

Pentecostal-Charismatic Group on Mission to Drive Christian Unity

With a mission to drive Christian unity, the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) has appointed David Cole as a liaison to the greater Christian community.

Racial reconciliation has been a cornerstone of PCCNA since its formation arising out of the “Memphis Miracle” in 1994, and Christian unity is listed among its purposes in the organization’s constitution and bylaws, in response to the John 17:21 prayer of Jesus.

Cole will seek to advance that emphasis by helping the PCCNA to strengthen relationships and seek opportunities for common witness with other Christian groups in North America, including those outside of the Pentecostal-Charismatic family of churches.

As members of the body of Christ, Pentecostal and **charismatic** Christians can learn much from other Christians, and also can draw from their own experiences to encourage other believers.

“The reality is there is a growing cry from mainline Protestant groups for evangelicals and Pentecostals to come to the table for dialogue, fellowship and worship together. They often recognize decline in their own ranks while evangelicals and Pentecostals are experiencing—at a minimum—stability, and in many cases expansion and growth,” says Jeff Farmer, chairman of PCCNA.

“In addition to that, there are **Spirit-filled** renewal movements internal to all Christian communities—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant—and the authenticity and fruit of these

streams of renewal have given credibility to the reality and life of Pentecost. David is, in the truest biblical sense of the word, called to this ministry. It is a passion of his, and he has been mentored by one of the best—Assemblies of God scholar and historian, Mel Robeck. David has significant experience working with leaders in the greater Christian Community.”

Cole is currently serving as vice president of Student Development and Pastoral Care as well as assistant professor of history at Briercrest College and Seminary in Saskatchewan, Canada. He brings more than 20 years of church and college leadership as well as a record of service to the International Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue, Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT), the Society for Pentecostal Studies and other organizations.

“Jeff Farmer and I have discussed over the years the role of Pentecostals and charismatics in the body of Christ,” says Cole. “Today there is an open door of opportunity for **Pentecostals** to, more than ever, learn what it means to participate locally, regionally and globally in the efforts of Christians from all ecclesial families to come together in common witness, and to be involved in both giving and receiving as Christians share with and learn from one another in a variety of interdenominational settings.”

In his newly appointed position, Cole hopes to attend upcoming gatherings of organizations such as Christian Churches Together in the USA, the Society of Pentecostal Studies and other groups. He will report back to the PCCNA and serve as a communication link for PCCNA members who may be unable to send their own denominational representatives to such meetings.

Cole’s experiences in the greater Christian community include nearly 30 years as a credentialed Pentecostal minister, first with Open Bible Churches (USA) and currently with Open Bible Faith Fellowship (Canada). He has also served on the faculties

at several Christian institutions, has engaged in research that specializes in **Pentecostal** history and theology, and has been involved as a Pentecostal in a variety of national and international dialogues between Pentecostals and/or evangelicals and other church families from across the ecclesial spectrum, seeking ways to help build bridges of cooperation and unity in fulfillment of the Great Commission.

“This is an opportunity for PCCNA to discuss how both as an organization and as individual churches we might position ourselves in relationship to other church families throughout Christianity,” says Cole. “For example, in terms of our own experience, our struggles in the area of racial reconciliation and how we must continue to work towards healing between different ethnic groups is something from which other churches can learn. The PCCNA story is an ongoing testimony and provides a challenge for all of us to continue to grow.”