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## Recognizing Faith: A Perspective on Black Caribbean Immigrant Women Reconnaître le rôle de la foi : Une perspective sur les immigrantes noires des Caraïbes

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### ABSTRACT

Faith plays important roles in the reconstruction of cultural identities for many immigrants, in particular for Black Caribbean immigrant women (BCIW). By understanding and appreciating the religious and spiritual dimensions of people's cultural identities, counsellors can enhance their knowledge when addressing salient aspects of faith in approaches to counselling. The discussion is intended to orient and demystify key practices within the Judeo-Christian Protestant tradition (specifically Pentecostal faith), address relevant feminist debates over the social positioning of women in this faith tradition, and highlight counselling implications for the culture-infused counselling model that emphasizes a social justice lens.

### RÉSUMÉ

La foi joue un rôle important dans la reconstruction des identités culturelles pour de nombreux immigrants, notamment les immigrantes noires des Caraïbes. Grâce à une meilleure compréhension et appréciation des dimensions religieuses et spirituelles des identités culturelles, les conseillers peuvent approfondir leurs connaissances afin de pouvoir aborder les principaux aspects de la foi dans leurs approches de counseling. La discussion vise à orienter et à démystifier les pratiques clés de la tradition judéo-chrétienne protestante (plus précisément de la foi pentecôtiste), à examiner des considérations féministes pertinentes sur la position sociale de la femme dans cette tradition religieuse et à mettre en lumière les répercussions en matière de counseling associées à un modèle de counseling culturel qui s'appuie sur une perspective de justice sociale.

In recent years international migration has become a global phenomenon never before witnessed in human history (International Organization for Migration, 2015). Currently, Canada's primary source of population growth is new immigrants from non-European countries, which contributes to the diverse Canadian mosaic (James & Davis, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2016). Black Canadians, inclusive of Caribbean immigrants, represent the third largest growing non-dominant immigrant group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

Research shows that the number of Caribbean immigrants in Canada has increased significantly in recent years—by over 200,000 people, according to

comparable data gathered from the 2011 and 2016 censuses (Statistics Canada, 2017b). According to the recent 2016 census, there are a total of 749,155 immigrants of Caribbean origin living in Canada, and of this number, 349,810 are male and 399,345 are female (Statistics Canada, 2017c). Seventy-nine percent of Caribbean Canadians indicate that they follow a Christian faith, of which 41% report belonging to a Protestant denomination, 29% identify as Catholic, and 9% belong to other Christian groups (Statistics Canada, 2017d). More women than men of Caribbean descent self-identify as religious (McKenzie, Khenti, & Vidal, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2016), and most of these women belong to Protestant denominations with heavy participation in Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Evangelical churches (Dixon, 2015; Guenther, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2017c). Based on the literature, Black people appear to have a stronger spiritual and religious commitment than other racial or ethnic groups in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016; Wilkinson, 2011, 2012) and the United States (Chatters, Taylor, Jackson, & Lincoln, 2008; Diamant, 2018; Diamant & Mohamed, 2018; Taylor, Chatters, & Jackson, 2007).

In the context of multicultural counselling, faith is an underappreciated and underrepresented dimension in cases of many immigrants' cultural identity (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Plumb, 2011). *Faith*, used in this context, refers to religious belief and commitment to those beliefs (Koenig, 2005). For many groups who are often marginalized, such as immigrants, faith is an important variable and can be a counterbalance against adversities.

This paper argues that it is important for counsellors to appreciate and acknowledge the concept of faith when working with immigrant clients. We will illustrate this argument through the perspectives of Black Caribbean immigrant women (BCIW), many of whom appear to have a stronger spiritual and religious orientation than their male counterparts (McKenzie et al., 2011; Statistics Canada, 2016). A number of these BCIW practice Pentecostal faith and use it as a positive force in the reconstruction of their post-migration cultural identity (Dixon, 2015; Toulis, 1997).

In this paper, the term *Black* refers to people of African or (Afro-) Caribbean descent who, as a whole, have shared experiences of systemic issues like racism, discrimination, microaggression, marginalization, and oppression (Mama, 1995; Owen, Tao, Imel, Wampold, & Rodolfa, 2014). For consistency with the literature, Blacks and people of African descent will be used interchangeably in this paper. Additionally, this paper focuses specifically on BCIW who live and operate within the Canadian sociocultural context and have a strong affiliation to the Pentecostal faith (Dixon, 2015; Wilkinson, 2011). Note that the above classification in no way ignores the reality that Black people are a heterogeneous group of individuals with a range of lifestyles and personal experiences (Richards, 2003).

Further, the immigration experiences of many BCIW of the Pentecostal faith should be acknowledged as an integral aspect of the adjustment process, which requires negotiating the complexity of cultural identities in social, cultural, political, and historical contexts (Arthur, 2017; Diller, 2015; Satzewich

& Lioudakis, 2017). In turn, counsellors need to consider how comfortable, competent, and confident they feel regarding the influences of people's religion, faith practices, and spirituality on their presenting cultural identity issues and for determining sources of strength in intervention planning (Brown, 2017; Dixon & Wilcox, 2016; Plumb, 2011).

Within the context of immigration, this discussion examines the Judeo-Christian, specifically Protestant, faith practices of numerous BCIW in Canada and how their faith plays a key role in their post-migration experiences. To begin, readers will be oriented to the central concepts of identity construction and reconstruction as central processes that occur through the migration process. Next, Protestant faith practices, particularly influenced by a Black Pentecostal orientation, are presented including key features such as spirituality and religiosity, charismatic worship, prayer, and glossolalia. Attention will then be given to the misrepresentations of Pentecostal faith within the Canadian context. This is followed by a discussion of the benefits of Pentecostal faith practices in the cultural identity reconstruction process.

One criticism that has been levelled against the Pentecostal faith is that its rootedness in a patriarchal tradition is oppressive for women. Recognizing the importance of gender ideology within the Pentecostal faith tradition, we address this criticism as well as highlight the potentially liberating aspects of faith practices in the process of identity reconstruction. Finally, key implications drawing from Arthur and Collins's (2010b) culture-infused counselling model for counsellors are outlined to enhance their repertoire of knowledge for working with BCIW clients of Pentecostal faith. In line with these implications, consideration is also given to how utilizing a social justice lens might play a critical role in counsellors' working relationship with diverse Pentecostal clients.

#### THE CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES AFTER MIGRATION

The experience of migration and exposure to diverse cultural norms often creates challenges for people to maintain and/or shift their cultural identities within a multicultural context (Arthur, 2012; Dixon, 2016; France, Rodriguez, & Hett, 2013; Satzewich & Lioudakis, 2017). Cultural identities are neither fixed nor static but can be considered fluid, situated, multidimensional, and interactive between individuals through the performance of language and collaborative dialogue (DePass, 2012a; Hall, 1996; Lantolf, 2000). Bhatia and Ram (2001) emphasized that cultural identities are fluid and socially constructed, with multiple dimensions situated in time, history, and place.

Borrowing from the theoretical framework of social constructionism (Gergen, 1985, 1997, 1999; Lock & Strong, 2010), *cultural identity reconstruction* acknowledges the fluidity and complexity of identities across and within sociocultural and historical contexts. While the process of deconstruction might involve some aspects of one's cultural identity being abandoned and losing their meaning, reconstruction might also consist of acquiring behaviour patterns from different cultural

sources, which can become more meaningful and transformational in a positive way for one's cultural identity (Arthur, 2017; Djuraskovic & Arthur, 2009; Isajiw, n.d.). With migration, it is important to recognize the intersectionality of identity dimensions such as gender, race, class, language, and religion, as well as appreciate the multiple ways that people express or feel restricted in revealing aspects of their identities in new cultural contexts.

Research shows that for many immigrants, 5 to 10 years appears to be the length of time it takes for them to assimilate into a new country (Markovizky & Samid, 2008; Salami et al., 2017). Further, it should be noted that although new immigrants to Canada enjoy better health on average than those born in Canada, cross-sectional data suggest that immigrants who have been in Canada for decades have comparable health to their native-born peers (Fuller-Thomson, Noack, & George, 2011). Consequently, the process of immigration is associated with health decline for some recent immigrants. This process is known as the *healthy immigrant effect* (Fuller-Thomson et al., 2011), and should be considered in counsellors' work with immigrant populations. The healthy immigrant effect supports the fact that the adjustment process in migration is a responsibility shared by immigrants and the receiving society (Fuller-Thomson et al., 2011). The above point has often been lost in discussions of the acculturation process (Berry, 2006a, 2006b), in which the onus is often placed on the individual to adapt and assimilate to local cultural norms and practices. This means that for many immigrants, their abilities to renegotiate and re-shape their fragmented identities should be acknowledged as a process that occurs beyond the period of settlement.

*Cultural identity*, a multilayered construct, signifies how one understands the inter-relational dynamic of social status, language, race, religion, ethnicity, values, and behaviours that permeate nearly all aspects of one's lived experiences (Arthur, 2017; Monk, Winslade, & Sinclair, 2008). As such, for many immigrants to reconstruct their cultural identity, they require useful coping strategies like strong social support through their faith communities and reliance on their faith-based practices (Dixon, 2015).

Wilkinson (2006) estimated that among Canadian Judeo-Christian Protestants, Blacks make up the largest percentage of non-dominant groups who embrace this Christian faith tradition at 68.1%. For many Black immigrants, one key aspect of identity construction and reconstruction is the extent to which they can sustain and express core elements of their cultural worldviews through their Pentecostal Christian faith (Dixon, 2015). For instance, their faith plays a pivotal role in helping to shape their cultural identity amidst social determinants of their mental health such as language, employment, and socioeconomic status (Salami et al., 2017). Such post-migration pressures can result in deconstructing salient aspects of their cultural identities like language, and reconstructing other aspects such as spirituality (Dixon, 2015). In support of the latter proposition, Hall (1999) argued that people of African descent find their "identities become multiple" (p. 2) when transitioning through diverse cultural contexts. For example, cultural and ethnic identities might become fragmented in the Canadian context as a result of

post-migration factors such as stress, depression, poverty, and racism (Aryee, 2011; Este, Lorenzetti, & Sato, 2018; James, 2010; McKenzie et al., 2011).

For the above reasons, many immigrants do not necessarily move away from their cultural group post-migration; in fact, they might reject the receiving culture and become more attached to their ethnocultural group affiliation (DePass, 2012b; Hall, 1999). Therefore, for some BCIW, the clash of two or more autonomous cultural systems could impact their cultural identities, leading to stronger or weaker adherence to their faith (Dixon, 2015). Addressing this cultural clash in counselling is important and should involve awareness of BCIW's spiritual and religious worldviews, which are often interwoven with their Pentecostal faith practices (Dixon & Arthur, 2014; Wilkinson, 2011). Consideration, therefore, should be given to key features of the Pentecostal faith that are likely to increase BCIW's ability to adjust into a new culture positively, and become more resilient to the adverse societal challenges they encounter (Dixon, 2015).

#### KEY FEATURES OF PENTECOSTAL FAITH

Black Pentecostalism in Canada could be considered an offshoot of the Black Pentecostal movement in the United States that started sometime in the second half of the 19th century, around the time of the Great Revival of the 1860s (Williams, 2016a). Such a charismatic revival is generally credited to William J. Seymour (Hollenweger, 2004; Paris, 1982; Reimer, 2003; Wilkinson & Althouse, 2010). Seymour was a former African American Baptist preacher who believed that "God was repeating the miraculous experiences of Pentecost for a worldwide revival of Christianity" (Wilmore, 1998, p. 181). Canadian religious scholars have chronicled the growth of the Pentecostal movement alongside dominant conservative Judeo-Christianity in Canada (Bibby, 2000; Rawlyk, 1997; Wilkinson, 2009). The steady membership growth of the Pentecostal Christian denomination is evident not only in Canada and the United States, but has an increasingly significant global presence in places like the Caribbean, England, Northern Europe, India, China, Brazil, and West and South Africa (Cox, 2009; Robbins, 2004; Wilkinson, 2012; Williams, 2016b). The rapid proliferation of the Pentecostal movement has been credited primarily to women from non-dominant populations (Simms, 2011; Toulis, 1997; Williams, 2016a, 2016c).

With the understanding that many Black Caribbean immigrants adhere to this faith (Wilkinson, 2012), scholarly work that affirms the meanings and experiences associated with the faith practices of many Black Caribbean immigrants is warranted, especially in the counselling domain. It should also be noted that Black Caribbean Pentecostalism has strong roots to slavery in that many people of Caribbean descent syncretized Caribbean Pentecostal Christianity with much of their West African primal religion (Macrobert, 1989). Such religious practices are deeply ingrained in the cultural fibre of many Caribbean immigrants and are therefore still practiced post-migration (Butler, 2008; Este & Bernard, 2003). Caribbean Blacks do not necessarily align with African-Americans culturally or

even racially, and as previously mentioned, most likely derived their faith practices from the Caribbean Charismatic versions of Pentecostalism, which is a subtle but important distinction to make in this context (Austin-Broos, 1997; Butler, 2008; Williams, 2016a).

Below, we define and discuss the key features of the Pentecostal faith concerning how they might help some BCIW reconstruct their cultural identities. Features of the faith include spirituality and religiosity, charismatic worship, prayer, and speaking in tongues (also known as glossolalia); the latter is considered a unique form of prayer for many Pentecostals that is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 2004; Fee, 1996; Kildahl, 1972).

### *Spirituality and Religiosity*

Spirituality and religiosity are fundamental aspects of the lived experiences of many people of African descent. Within the theological framework of Black Pentecostalism, spirituality and religion are key concepts that are intricately connected to the identity of many Blacks in the diaspora (Anderson, 2004; Hollenweger, 1999a, 2004). Borrowing from Lee, Noh, Yoo, and Doh, (2007), *diaspora* describes “an ethnic group of people who have suffered persecution and oppression, driven from their homeland and involuntarily relocated to new places or land” (p. 115). By definition, *religion* relates to an institution: it is comprised of a set of faith and worship practices, and it contributes to a sense of community and togetherness (Rose, Westeffel, & Ansley, 2008).

Conversely, *spirituality* is defined as the acceptance of personal beliefs and ethics, as well as the relationship between the individual and a higher source, power, being, or God (Richards, Bartz, & O’Grady, 2009; Rose et al., 2008). While many people view religion and spirituality as separate entities (Burke, Chauvin, & Miranti, 2005), other cultural groups like BCIW consider these concepts to be interconnected forces that make assertions about the nature of suffering, the meaning of healing, and the power of compassion (Dixon, 2016; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Stewart-Sicking, Deal, & Fox, 2015).

Research completed by Canadian scholars Este and Bernard (2006) indicated that spirituality serves as a key tool of survival among many Black immigrants in Canada who are often “othered” because of their raciocultural identity and labelled members of a minority by the dominant group. According to Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000), spirituality is the core component of well-being—a finding that aligns strongly with the worldview of many BCIW.

Further, a recent qualitative study conducted by the first author on the cultural identity reconstruction experiences of Jamaican Canadian immigrant women supported the position that spirituality and religion are central organizing frameworks and distinctive features of their cultural identity reconstruction process (Dixon, 2015). This reconstruction applies to both the individual and communal identities of individuals of Black Caribbean descent (Dixon, 2015). Based on the potential similarity of the experiences of Blacks across the diaspora, spirituality and religion can be sources of strength and healing for many of these persons during the

identity reconstruction process. The strong reliance on Judeo-Christian spirituality and religion may be able to help many BCIW cope with stressful situations such as economic disadvantages or with psychological issues resulting from oppression (Este & Bernard, 2006; Este et al., 2018; Hansson, Tuck, Lurie, & McKenzie, 2010). More specially, Pentecostal faith practices appear to be significant coping mechanisms in many Black cultures; such practices are considered key sources of strength and healing when encountering situations appraised as highly stressful (Aryee, 2011; Dixon, 2015; Hall, 2012).

### *Charismatic Worship*

In addition to spirituality and religiosity, charismatic worship within the Pentecostal faith tradition traces its origins to the Apostle Paul's first and second letters to the Corinthians (Stringer, 2005). Paul discussed distinct gatherings for worship to take place, and for the congregation to sing hymns and join in praise. For this paper, *charismatic worship* is described as an activity occurring within a congregation or individually, involving praise through music, speech, scripture reading, and holy ceremonies (Christian Worship, 2009).

It is important to note that within the Pentecostal faith, there is a variance of worship styles amongst members regarding congregational involvement and music styles (Christian Worship, 2009; Williams, 2016c). Charismatic worship represents a distinct feature of Pentecostal spirituality and religion for many people of Black Caribbean descent (Dixon, 2015). For a number of these individuals, charismatic worship activities may include, but are not limited to, joyful singing and dancing as forms of reverence to the Lord (Dixon, 2015; Kay, 2011; Yong & Alexander, 2011). Therefore, it is common and normal for BCIW who practice Pentecostal faith to cry during worship, fall to the floor, laugh hysterically, and scream, as well as speak in tongues (Denys, 1980; Dixon, 2015; Lewis, 2011). In these states of expressiveness, these individuals are potentially lifted out of their mundane daily experiences into new realms of ecstatic possibilities (Anderson, 1999a, 1999b; Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997). With an emphasis placed on vibrant music and what might be considered theatrical performances, charismatic worship moves away from a "boring, predictable, and ritualistic style of worship" (Boyne, 2012, p. 1).

Thus, charismatic worship allows for freedom of bodily expression and active engagement in worship practices. Charismatic worship considers the paradigm shift within the Pentecostal movement over the years, from a classical and traditional emphasis on speaking in tongues (to be later addressed) to a more universal acceptance of charismatic and evangelical worship practices (Evangelical and Fundamentalist Movements, n.d.). It is also important to acknowledge that Black Caribbean Pentecostalism may have a unique flavour and does not necessarily reflect Pentecostalism in Canada (Boyne, 2012). Black Caribbean culture, apart from Pentecostalism, is more lively, expressive, emotionally rich (even dramatic), communal, and charismatic (Boyne, 2012; Butler, 2008; Williams, 2016c). For many individuals from the Caribbean, the

expressive Pentecostal style of worship is transferred to the Canadian context, wherein the classical practice of “speaking in tongues” is still preserved as an active form of charismatic worship (Dixon, 2015).

Expressions of the Pentecostal faith tradition may draw on an Afro-Caribbean spirituality that is characterized by full body expressions including dance, vocalization, and transcendent experiences such as glossolalia (Austin-Broos, 1997; Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Simms, 2011). Anderson (1999a) indicated that the charismatic worship styles of Black Pentecostals can be easily reconstructed into different cultural contexts, including Canada. In response to the Pentecostal faith’s charismatic form of worship, there appears to be a growing interest from numerous non-Black Caribbean individuals who are intrigued by this non-traditional style of worship like South Koreans, Africans, Fijians, Chileans, and Latin Americans (Chong, 2011; Gifford, 2011; Lindhardt, 2011; Ryle, 2011; Smilde, 2011).

According to Boyne (2012), traditional churches such as Anglicans and Presbyterian are losing followers who seek more ecstatic styles of worship. In the Canadian context, Boyne’s perspective is supported by the Pentecostal religious scholar Wilkinson, (2009, 2011) who acknowledged a significant shift in styles of worship, with some traditional churches adopting a more expressive, lively, and charismatic form of worship. Despite the growing attraction of many traditional church members to the Pentecostal movement in Canada, this faith tends to be misrepresented by outsiders who are unfamiliar with its worship practices. These misrepresentations will be addressed later in the paper with the hope that more people will gain a better understanding of the Pentecostal faith tradition and its value to the lives of many individuals including BCIW.

### *Prayer*

Prayer is another feature of the Judeo-Christian Pentecostal faith that can assist with the cultural identity reconstruction process of BCIW. Within the Pentecostal faith, prayer can be viewed as a personal ritual that functions in diverse ways, and it can be effective in some BCIW’s abilities to overcome post-migration barriers (Cook & Bade, 1998). To illustrate, a study was completed with 12 Black West-Indian Canadian women to examine how they experienced and managed depression (Schreiber, Stern, & Wilson, 2000). The findings showed that many of these women shared a deep spiritual connection with their Christian faith and they prayed routinely as a way of managing their depression in culturally defined ways by being strong and not showing vulnerability (Schreiber et al., 2000). The above results are critical information for counsellors to be aware of, for intervening in an unfamiliar culture.

At this stage, it is important to make the distinction between personal prayer and communal prayer. *Personal prayer* signifies private communion with God; when we pray personally, we learn to relate to God privately (Christopher, 2014). In contrast, *communal prayer* aims to benefit the church body. Pentecostal faith adherents, also called believers, who engage in

communal prayer find support, comfort, and encouragement to pray together corporately and collectively, whether it be in a prayer meeting or church service (Christopher, 2014). The benefit of personal and communal prayers is that both practices serve to help BCIW cope and reorient their identities amid stressful acculturation experiences (Dixon, 2015). More so, given the cultural emphasis in the Black Caribbean community of shared collective experiences of post-migration stressors, their public uses of prayer are essential to their unified sense of coping and provide them with resilience and the strength to tackle problems and overcome adversities (Malmin, 2013).

Within the Pentecostal faith, prayer can represent a relational aspect of spirituality wherein the individual appears to have a mutual relationship with God (Christopher, 2014). For many believers, prayer is a form of worship practice characterized by frequent verbal communication to God in a conversational style (Malmin, 2013). In this context, God is regarded as an accessible spiritual being and a personal friend (Black, 1999). By communicating with God through prayer, believers can seek strength from a divine source that is considered greater than themselves, to help them make positive meaning of adverse life challenges. Prayers also allow many individuals to develop a more profound sense of connectedness in their faith practices, as well as with each other in a communal way (Dixon & Arthur, 2014). Through prayers, some BCIW might learn to reframe their mindsets and reconstruct their thinking to see greater spiritual and religious purposes in their negative circumstances (Dixon, 2016).

The above position was evident in the study by the first author, as mentioned earlier, that was completed with 6 Jamaican Canadian immigrant women, referred to as co-researchers, who use Pentecostal faith to reconstruct their post-migration cultural identities (Dixon, 2015). Through the exploration of the co-researchers' lived experiences, the results showed that they were able to deconstruct negative thoughts and reconstruct affirmative ones through the infusing of scriptural verses into their prayers and devotions (Dixon, 2015). Such faith practices offered them a sense of hopefulness and resiliency in reconstructing healthy, holistic, and positive cultural identities (Dixon, 2015).

### *Glossolalia*

In this section, we will discuss glossolalia: it is one of the most dramatic and least understood aspects of Pentecostalism, and as such it warrants attention. The concept of glossolalia, speaking in tongues or speaking in a heavenly language, is often used in the religious literature interchangeably to describe a transformed spiritual process (Cox, 2009; Nolen, 2010; Saayman, 1993). *Speaking in tongues* has been characterized by some past scholars as a vocalization without meaning (Spanos & Hewitt, 1979; Spanos, Cross, Lepage, & Coristine, 1986). Conversely, other recent scholars view speaking in tongues as meaningful to some believers who consider it a gift given by God to help them live a holy and righteous life through faith (Anderson, 1999a; Simms, 2011). For many Pentecostals, this miraculous encounter signifies the “filling” with, or “baptism” by, the Holy Spirit

(Cox, 2009; Hyatt, 1998; Wilkinson & Althouse, 2010). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a spiritual process that gives new life to believers and endows them with gifts like teaching, preaching, and evangelism for ministry (Sproul, 1998; Williams, 2016b, 2016c).

Pentecostals point to the pattern in the book of Acts in the Bible where the Holy Spirit filled believers as the advent of the glossolalic experience (Sproul, 1998). This supernatural account is referenced in the biblical verse: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4, King James Version [KJV]). Although critical to the origin of the Pentecostal faith, it should be noted that the above scripture is subject to interpretation and emphasizes a common misunderstanding of glossolalia. For instance, in Acts, speaking in tongues described real languages since in subsequent verses people listening understood what the disciples were saying. Sometimes, in contemporary Pentecostal churches, the language of glossolalia is likely understood by someone in the congregation who can interpret what the speaker is saying for the spiritual edification of the church body (Simms, 2011).

According to Sequeira (1994), the interpretation of tongues is another spiritual gift that one can receive. It is also said that speaking in tongues is only legitimate when an interpreter is also present (Sequeira, 1994). As mentioned above, speaking in tongues is a part of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, and this gift is considered the most intimate form of communication one can have with God (Poythress, 2012). However, for many adherents of the Pentecostal faith, glossolalia would merely be described as a private prayer language for personal edification and not primarily used in public settings (Poythress, 2012; Simms, 2011). This is supported by passages in the New Testament that caution against glossolalia in public worship services and making the tongues the focus rather than God (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:26-28, KJV).

For many believers, including BCIW, glossolalia has two distinct functions: to allow God to speak through an individual, and to enable an individual to speak or pray directly to God (Boyne, 2012; Butler, 2008). Glossolalia, however, can be potentially repurposed to reconstitute a fragmented cultural identity. In private, the believer can experience a sense of spiritual strength to overcome life's challenges as the individual enters into a blissful and peaceful meditative or prayer-like state (Nolen, 2010). In a public setting, this sense of strength can become a collective experience that is shared by members of the Black community with common interpretations of migration challenges (Butler, 2008; Toulis, 1997).

Glossolalia, then, can be potentially repurposed to support the reconstruction of a fragmented cultural identity. Many BCIW's efforts to create meaning from their post-migration experiences through glossolalia might be influenced by intersecting personal and social worldviews, as well as broader socio-cultural discourses (Dixon, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of religious worldviews that may incorporate experiences of glossolalia. These experiences might strengthen BCIW's abilities to navigate cultural value conflicts as they transition into another culture. Working with Pentecostal clients requires counsellors to utilize active

listening skills about their glossolalic experiences to build empathetic relationships. Within those relationships, counsellors should be concerned with the meaning that the clients ascribe to their experiences rather than the actual practices of their faith. In the course of the sessions, counsellors will learn about the practices and how they influence the lives of the clients, both positively and negatively. Based on the previous descriptions, it can be argued that Pentecostalism has built-in mechanisms to deal with many psychosocial issues for new immigrants and that ought to be celebrated, promoted, and protected. The next section sheds light on the misrepresentations that often occur of Pentecostal faith within the Canadian context.

#### MISREPRESENTATIONS OF PENTECOSTAL FAITH IN CANADA

As a charismatic and evangelical faith group, Pentecostals are often misrepresented and stigmatized by Canada's dominant culture. For example, in a discourse analysis pilot study conducted by the first author, the representations of Pentecostals were examined in two of Canada's largest national newspapers with a broader readership than other local newspapers: *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* (Dixon, 2012; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The aims of this pilot study were twofold: (a) to address the media discourse of how the Pentecostal faith tradition is represented in Canada's mainstream media, and (b) to investigate how adherents of this faith group are portrayed. In the author's extensive search of the newspapers from the 1960s to 2012, the time of the pilot study, the terms Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Evangelicals were used to generate a broader range of results (Denys, 1980; Lewis, 2011). The number of articles was sparse, and despite the limited coverage of this faith group, the language used to describe them in the media discourse reinforces the societal stigma affiliated with their religious practices. Descriptive words such as: "primitive," "delusional," "spiritual high," "gibberish language," and "out of control" were observed in both mediums that painted negative representations of Canadian Pentecostals (Denys, 1980; Ibbitson, 2001; Kapica, 1991; Lewis, 2011). The findings of this pilot study supported past research, which indicated that descriptions of Pentecostals and Pentecostal worship often involve negative terms such as "schizophrenic, hysteria, cataleptic, regressed, emotionally unstable, immature, neurotic, excessively dependent, and highly dogmatic" (Spanos & Hewitt, 1979, p. 429; Spanos et al., 1986).

The above discriminatory language and stereotypes portrayed in the media are important for counsellors to be aware of when working with Pentecostal clients since such negative portrayals can encourage intolerance by outsiders of the faith. For instance, some outsiders might view the Pentecostal faith practices in a pathologizing and maladaptive manner (Aten & Leach, 2009; Lewis, 2011). In turn, the above perceived negative Pentecostal practices may be internalized by immigrants as a rejection of who they are, and that important aspects of their identities are not socio-culturally sanctioned by the dominant group. Therefore, creating a safe space in the counselling process to discuss salient aspects of

Pentecostal clients' faith can help to strengthen the therapeutic relationship, and build trust and transparency between both the counsellor and the client. Further, key benefits of the Pentecostal faith for many of its adherents are often disregarded in mainstream counselling literature and will be addressed below (Dixon, 2015; Dixon & Arthur, 2014).

#### BENEFITS OF PENTECOSTAL FAITH IN CULTURAL IDENTITY RECONSTRUCTION

Despite the negative misrepresentations of Pentecostal faith in various social discourses, such as the media (Dixon, 2012; Simms, 2011), research has acknowledged positive aspects of these faith practices (e.g., glossolalia, singing, and praying) in the lives of many individuals (Bearson & Koenig, 1990). For instance, numerous studies have acknowledged the benefits of spirituality and religiosity on overall well-being in terms of enhanced quality of life (Aryee, 2011; Koenig, 2005), greater social support (Culliford, 2011), effective coping with stress (Pargament, 2013), lower levels of depression (Koenig, 2005), longer survival, and meaningful purpose in life (Siegel, Anderman, & Schrimshaw, 2001). Given the previous findings, greater emphasis should be given in the counselling literature to the potential benefits of the Pentecostal faith, particularly in the lives of BCIW.

Black Caribbean immigrant women might acquire the strength to overcome adversities by attending church services involving other believers of a similar faith. For example, Guenther (2008) pointed out that Black Evangelical churches are often more actively engaged in social activism than their White counterparts due to their exposure to subtle forms of systemic or institutional racism. This position is supported by research on Black churches in other cultural contexts, including the United States (Yong & Alexander, 2011), England (Hollenweger, 1999b; Toulis, 1997), Africa (Kalu, 2008; Sackey, 2006), Haiti (Butler, 2008), and Jamaica (Austin-Broos, 1997; Dick, 2004). Social activism through Black churches frequently addresses issues of social justice and oppression, particularly with regards to racism and discrimination (Dixon, 2015; Este et al., 2018; Gayle, 2011; Guenther, 2008).

As a way of fostering social justice and accepting diversity, some people of African descent use their faith practices to turn adverse circumstances into positive ones. In other words, they adapt the spiritual belief that God will "make a way out of no way" (Harvey, Blue, & Tennial, 2012, p. 34). This phrase is frequently used in the Black Christian faith communities to refer to one's ability to exercise resilience by overcoming adversities (Mieder, 2010). Considering the aforementioned post-migration factors encountered by many BCIW, this proverbial phrase might be transferable to their experiences in a Canadian context and other culturally diverse settings. Moreover, they might use their Pentecostal faith to construct meaningful personal, racial, and gender identities; reaffirm their humanity; agitate for social justice; and maintain a sense of community in the dominant culture (Hunt, 2002). In the section below, attention is given to the critical role that gender plays within the Pentecostal faith tradition.

## GENDER ROLE ISSUES IN PENTECOSTAL FAITH TRADITION

Studies addressing gender roles in Pentecostal faith traditions have been tackled in various cultural contexts during the past decades, including the United States (Lawless, 1991, 2005), Latin America (Brusco, 1995; Ehlers, 1996; Gill, 1990), Africa (Manglos, 2010; Sackey, 2006), the United Kingdom (Anderson, 1999a, 1999b, 2004; Hunt, 2002; Toulis, 1997), and Jamaica (Austin-Broos, 1997; Boyne, 2012; Williams, 2016a). From these earlier studies, a critical theme emerged, centred on the perception by various outsiders of the faith tradition that women were often marginalized, if not alienated, in many Pentecostal denominations (Boudewijnse, Mroogers, & Kamsteeg, 1998; Lawless, 1991; Medina, 2011). These denominations vary widely in the extent of formal authority and leadership allocated to women. However, in many of the Pentecostal denominations, the scope of formal authority and leadership awarded to women varied.

In many cases, more women were and continue to be addressed as “individuals” and not “merely women” (Boudewijnse et al., 1998; Johns, 2010; Poewe, 1994). As such, their involvement in church activities increased, potentially accounting for the continuous growth of the Pentecostal movement on a global scale (Cox, 2009; O’Connell, 2006; Pew Research Center, 2006; Poloma, 2000). This growth is transformative: more women have taken on leadership positions such as pastors, spiritual teachers, and evangelists. Additionally, an increasing number of women are involved in social activism (Lawless, 2005; Shirer, 2011), missionary work (Blumhofer, 1997; Boylan, 1989), and ministerial duties (Kalu, 2008; Rawlyk, 1996).

Gender ideology is a salient topic that has been brought to the forefront of theological discourse within Judeo-Christianity (Kroska, 2009). Through active engagement in leadership roles, many women have begun to create noticeable shifts within the gender ideology discourse of the Pentecostal faith tradition. This tradition has been rightly criticized for its tendency to be patriarchal and male-dominated (Cox, 2009; Jakes, 2008). Such gender discourse has generated much-deserved attention across denominational divides as the attitudes regarding the status of women’s roles, rights, and responsibilities have been challenged by many influential male and female religious activists (e.g., Dixon, 2015; Jakes, 2008; Simms, 2011; Shirer, 2011).

In addressing the ideology of gender in Pentecostal and Catholic faith traditions, Boudewijnse (1998) reasoned that, “if Mary’s [gender] emphasized womanhood, the ideology of the Holy Spirit emphasized personhood” (p. 112). Pentecostals have been more successful than other denominations in dealing with the perceived needs of women (O’Connell, 2006). The first converts to Pentecostalism are often women who are attracted to the warmth of Pentecostal worship and the fact that they quickly find a role within the extended church family (O’Connell, 2006). This conversion has led to the growing presence of women in leadership positions within the Pentecostal faith (Simms, 2011; Yong & Alexander, 2011).

Further, the Pentecostal ideology, which emphasizes the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, offers women the opportunity to “[reconstruct] their personal histories” (Boudewijnse, 1998, p. 112) and “rescript their lives” (Lawless, 1991, p. 53). For counsellors who work from a narrative counselling approach, perhaps they could join with Pentecostal clients in a culturally sensitive manner to help them co-construct stories of empowerment and resilience that align with their religious worldviews (Morgan, 2002).

Adopting Manglos’s (2010) perspective, Pentecostal faith is moving away from a static set of doctrines which previously kept women in subservient positions, to a more flexible set of doctrines that are accepting of women’s unique contributions to the global Pentecostal movement. In recent years, this faith has transformed in its religious practices to demonstrate greater acceptance of women (Dixon, 2015; Johns, 2010; Sánchez-Walsh, 2009; Shirer, 2011). As a result, women who adhere to the Pentecostal faith can reconstruct their identities both within and outside of the church community.

#### FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE: CRITIQUING THE ROLE OF RELIGION

From a Western feminist perspective, religion as a historically institutional construct tends to represent a patriarchal system that contributes to the subjugation and oppression of women (Ballou, 1995; Holden, 1983; Lawless, 1991, 2005; Sackey, 2006). For example, women were often viewed as second-class citizens who were considered inferior to men in their subservient roles as wives, helpers to husbands, and the bearer of children (Keller & Ruether, 2006; Lovše, 2009). Being prevented from playing a full and equal role in many faiths has arguably created an environment in which societal violations like domestic abuse and pay inequality against women were justified, a context that some conservative religions have helped shape in the past and not pushed hard to change (Kristof, 2010).

The above view is supported by Black feminist Patricia Collins (2000) who asserted that for some Black women across the diasporas, religion serves as a force of oppression similar to other social constructs including race and gender. Collins (2000) argued that religious women are often oppressed as the structural framework of these male-dominated institutions restrict opportunities for self-expression and devalue women’s leadership abilities. Collins’s argument further aligns with the past work of Toulis (1997) in Britain, where she acknowledged that Pentecostal faith has patriarchal underpinnings, despite the growing efforts of many Pentecostal Black Caribbean women to demonstrate more assertiveness in their spiritual and religious identities. Additionally, Toulis claimed that the theological position of the Pentecostal faith adopts a stance of “absolute male dominance and a substratum of negotiated gender roles” (p. 221). Despite this quote, some feminist critics postulate that the status of women in the Pentecostal faith should not be viewed solely through the lens of a Western feminist perspective (Boudewijnse et al., 1998; Sackey, 2006).

According to Sackey (2006), one cannot argue for the universal oppression of women in all forms of religious ideology and practice. Although most traditional religious denominations (e.g., Catholicism, Protestant, Anglican, and Presbyterian) have historically subjugated women in certain religious, political, and social spheres (Collins, 2000), the Pentecostal faith tradition in recent years has proven to be an important source of strength and resiliency for many women of African descent (Aryee, 2011; Dixon, 2015; Lovše, 2009; Nolan & West, 2015). For instance, in the lives of many BCIW, performing active roles and responsibilities in their church communities have made them effective leaders and advocates in broader societal contexts like motivational speaking and teaching (Dixon & Arthur, 2014; Simms, 2011; Sumner, 2003).

In the context of the Black church community, some BCIW are appointed to certain leadership roles in the church such as intercessors, prayer warriors, encouragers, and worshipers that allow them to operate in a position of power and authority (Dixon, 2015; Shirer, 2011). Such roles may boost their self-esteem and earn them the respect of other believers, which in turn may add value to their lives and make them feel validated. For example, within some Black church communities, some women are bestowed such titles as “sisters” and “mother,” which position them as vital parts of a spiritual family (Simms, 2011).

Despite the above supportive positions for women in the church, scholars still question whether the Pentecostal faith liberates or oppresses women because it remains rooted in a patriarchal Christian tradition (Johns, 2010; Johnson, Wilkinson, & Althouse, 2010; Lawless, 1991). Scholars examining gender and religion in churches, including Pentecostalism, agree that the patriarchal systems of traditional churches may keep women in subordinate positions (Lawless, 2005; Nzojibwami, 2009; Sackey, 2006). In Austin-Broos’s (1997) research on Jamaican Pentecostalism, her critique showed that although women outnumbered men in membership, men predominantly occupied formal leadership roles such as deacons, pastors, and bishops.

However, it is important to acknowledge a paradigm shift that has been occurring in recent years in many Pentecostal churches. One of the unique distinctions of the Pentecostal movement is the increased role of women. Throughout church history, charismatic movements have allowed women in ministry, since the freedom of the Holy Spirit breaks social and political barriers (Cox, 2009; Johns, 2010; Poloma, 2003). In fact, Pentecostal denominations throughout the world are much more likely to ordain women. The legacy of women in missions and as full senior pastors in church is quite different from other evangelical denomination such as some Baptist denominations (Johns, 2010; Stephenson, 2011).

Although there is *still* much work to do for complete equality within Christendom, many believers would perceive Pentecostals as progressors in paving the way for women to become leaders in their own rights and merits (Jakes, 2008; Langford, 2017; Stephenson, 2011). There are many nuances of the Pentecostal faith culture that are misunderstood, but, as Jakes (2008) wrote, “we

cannot change what we don't understand" (p. 190). One hopes that, as modern-day Pentecostalism continues to develop and grow, the Judeo-Christian cultural tradition will be preserved without the perpetuation of female degradation.

#### BENEFITS OF PENTECOSTAL FAITH FOR BCIW

Black Pentecostal churches can be considered women's organizations (Boudewijnse, 1998) because women account for a majority of the membership and appear to be key contributors to the churches' operations when compared to their male counterparts (Austin-Broos, 1997; Jakes, 2008; Sackey, 2006). Unlike the traditional, conservative church practices of Catholics, Anglicans, and Presbyterians (Bibby, 2000, 2004), the charismatic element of the Pentecostal church seems to provide more opportunities for a growing number of BCIW. These opportunities allow them to reconstruct and renegotiate their identities in positions of leadership within the church community (Medina, 2011; Wilkinson, 2011).

Sackey's (2006) investigation of the changing status of women in African independent churches in Ghana—both Pentecostal and Charismatic churches—identified ideological shifts that allowed women to take on leadership roles and break into what was once a male-dominated Christian sect. In the context of Ghanaian culture, Sackey (2006) called for the adoption of a new gender ideology that is not only Westernized, but “theorizes and looks at gender issues within their special circumstances, which include cultural, historical, environmental, and present economic conditions” (p. 60). Sackey's argument can be expanded to the Canadian Pentecostal faith tradition where gender relations continue to transform many BCIW. In Pentecostal faith, the role of gender is continuously being “subjected to a process of symbolism and meaning-making” (Mroogers, 1998, p. 29). However, there appears to be no research undertaken within the Canadian context of how BCIW use Pentecostal faith to reconstruct meaning in their lives.

Therefore, this form of identity reconstruction requires consideration by researchers in Canada, especially because many BCIW are regularly pushed to the margins of dominant religious discourses due to a lack of understanding surrounding their faith practices (Dixon, 2015; Guenther, 2008; Medina, 2011). Rawlyk's (1996, 1997) work on Canadian Pentecostalism offers a brief reference to the Pentecostal scholarship conducted on the significant contributions of Pentecostal women.

Rawlyk's (1996, 1997) argument is further supported by Este and Bernard's (2003) study on African-Nova Scotians in Canada that focused on how strong Black women use spirituality as a key source of survival in Canadian society. Of the 50 women who participated in the above study, about 71% of the women strongly agreed that God is in control of their lives (Este & Bernard, 2003). These respondents also indicated that their ability to survive in Canadian society where systemic racism exists appears to be significantly attributed to their strong reliance on God as their key source of spiritual strength (Este & Bernard, 2003). The religious faith of these women and their connection to the Black church enabled

them to reconstruct the negative impacts of slavery and of Eurocentric cultural oppressions that vilify African culture (Este & Bernard, 2003).

More so, the resilience and psychosocial survival of people of African descent in the diaspora, through slavery and its consequences, have been strengthened through their collective communal experiences as is most evident in their expressions of religious and spiritual practices (Flynn, 2011; Richards, 1990; Wheeler, Ampadu, & Wangari, 2002). Despite these merits of spirituality as a major force in the attainment and maintenance of health and well-being among Africans in the diaspora (Este & Bernard, 2003; Wheeler et al., 2002), the influence of Pentecostal faith on counselling stigma still needs attention in the counselling literature.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

Openness to reflexive and reflective practice requires counsellors to enhance their understanding of other people's cultural identities, which can be accomplished through meaning-making conversations (Arthur, 2019; Cunliffe, 2016). We argue that such conversations can be accomplished using Arthur and Collins's (2010a) culture-infused counselling (CIC) model as a framework when working with diverse groups. The CIC model emphasizes three core competency domains for counsellors to integrate into their work with diverse clients: (a) cultural self-awareness, (b) awareness of client cultural identities, and (c) culturally sensitive working alliance (Arthur & Collins, 2010b; Collins & Arthur, 2018). Firstly, *cultural self-awareness* includes active awareness of personal assumptions, values, and biases. Secondly, *awareness of clients' cultural identities* takes into consideration the understanding of clients' worldviews. Lastly, *culturally sensitive working alliance* emphasizes the collaborative agreement of counselling goals and the creation of tasks in the context of a trusting therapeutic relationship. It is important to highlight that Arthur and Collins (2010b, 2014) emphasize social justice as a key aspect of the working alliance. Using a social justice lens in counselling practice can better position counsellors working with diverse immigrant clients to help them increase their personal agency and provide them with a sense of empowerment to tackle post-migration stressors (Arthur, 2019).

With the recognition that systemic disparities exist with various non-dominant populations in Canada, Paré (2013) calls attention to power dynamics between counsellors and clients and the importance of counsellors actively working to support the expertise held by clients about their own lived experiences. It is argued that multiculturally-competent counsellors, who occupy a perceived position of power concerning their clients, should enhance their awareness about the post-migration plights that lead to the fragmented identities of many diverse clients like BCIW (Dixon, 2015).

Counsellors are encouraged to draw from the CIC model to inform their counselling practice, which places value on cultural-sensitivity. By creating space for advocacy work the CIC model empowers clients like BCIW to take ownership

of their intersectional identities through the telling of their stories about the struggles of post-migration acculturation. Adapting a CIC lens, counsellors should strive to facilitate the clients' agency by allowing them to describe the meaning that they ascribe to their experiences and not to the practices per se. No one group of clients should be generalized and seen as holding the same intracultural worldviews. This means that counsellors need to accept that people have different reactions to the same post-migration situation/experience. Failure to do so might result in counsellors prejudging based on prior knowledge rather than allowing clients to share their emotions surrounding their post-migration experience.

The argument has been repeatedly emphasized in the counselling literature that counsellors need to become more intentional in how they carry out their social justice agenda to benefit diverse clients presenting issues (Arthur, 2017; Kennedy, 2013; Kennedy & Arthur, 2014). For many of these clients, their religious and spiritual worldviews need to be prioritized, valued, and incorporated into the counselling process.

Building on the above arguments, we posit that it might be helpful for counsellors to appreciate the complex nature of faith and the awareness of not only the negative aspects previously discussed around hierarchy and patriarchy within the past Pentecostal tradition but also the positive aspects as well described in a progressive Pentecostal movement (Dixon, 2015; Shirer, 2011; Williams, 2016c). The CIC model, which incorporates a social justice lens proposed in this paper, requires an awareness on the part of the counsellor to explore how a Pentecostal faith practice is initially seen as "odd" might, in fact, be a key to addressing the clients presenting issues like post-migration stress (Dixon, 2015). The mutual learning on the part of the counsellor and the client requires discernment about what is really oppressing and what is liberating for BCIW clients. In other words, both parties need to be open and receptive to their individual experiences as well as the variances within the Pentecostal faith experience.

Considering the importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of many people of African descent across the diaspora, it is critical for counsellors to consider their views on religious and faith practices. It is vital for counsellors to become aware of the core beliefs associated with Black Canadian culture to provide respectful and informed counselling approaches that incorporate the collectivistic roots of this community (Moodley & Walcott, 2010; Nolan & West, 2015).

It is, therefore, necessary for us as counsellors to further our learning of religious and spiritual worldviews (Burke et al., 2005; Nolan & West, 2015). These are salient dimensions of identity that carry deep meaning for many individuals within Canada's rich multicultural mosaic, particularly Black immigrants (Arthur & Collins, 2010a; Dixon, 2015). As counsellors, we can enhance our cultural awareness by working with unique clients like BCIW, for whom faith plays a critical role in coping with post-migration stress as they navigate the reconstruction of their cultural identities.

To address the counselling needs of this thriving ethnocultural population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017c), it is vital for counsellors to become aware of

the core religious and spiritual beliefs of Black Canadian immigrant populations. Making an effort to develop a genuine understanding of the Pentecostal faith without judgement is a step in the right direction for counsellors in respecting and embracing religious diversity.

#### CONCLUSION

Counsellors will inevitably work with unique clients whose faith plays a critical role in how they cope with adversities in their lives, and who access their religious and/or spiritual practices as sources of positive inspiration. In this discussion, we have highlighted the role of religious faith and spirituality within the Black Caribbean community in the context of migration. For many new Canadians who are dealing with multiple stressors associated with migration, their religion and faith practices are a part of their worldview that they can transfer between cultural contexts. Therefore, counsellors are encouraged to adopt a CIC approach when working with Black Caribbean clients whose cultural identity is strongly influenced by their Pentecostal faith practices. This approach allows for the utilization of a cultural analysis to assess such clients, and for counsellors to have a better understanding of the complex ways in which these clients navigate their lives post-migration (Hier & Bolaria, 2006; James, 2010).

Furthermore, by adopting a cultural analysis perspective with clients, counsellors can shift their thinking away from one that is strongly influenced by a cultural hegemony that emphasizes the dominance of one group (McDermott & Varenne, 2006). We posit that counsellors who strive to embrace a more CIC approach with clients will view them as whole people with multi-layered dimensions of identities that merit exploration, recognition, appreciation, and celebration.

More so, in working with immigrant clients, it is important to emphasize the need for counsellors to engage in ethical practice by reflecting on their own personal and cultural identities, and to explore how their assumptions about religion and spirituality might influence their worldview, including understanding diverse communities and their shared experiences (American Counseling Association, 2005; Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, 2007; Association of Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values Issues in Counseling, 2009). Counsellors have a critical role to play in advocating for culturally informed services that consider the faith practices of Canadian immigrants in a dominant society that contribute to a social process of othering through false and negative assumptions (Arthur, 2019; Hays, 2016).

As BCIW navigate new cultural understandings, religious faith and spirituality is a source of strength in helping them to reconstruct their personal, cultural identities (Dixon, 2015). In their work with BCIW, counsellors should be open to discussing relevant aspects of their faith, like gender roles and feminist ideology and how these concepts help to inform their cultural identities. By remaining open to cultural variation and individual differences, counsellors can understand

how socio-political and interpersonal forces likely influence BCIW's behaviours both within and outside of the church community (Dixon, 2018; Moodley & Walcott, 2010; Nolan & West, 2015). This paper offers one example through highlighting the experiences of BCIW clients to support counsellors to deepen their understandings of faith and spirituality and the connections with people's sense of belonging and well-being in Canadian society.

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