North Central University. n.d. “Carolyn Tennant.” Accessed October 2, 2020. <https://www.northcentral.edu/academics/carolyn-tennant>.
- NCU Magazine*. 2011. “North Central Faculty Continue to Distinguish Themselves.” *NCU Magazine*, October 27, 2011. https://issuu.com/northcentraluniversity/docs/ncu_magazine_fall_2011/22.
- Reichart, Sanford. 1980. “Book Review: Elementary and Secondary Level Programs for the Gifted and Talented.” *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* 4, no. 1: 60–1. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/016235328000400113>.
- Tennant, Carolyn. 2001. “Rediscovering the Pioneering Spirit.” *Enrichment: Journal for Pentecostal Ministry* 6, no. 2: 46–50.
- . 2004. *Front Line: A Daily Devotional Guide for Christian Leaders*. Minneapolis, MN: NCU Press.
- . 2006. “The Explosion of Spiritual Gifts and Fervor in Celtic Missions.” In *Java and Justice: Journeys in Pentecostal Missions Education*, edited by B. Brenneman, W. R. Brookman, and N. Muhovich. Minneapolis, MN: North Central University Press.
- . 2011. “The Cèilidh Honors Seminar for Cèli Dè: Stephen Lawhead,” syllabus, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO.
- . 2016. *Catch the Wind of the Spirit: How the 5 Ministry Gifts can Transform Your Church*. Springfield, MO: Vital Resources.

- . 2020. “Prophecy 101.” *Antioch Initiative*, November 1, 2020. YouTube video, 1:07:00. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okBeRg2PU5A>.
- , Beverly LaHaye, and Sherilyn Benvenuti. 2002. “Interview with Sherilyn Benvenuti, Beverly LaHaye and Carolyn Tennant: Fulfilling the Call, Being a Woman of God in Today’s World.” *Enrichment: A Journal for Pentecostal Ministry* 6, no. 2: 16–21.
- Villafañe, Eldin, Bruce W. Jackson, Robert A. Evans, Alice Frazer Evans. 2002. *Transforming the City: Reframing Education for Urban Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.