They ‘Made a Pentecostal Out of Her’:
The Church of God (Cleveland) in Australia

Glen O’Brien

Paul Conkin dismisses the historical significance of the Holiness movement as ‘largely a way station on the path to Pentecostalism.’ Those within Holiness churches are more likely to see Pentecostalism as the aberrant and illegitimate offspring of the Holiness movement. Charles Edwin Jones notes that the Holiness and Pentecostal movements ‘are sometimes regarded as one movement by outsiders because of their common emphasis on the present work of the Holy Spirit’. According to Jones, however, they are ‘a mother and daughter estranged by mutually contradictory beliefs concerning the purpose and sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and by mutually incompatible modes of devotion and worship’. It is observable in social interaction that arguments within families are often more bitterly contested than those with strangers. Pentecostal and Holiness churches have much in common but it is this very commonality which makes their differences stand out in such bold relief. This article will examine this perennial tension through an examination of the emergence in Australia, in the 1970s, of the Church of God (Cleveland), a denomination that identifies itself as both ‘Holiness’ and ‘Pentecostal’. I will seek to demonstrate that the Church of God in Australia became less distinctively ‘Holiness’, and more decidedly ‘Pentecostal’ in self-definition, that this was a direction well under way in the United States branch of the church before the Australian work commenced, and that this trajectory was a mechanism for sur-
vival and growth in the Australian context.

When self-funded Church of God missionaries Bill and Winnie McAlpin first arrived in Australia in 1973, they initially received a less than warm reception from fellow Pentecostals as they sought to negotiate a place in the Australian religious context. Other North American churches entering Australian in the post-war years, such as the Wesleyan Methodists and Nazarenes, after initial alienation, gradually gained acceptance and growth, partly through transfer growth from other evangelical churches. They would do this, however, only at the cost of becoming more generically ‘Evangelical’ and less distinctively ‘Holiness’. The Church of God underwent a similar experience, becoming more generically ‘Pentecostal’ at the cost of their distinctively Wesleyan-Holiness identity.3

The globe trotting Church of God missionary, J. H. Ingram came through Australia in 1945, and generated some interest in the Church of God.5 However, it would be nearly thirty years before any real work would commence with the arrival in Sydney of Bill and Winnie McAlpin to commence the work of founding the church. When Florida paint contractor and Church of God pastor Bill McAlpin married Winnie she was ‘a Wesleyan Methodist girl’. In his own words he ‘made a Pentecostal out of her’.6 Their experience may serve as a metaphor for the way in which the Church of God, though remaining aware of its Holiness roots, has oriented itself more toward Pentecostalism than toward the Wesleyan-Holiness churches.

McAlpin had been serving Church of God congregations on Florida’s East Coast in the late 1960s when he first began to feel restless, and to pray for new direction. A passing reference to Australia by their local church secretary led the McAlpins to re-

search in libraries and a deepening sense that this was the direction toward which they should head. Surprised to hear that there was no Church of God work in Australia, the McAlpins approached the World Missions department in Cleveland and a meeting was arranged. McAlpin notified his local church that he was resigning to become a missionary, but the Mission Board decided that the McAlpins were not equipped financially, nor with the necessary knowledge of Australian conditions, and determined to do nothing. They told the Mission Board they would go to Australia at their own expense if the Board would contribute to the cost of literature and some rent. They arrived home to find a letter from the Australian Consulate inviting them to an interview. On the list of tradesmen being let into the country were painters, so long as they had a job offer. Such an offer came from a fellow paint contractor in Australia and a short time later a visa arrived from the Australian Government, with an offer of assisted passage to Australia.

The McAlpins left the US on Columbus Day, 12 October 1973, with a sense of divine calling to serve as self-funded Church of God missionaries. They were met at Mascot by a hire-car driver, employed by the Australian Government, who identified them through the immigration badges they wore. They were thirty-one years old, with two children, aged twelve and eight. They had no contacts, no friends, and no personal finances. The driver took them to the Government subsidized ‘East Hills Hostel’ in Liverpool, where they stayed in a three-room apartment for three months, before buying a home in Campbelltown. The job offer fell through and Bill never did work as a paint contractor, turning instead to full time missionary work. From these small beginnings they worked to establish a strong Church of God pres-
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As with other Holiness churches, the fact that they were Americans, members of an American denomination with a strongly centralized form of government, would mean that their acceptance by Australian Christians would be slow in coming. It was among Pentecostal and not Wesleyan-Holiness groups, that they gained the greatest acceptance (and even that was sometimes hard-won) and it has been among immigrant groups with existing Church of God connections in their home countries that the greatest growth has been seen. Newly emerging religious groups need to find strategies for survival in the environments they inhabit. One such strategy is to be open toward existing groups hoping to benefit from the infusion of other Christians into the new group. Holiness churches that emerged in Australia following the Second World War, such as the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Church of the Nazarene sought involvement with evangelical Christians and took up opportunities for ministry in evangelical circles whenever they could. They received members from other denominations into their ranks in large numbers, and grew more by such ‘switchers’ than by new converts. These new members brought with them the theological convictions and the particular ethos of the groups from which they came and this infusion of non-Wesleyan emphases served to dilute the distinctiveness of the receiving group. ‘Second blessing’ holiness began to be explained whenever possible in terms with which incoming Evangelicals would be comfortable. A similar pattern is observable in the Church of God, though the incoming ‘switchers’ were Pentecostal rather than Evangelical.

William Bainbridge cites the ‘recruitment of new members’ as a factor in raising the religious intensity of a sect. How conversely, as the experience of Wesleyan-Holiness churches in Australia demonstrates, if these new members are from other Christian traditions, rather than new converts, the opposite effect may occur. Ironically for church founders convinced of the distinctiveness of their message, it was this lowering of religious intensity which led to survival and growth, since growth was based more on ‘transfer’ than ‘new convert’ intake. The more generically ‘Pentecostal’ and less distinctively ‘Holiness’ the receiving church remained, the more successfully it could retain ‘switchers’ who already had strong theological convictions not always in keeping with traditional Holiness views. It is the contention of this paper that just such a pattern is traceable in the Church of God in Australia.

Fire in the Mountains: The Beginnings of the Church of God (Cleveland)

The Church of God (Cleveland), with its origins in 1886 among a small band of believers from Polk and Monroe counties, in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, is currently the largest white Pentecostal-Holiness denomination in the United States. Mickey Crews has traced in his social history of the Church of God the way in which the concerns of these rustic mountain folk, during one of the most severe depressions of the nineteenth century, were mirrored in many respects by the Populist movement. Each movement was egalitarian in its own way and this egalitarianism was the primary basis of the Church of God’s rejection of the mainline Protestant churches, which they perceived as having bought into markers of social difference based on the privileges of wealth. To Methodists and Baptists, Church of God people were ‘holy rollers’. To Church of God people, Methodist and Baptists had lost their true holiness by being merged into the prevailing
culture of affluence.

Church of God ministers were bi-vocational subsistence farmers, with large families of up to 20 or more children. Though most members were dirt poor, the spokesmen of the movement were landowners, relatively affluent in their particular setting. Most early Church of God members had transferred in from Methodist and Baptist origins, concerned with the liberalizing tendencies of a Darwinian age. Some Baptists revived Landmarkism, a movement which had arisen in the 1850s to 'save' Baptists from liberalism, and Methodists joined Holiness associations. What Methodists involved in the Holiness Movement called 'Christian perfection' or 'entire sanctification', Church of God folk called 'the way of Holiness'. Only when a person was sanctified wholly could he or she become a candidate for the 'third blessing', the 'baptism with the Holy Ghost and power', marked by manifestations of divine power, and authenticated by 'speaking in tongues'. During the great depression of the 1930s, when most denominations recorded no growth or even decline, the membership of the Church of God more than doubled. It expanded into northern and western states, as well as into foreign mission fields. This is a pattern of growth that reflects the argument of Joel Carpenter that out of American fundamentalism's isolation in the 1920s came a new, internal strength that enabled it to adapt to the changing times of the 1930s and 40s with remarkable success. By 1994 the Church of God had grown to three and a half million members in over one hundred countries.

The Church of God (Cleveland) in Pentecostal Context
The Church of God was 'Holiness' before it was 'Pentecostal.' For a while it sought to be both, and in its official self-definition it remains so. However it has moved, like Winnie McAlpin herself, from distinctively Wesleyan origins to a more general Pentecostal orientation. The doctrine of a three-stage way of salvation (salvation, followed by sanctification, and then the 'baptism of the Spirit' as a third 'blessing') was the earliest form of Pentecostalism, and was taught by 'the whole Pentecostal movement in America' until 1908. According to Vinson Synan, 'the historical and doctrinal lineage of American Pentecostalism is to be found in the Wesleyan tradition.' Yet a divide opened up in the Wesleyan-Holiness movement, leading to quite distinct streams – those which affirmed that speaking in 'tongues' was a sign of the 'Baptism of the Holy Ghost' and those who retained the older Wesleyan view of the 'Baptism' as an experience of sanctification. Some Holiness churches opened up to the new doctrines and expressions, while others closed ranks and made a concerted effort to distance themselves from the 'tongues' movement.

The Holiness preacher W.H. Durham, who had received the 'baptism in the Spirit' in Los Angeles in 1907, went on to reduce the earlier 'Wesleyan' three-stage pattern to a two-stage experience, stating that God dealt with the sinful nature decisively at conversion, leaving no further need for any sanctifying baptism. Durham was expelled from the Apostolic Faith Church because of this teaching, and the earliest Pentecostals were in broad agreement that Durham's two-stage theory was demonically inspired. Yet it has been this two-stage 'Baptistic' theory which has become a global movement, recognised as 'authentic' Pentecostalism, the older three-stage expression remaining pretty much confined to the southern United States. The pastoral orientation of the original three-stage understanding of salvation
was that, since the Holy Spirit will only enter a pure heart, believers should not hope to gain full victory by a detour around holiness.

Topeka, Kansas and Azusa Street, California have legendary status in Pentecostal historiography. Charles Parham is one common element in both locations. Parham had become a Methodist pastor in 1893, at the age of twenty, in Eudora Kansas, but withdrew from Methodism in 1895, before being ordained. He came in touch with Benjamin Irwin's Fire Baptized Holiness Church, a three stage Pentecostal-Holiness group. In Topeka, Parham established Bethel Bible College in October 1900, with 30 students. He invited his students to investigate the question of what evidence confirmed the Pentecostal experience recorded in Acts, and they came to the conclusion that it was 'speaking in tongues'. According to the story, tongues of fire appeared in the room during a 'watchnight' service in 1901 in the old mansion which served as the Bible school (many locals long believed it to be haunted). During this service, Agnes N. Ozman 'spoke in tongues' (apparently Chinese) when Parham laid hands on her to commission her for missionary service. Two days later, several other students also 'spoke in tongues' and many see this moment, only days into the new century, as the birth of Pentecostalism. Of course, it would be simplistic to see this as the beginning of Pentecostalism and alternative theories of origins are beginning to emerge.19

Moving to Houston, Texas, after unsuccessful attempts to establish congregations on the 'tongues' model, Parham admitted some black Holiness workers into his circle, including William Joseph Seymour, who would prove an important link in the Church of God (Cleveland) moving from the older Holiness to the newer Pentecostal stance. Parham helped pay Seymour's way to Los Angeles to help in a Holiness mission there, a work which would soon grow in influence way beyond Parham's own efforts. Parham's career tapered off after this point as he moved around from place to place, openly criticized Seymour's work, faced criminal charges of sodomy, and quickly lost his reputation even among his own followers.

Seymour's attempt to convince the Holiness mission in Los Angeles that tongues was the evidence of a third baptism of fire did not go down well. Horrified, the mission dismissed him and he established his own work in a deserted, run down, two-story building on Azusa Street, which had been formerly used as a Methodist mission. The wild services Seymour had held in his own home, and which had disturbed his neighbours, were now transferred to Azusa Street where they would be given a wider, national platform. In the first year of the Azusa Street revival, 13,000 people were reported to have 'spoken in tongues'. As the effect of Azusa spread throughout the States, the distinction (and division) between 'Holiness' and 'Pentecostal' became sharper.20

A white Holiness preacher from North Carolina, Gaston B. Cashwell, had visited Azusa and received his 'baptism' at the laying on of William Seymour's hands. He returned home to establish congregations all over the South, which eventually coalesced to form the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the second-largest white three-stage group in America, after the Church of God.21 Cashwell, 'baptized in the Spirit' under W. J. Seymour at Azusa Street, links the Church of God to Pentecostal beginnings through his conversion of Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson in 1908 to the experience of Spirit baptism as evidenced by tongues-speaking. Tomlinson, the founder of the Church of God, was a
small-scale farmer in Tennessee who by the late 1890s had been 'saved and sanctified' under the influence of Holiness teaching. On 9 August 1886, he gathered with a small band of like-minded believers at Coker Creek, two miles from where the Smoky Mountains are intersected by eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina, as the founding members of what would become the Church of God. The creative adjustment to the earlier form of Holiness teaching that the Church made was to set forth three stages of salvation. Only when a saved person was sanctified wholly could he or she become a candidate for the 'third blessing', the 'baptism with the Holy Ghost and power', marked by manifestations of divine power, and authenticated by 'speaking in tongues'. The Church of God has a well-established lineage in Pentecostal history, but it has clearly Wesleyan-Holiness origins. The movement would continue to struggle with these two aspects of its origins as it sought to establish its identity.

The Self-Identification of the Church of God

The formal self-identification of churches usually finds expression in their official statements of faith. The Church of God had no such statement until the Declaration of Faith was adopted at the forty-second General Assembly in 1948. The early leaders of the Church of God had been opposed to creeds and confessions as human, and therefore flawed, inventions. Furthermore, statements of faith were believed to be divisive and to set up barriers between Christians. At an address to the General Assembly in 1913, R.C. Spurling depicted humbly derived creeds as 'small railroads' leading away from the truth of the Gospel. 'But the great engine of the Church of God cannot travel these side tracks because they are narrow gauge.' He knew first hand the controversies that could erupt over doctrine when 'Landmarkism' had disrupted the Baptist churches of East Tennessee. For early Church of God people, the New Testament was to be the only rule of faith and practice. When the Church was first formed as the 'Christian Union' in 1886, the charter members agreed to be free from 'all man-made creeds and traditions ... to take the New Testament, or law of Christ' as their 'only rule...giving each other equal rights and privileges to read and interpret for yourselves as your conscience may dictate,' and to 'sit together as the Church of God to transact business'. Even so, by 1909 the General Assembly felt the need to provide ministerial candidates with help to an understanding of the New Testament, and in 1910 provided a list of twenty-five brief statements with biblical references attached. In 1948 a fourteen-point declaration was approved, and though a fuller, more comprehensive statement was also called for, it never eventuated. The declaration reflects both Holiness and Pentecostal beliefs, and Charles W. Conn insists that these two traditions belong together in the Church of God.

Conn wants to make clear the historic lineage of the Church of God as extending back through the nineteenth century Holiness movement to John Wesley and early Methodism. For him, 'the Pentecostal emphasis is simply an extension of the earlier holiness concepts'. Church of God adherents 'regard themselves different among holiness believers only in the further spiritual experience they have received'. In 1960, the General Assembly asserted that the Church had been a Holiness church before it had been a Pentecostal one, and reaffirmed its commitment to remain so.

The emergence of the Charismatic (neo-Pentecostal) movement, which brought 'marginal' behaviours such as 'tongues
speaking' and 'divine healing' into the mainline churches in the 1960s and 70s, served to bring the Church of God's sense of identity as a Holiness church clearly into focus. Church of God leadership was standoffish, if not positively hostile to this new development, which saw members of mainline Protestant and Catholic churches claim to have received the 'baptism of the Spirit' and spoken in 'tongues', but without the preparatory work of entire sanctification. It was conceded that many had received genuine blessing in this movement but that these should be brought into Church of God fellowship where they would experience 'true Pentecostalism'. Wade H. Horton, General Overseer, at the 50th General Assembly in 1963, was concerned that those in the Charismatic movement who had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit did not hold to Holiness doctrine, or live holy lives. Church of God leaders were concerned that such believers were bypassing the crucial second work of grace—entire sanctification. According to Church of God theology, one could not receive the 'baptism' without this preparatory cleansing work. In 1972, Hughes insisted that 'as fish cannot live out of the water, the baptism of the Holy Ghost cannot exist without holiness. Holiness is a prerequisite for the reception of the Baptism and for the maintenance of the Baptism.' For Horton, neo-Pentecostals were only 'pseudo-Pentecostals'. The overall attitude of the Church of God to the neo-Pentecostal phenomenon was 'let's just wait and see'. Despite the perceived threat of the Charismatic movement, the Church of God increased in growth right alongside its closest rival. In 1958, there were 155,541 members in the United States. In 1974 that number had more than doubled to 324,553, and by 1994 there were 721,476 members in the US alone and 3,646,409 members worldwide. Membership outside of the USA and Canada exceeded 5 million in 2001.32

Church of God historian Kimberley Alexander has noted how these mid-century attempts to draw the Church back to its Wesleyan-Holiness roots did not manage to stem the drift toward a more generic Pentecostal orientation. She cites both membership of the Church of God in the National Association of Evangelicals and involvement in the Charismatic movement as serving to dilute the Church's Wesleyan emphases.

As more and more Church of God ministers found a new 'home' within Evangelicalism, a place where they had previously been unwelcome, and as many were trained in Reformed theology, there was a corresponding decline of the Wesleyan emphasis on the crisis experience of entire sanctification. As the Charismatic movement of the 1960s and 1970s began to bring other voices into the church, whether through media or direct personal involvement, there was a further chiseling away at the doctrine of entire sanctification as a crisis experience subsequent to conversion.39

This seems borne out by the Church of God's official U.S. website which announces that the Church is Christian, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic. Neither 'Wesleyan' nor 'Holiness' appears among the many self-identifiers listed. The Church of God Theological Seminary is one agency of the Church that is contributing to the rediscovery of its Wesleyan-Holiness origins and identity. The President of the Seminary, Steven J. Land, is noted for his scholarship in the field of Wesleyan-Pentecostal studies and many faculty members' publications reflect this concern.

Pentecostalism in Australia

Australian Pentecostalism has also been described as having been birthed from a Wesleyan matrix. Janet 'Mummy' Lancaster, born in Williamstown, Victoria, was a Methodist who, in 1908, experienced 'speaking in tongues'. She opened the Good News...
Hall in North Melbourne in 1909, which became the centre of the ‘Pentecostal Mission’ she would lead until her death in 1934. Lancaster wrote an editorial in 1930 in which she displayed her Methodist origins and sought legitimisation of her cause in statements on Pentecost made by prominent Methodist clergymen. ‘Mummy’ bemoaned ‘the fellowship so familiar and so vital to the Methodism of an earlier day [as] almost nonexistent’ and saw a revival of Pentecostal manifestations as the answer to the problem. The Methodist Church did not welcome the new Pentecostal message and the 1935 Conference directed Methodist minister, Arch Newton, and local preacher, Gordon Bowling, ‘to withdraw their Pentecostal influence or withdraw themselves from the Methodist ministry’. Bowling left, to become a minister in the Apostolic Church, but Newton stayed. Periodically there were Pentecostal-type behaviours at Christian conventions, such as ‘tongues speaking’ at the Belgrave, Victoria convention in 1910, and some emphasis on faith healing through the laying on of hands but these were exceptional and often caused controversy.

The second earliest Australian Pentecostal ministry, the Southern Evangelical Mission, was also established by a former Methodist, the home missioner, Robert Horne. He had been involved with the Keswick movement and began his own independent work in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield in 1911. In 1922, Horne published an advertisement in the Melbourne Age distancing himself from the teachings of the Good News Hall. The Sunshine Gospel Hall, under the leadership of C. L. Greenwood opened in 1925 and regularly saw a packed house. Greenwood organised the Pentecostal Church of Australia after a week-long series of meetings in the Prahran Town Hall. This group moved to Bridge Road in Richmond where they leased the Richmond Theatre, eventually purchasing the building and renaming it Richmond Temple. A meeting of seventeen Pentecostal leaders in Brisbane took the name ‘Assemblies of God’ in July 1929 and in 1937 the Melbourne-based Pentecostal Church joined this Brisbane-based group to form the Assemblies of God in Australia.

Since that time the Assemblies of God have seen phenomenal growth and become the largest Pentecostal denomination in Australia, with over a thousand congregations and 160,000 adherents.

Barry Chant’s unpublished PhD thesis on the history of Australian Pentecostalism focuses in its third chapter on the ‘Spirit of Wesleyanism’ that served as a contributing factor to the emergence of Pentecostalism in Australia, with a focus on the years 1870-1906. Chant is correct in stating that ‘there was no significant denominational Holiness movement’ in nineteenth century Australia, that might parallel with the American experience. However, a number of Holiness denominations did form in the mid-twentieth century and in Heart of Fire Chant has only a few scant references to these Holiness movement cousins of Pentecostalism. Chant refers to the Church of God of Prophecy as tracing its origins to the American Holiness movement and consequently having an emphasis on holiness and sanctification. He also refers to the Church of God (Anderson) as having experienced some conflict over ‘speaking with tongues’. He seems less than enthusiastic about American incursions into the Australian scene:

It seems clear that in the future more American denominations will attempt to open branches in Australia. One cannot do anything to stop this, of course, even if that were desirable. But it would be a pity if Australian Pentecostalism became too much identified with American Pentecostalism. It has some colourful and unique history and pioneering traditions of its own. If, for one, would be sad to see
them swamped.\textsuperscript{53}  

The American Wesleyan Methodist leader Robert Mattke, remembers an attitude of ridicule toward Pentecostals in Australia in the 1950s:

[Pentecostal evangelist] Oral Roberts came to Australia when we were there, and he held meetings down in Melbourne. In the park he pitched his tent, but it was an area where free-thinkers of every type came. He ... had a lot of ... advance publicity that was negative. People heard about his herd of prize beef cattle back in Oklahoma, or somewhere, and when he arrived, he came with all the semi-trailers of equipment and lights, tents and curtains and the Australians kind of saw this as the American ... circus come to town ... and we went to one of the services to see what it was like, and they introduced him, and he popped out from the backstage, and ran through curtains, and ran to the pulpit, and this just did not go over at all. And so there were stink bombs, and heckling and it got so bad that he just had to fold his tent and leave.\textsuperscript{54}

If Pentecostalism emerged out of Methodist origins in Australia, and thus out of a Wesleyan theology of experience, it is probably true to say that an awareness of these Wesleyan origins has not been sufficiently recalled in Australian Pentecostalism. If it had been, the Church of God with its Wesleyan beginnings and its Pentecostal experience may have found a more ready welcome. As it was, there was considerable suspicion toward them, on the part of other Pentecostals, as either too ‘American’ or too Holiness.

The ‘New Testament Church of God’ in Australia

In January 1976, the Church of God was formally organized in Australia, with thirty-three members, five ministers, and three churches. The name ‘Church of God’ was already in use in Australia by Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), so for a time the Cleveland group operated under the name ‘New Testament Church of God’. When the McAlpins first moved to Sydney in 1973, they presented themselves as gospel singers, visiting as many churches as would have them, ministering in music. When invited to sing at a series of meetings in the western Sydney suburb of Leumeah, they were befriended by an Assembly of God minister who sold them his modest house in Campbelltown before moving to Queensland.

Continuing to research the church scene and the Australian culture and lifestyle, the McAlpins discovered ‘vast differences’ between the American and Australian church scenes. ‘Did we ever get an education! The way of worship was totally different.’\textsuperscript{55} They sang different. ‘The way they conducted their services was different. Their altar services were different. Everything was different.’ Winnie remembers that there was very little media broadcast of the gospel as compared with America. Being a Christian was a very private matter in Australia. It was difficult to get someone’s attention. They gave out 5000 flyers on one occasion to draw attention to a meeting but with little result. The Australians worked hard during the week, both parents had to work in order to own a home. On Sundays the people were tired. They were happy for the church to have their children on a Sunday afternoon so long as they had nothing else on, so there was quite an impact among children, but the parents themselves were uninterested. To the McAlpins, church life took priority, and everything else was secondary, but to Australians, secular life was first and church was secondary. In Florida, when they held special meetings, they could invite people from other churches, and even fellow pastors from other denominations, and there was a good response. The same participation was not found in Australia.
They remained committed to fellowship with all believers in spite of this opposition from other denominations. They held interdenominational tent meetings, sang with the interdenominational ‘Full Gospel Business Men’ and promoted harmony between churches as much as possible. The New Testament Church of God seemed neither fish nor fowl. The churches the McAlpins sought to associate with, and which kept them at arms length, were Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God. There was no involvement at all with Wesleyan-Holiness groups. The Pentecostals would not associate with them because they were considered too Holiness, and the Holiness churches would not associate with them because they were too Pentecostal. There was theological opposition to the doctrine of sanctification held by the Church of God on the part of other Pentecostals, who believed them to be not quite orthodoxy with their ‘three blessings’ and too rigid in their lifestyle prohibitions. Harold McLeod, General Overseer of the Australian work from 1984 to 1995, found that he gained greater acceptance among some Uniting Church and Catholic churches than from the Assemblies of God, which seemed to have held the Church of God at arms length because it was perceived as an American group in competition with it. As a result, Church of God leaders were not invited to participate in any multi-church crusades or organizing committees. The fact that the Church of God did not fit neatly into either the Holiness or the Pentecostal camp meant that one aspect of its self identification would inevitably be muted if it was to find its place among the existing churches in Australia.

That the Church of God identifies itself primarily as Pentecostal rather than Wesleyan-Holiness is clear from its own literature. Church of God historian David Roebuck can refer to the Assembly of God as ‘our sister fellowship’. When Tuisi Tonga desired to commence Church of God work in his homeland of Tonga, the funds for supervision were not available and he was referred to ‘another Pentecostal church’. A combined tent meeting held in the Sydney suburb of Fairfield in January 1982 demonstrated that the Church of God identified, not with the Wesleyan-Holiness churches but with Pentecostalism. Joining with the Christian Revival Crusade at Fairfield, and the Full Gospel Church at Merrylands, they participated in the Free Gift Festival, which was said to have brought a unity among the Pentecostal ministers in an effort to reach the lost in the Western suburbs.

At the same time, it is true that many informed Church of God people remained aware of their Wesleyan roots. An ‘Account of the Life of John Wesley’ was included in the May 2001 issue of the Church of God Evangel (Oceania Region). It seems to be an older account drawn from a source without credit. Interestingly, however, it makes no mention of his doctrine of entire sanctification, belief in which was the constitutive factor in the Church of God’s original Wesleyan orientation. Harold McLeod, General Overseer of the Australian work from 1984 to 1995, when asked whether he would prefer the Church of God to be thought of as Pentecostal or Holiness, opted for Holiness. The basis for this was partly because the lifestyle standards of the Church of God were generally more demanding than those of other Pentecostal churches. However, the artificiality of the question — being placed on the spot and asked to make a choice between two options — seemed to produce a different orientation than was evident in ordinary conversation:
You see, we’re very emotional. Pentecostals, Charismatics are very emotional. We clap and sing, and dance and jump and whoop and holler, but at the end of the day, if relationship with God ... does not measure up, then it’s just vanity. God is not impressed with our emotions [but] with our relationship and to ... really ... please God [in] a life of holiness and purity.63

For Brother McLeod, holiness is a necessary aspect of being ‘Church of God’. However he self-identifies not as ‘Wesleyan’ or ‘Holiness’ but as ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘Charismatic’. For him, Church of God people in Australia are a certain type of Pentecostal, rather than a certain type of Wesleyan.

**A Church of Immigrant Communities**

The history of the Church of God in Australia is marked by a striking ethnic diversity. Members of the Church of God would emigrate from their home countries and establish congregations in their new homeland soon after arrival in Australia.64 According to Winnie McAlpin, some of the Pentecostal churches in Australia did not feel that the immigrant communities were worth their time and money, but the Church of God took on this ministry wholeheartedly. It was felt that God had given them an opening ‘to come in and minister to that sector’.65 The tent the McAlpins used for evangelistic meetings had been purchased from a Swedish couple they had met soon after their arrival in Australia. Bill preached through an interpreter to a group of twenty-five Swedish believers at a family camp in the Blue Mountains.66

V.V. Matthew, from the Church of God in India moved to Sydney after he had graduated from the Melbourne Bible Institute in November 1977.67 After obtaining a permanent residency visa, his family joined him there from India. A Romanian church grew by the arrival of family members reunited through the immigration system.68 A Romanian congregation in Melbourne, under the leadership of John Draghici, joined the New Testament Church of God on 3 April, 1982, with 40 adult members.69 Romanian congregations would later be added in both Sydney and Adelaide in 1987, and by 1992 also in Brisbane. In 1982, 60% of the Romanian immigrants who arrived in Australia were said to be from the Church of God-related, Apostolic Church of God in Romania. 90% of these were young men under twenty-five, about half of which were thought to be lost to the church upon arrival.70 By 1991 the Romanian congregation in Melbourne had grown to an attendance of 600 people.

The German Church of God opened in Adelaide in 1979. A South African Full Gospel Church joined the Villawood (NSW) Church of God in November 1982, after their pastor, A. Lamb, returned from South Africa, swelling attendance into the eighties within a few weeks. Twenty former members of his Durban congregation were living in Campbelltown (NSW) at the time. Another forty to fifty were said to be immigrating in 1982, adding to the large number of South Africans arriving in Australia at that time.71

A Lebanese pastor, Ate G. Nasrallah, who had led the Arabic-speaking Christian Centre in Sydney, was received into the membership of the Church of God, along with his family, in February 1983. Pastor Paulus Darma, an Indonesian pastor, returned to his own country, in October 1983, to seek permanent residency in Australia, after the Department of Immigration refused him a visa extension. There were estimated to have been about two hundred Indonesian Pentecostals in Sydney at that time, many of whom were members of the Church of God in that country, known as the Bethel Church of God.72
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Pastor Jorge Robolledo, after contact with Pastor Ted Wharemata, led one hundred Spanish people into the Villawood congregation in November 1983.\(^7\) A second Spanish congregation, this time in Brisbane, led by Roberto San Martin, brought one hundred and twenty-five people into the Church of God early in 1987. In 1991 they commenced building a sanctuary that would seat six hundred people. Another Spanish congregation was added in 1990, this time in Melbourne, under the leadership of Victor Reyes. A Filipino congregation in Sydney was opened in 1987 with one hundred in attendance. In December 1988, J. F. Mahaffey arrived in Australia to serve as Director of the Oceania School of Ministries. He found that the Northside Pentecostal Fellowship, where he served in pastoral ministry for a time, was made up mostly of immigrants 'from Europe, Asia, and the United States'. Only 'a few of them were born in Australia'.\(^7\) In 1990 two Fijian congregations were opened in Sydney with a total of two hundred members.

The Church of God attracted significant numbers of Aboriginal Christians into its ranks. Tent meetings were regularly held in rural New South Wales from 1979 and throughout the 1980s.\(^7\) In 1980 Aboriginal pastor Edward Hickling, serving the Church of God congregation in Bogabilla, NSW, became not only the first Aborigine to join the Church of God, but the first Australian to receive a ministerial license in that Church. The Pentecostal preacher Gordon Nagas, a Solomon Islander, was ministering among the Aboriginal people at the Tabulam and Woodendong missions near Kyogle in northern NSW. Nagas was making boomerangs to help finance the opening of an Aboriginal Bible College. He invited McAlpin to conduct evangelistic tent missions among the Aborigines and during this time Bill 'learned to throw the boomerang, to hunt, to eat Aboriginal foods such as the kangaroo, turtle, snake, goanna and parrot.'\(^7\) Here was an American evangelist from the south, lately of Tennessee and Florida, seemingly feeling more at ease with Aboriginal people than many white Australians would feel.

By 1991 the New Testament Church of God had grown from one family to a total of twenty-one churches and missions and approximately 1,300 members. The Church of God website currently includes thirty-five churches. Here is a church energetically established by contract painters, butchers, Aborigines, and immigrants. Aboriginal, White Australian, Fijian, Romanian, Spanish, and Filipino congregations seemed able, despite their cultural differences, to unite. Perhaps their unity, in spite of the divergence of their cultures arose out of a shared sense of dislocation, as well as a shared Pentecostal experience. The reason for this may be suggested by Paul Brodwin who has traced the manner in which members of the Haitian diaspora gathered into Pentecostal churches, which provided 'a form of collective defense and remoralizing' that protected against a loss of social cohesion in the face of the temptations of secularism.\(^7\) In light of this, it is noteworthy that Harold McLeod recalled that the immigrant Church of God congregations in Australia held much stricter views on things such as dress codes, use of alcohol and tobacco, and the prohibiting of 'worldly' entertainment.\(^7\) When Bill McAlpin first made contact with the Romanian Church of God congregation in Melbourne they 'interrogated' him about church practices.\(^7\) They never sat to pray, not even when giving thanks for food, a tradition perhaps drawn from Orthodox practice, where prayer is always either from a standing or kneeling position. They didn't come forward for healing prayer unless they had been
to the doctor first. They would not pray openly very often, but usually would confine this to prayer meetings. McAlpin suggested that this may have been a practice from the days of Communist restrictions when such meetings were of necessity held in secret. Women and men always sat on separate sides of the church. Many men would not wear neckties as such ‘superfluous adornment’ was seen as an expression of vanity, and women always wore scarves on their heads as an expression of proper modesty. In Brodwin’s study, the immigrant Haitians tended to reflect the more conservative features of earlier formative Pentecostalism. Immigrant Church of God communities in Australia would seem to bear out this thesis.

Conclusion
The Church of God may have had its international headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee; but its emergence in Australia would not be furthered by its American identity so much as by the diversity of its immigrant communities who came to Australia already identifying with the Church of God in their home country.

With its origins among the mountain Holiness people of southern Appalachia, the form of red-hot Holiness religion it exhibited was radical enough, but it developed into an even more radical strain of Christianity. The Pentecostal ‘blessing’ brought those who had already received the ‘second blessing’ of entire sanctification to an even greater intensity. The ‘baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire’ seemed to bring the conversion and sanctification experiences to their logical fulfillment. For a while, and in its formal doctrinal statements, the Church of God held on to this distinctiveness and sought to be both Holiness and Pentecostal. However, as time went on and the non-Wesleyan form of Pente-
Notes:

* Dr Glen O'Brien is Lecturer in History and Theology at Tabor Victoria and Kingsley College in Melbourne.


3. Though there are many denominations that use the name “Church of God”, all references to the “Church of God” in this article, unless otherwise noted, are to the Church of God with its headquarters in Cleveland, Tennessee.


5. A brief biographical account of this remarkable itinerant missionary can be found in Charles W. Conn, ‘J. H. Ingram: Missionary Extraordinaire,’ in *Into All the World: Church of God World Missions Anniversary Album* (Christopher C. Moree ed.; Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1984) 36-7. Those who met Ingram in 1945 include Robert Taylor and his wife, pastors of the Emmanuel Mission in Sydney, which has maintained friendly contact with the Church of God. See Bill and Winnie McAlpin, *Where God’s Finger Points: The Church of God “Down Under,”* typewritten manuscript copied at the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Cleveland Tennessee, 3. The only name on this document is B. M. McAlpin, but it is clear from reading the text that it is also his wife Winnie’s work.


11. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, 582.


15. The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (the word ‘Pentecostal’ was dropped later) and the Pilgrim Holiness Church (later to merge with the Wesleyan Methodists) were the two largest groups to actively reject the ‘tongues’ version of holiness. Pentecostal denominations that report their membership to the National Council of Churches (USA), number their membership at around 10 million (these include both two-stage and three-stage Pentecostals). On the other hand, denominations that are Holiness, but not Pentecostal, number only 1.5 million. See Conkin, 271. These figures, of course, do not include the very large number of independent Holiness, Pentecostal, and Pente-
costal-Holiness congregations who do not submit statistics to the National Council of Churches.


17. A certain ‘Sister Rahley’ received a vision in which she felt she was able to identify the source of Durham’s theology. The demons were discussing what to do, now that the Holy Spirit had come to the world again. But when at last a very distorted demon said, “I have it, give them a baptism on an unsanctified life,” all the demons clapped and roared in approval.’ *Ibid.*, 25.

18. The term ‘Baptistic’ is used to distinguish this later development from the original ‘Wesleyan’ position.


23. In 1933, Tomlinson’s leadership was overthrown and the group became known as Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). Subsequent splinter groups and heirs apparent have resulted in a confusing number of groups all claiming to be the torchbearers of the original movement. These include Church of God (Prophecy), Church of God (Huntsville, Alabama), and Church of God, Inc. (Original). See International Offices of the Church of God of Prophecy, *An Introduction to the Church of God of Prophecy* (Cleveland, Tennessee, 1999).


27. ‘Declaration of Faith (Decisions passed at our recent Assembly)’ *The Church of God Evangel* 39:29 (25 September 1948) 1, illustration in *Church of God History and Heritage* 2.1 (Summer 1998) 6.


29. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, xxv.


33. Wade H. Horton, ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, There is Liberty’ sermon delivered at the 56th General Assembly and recorded on audio tape, in *Ibid.*, 158.

34. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army*, pp. 364-5.


44. Ibid, 285-90.

45. Ibid, 287. The Good News Hall was considered heretical by some other Pentecostals of the time because of its non-Trinitarian views. The Godhead was believed to be made up of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, Jesus being inferior to the Father. Nonetheless, some Pentecostal historians continue to regard movements such as Lancaster's as authentic pioneers of the movement. Chant, *Heart of Fire*, 51-3.

46. Ibid, 174.


51. Ibid, 103.

52. Chant, *Heart of Fire*, 188. He attributes the pioneering of the Church of God wrongly to ‘Cole Schwartd’ rather than to ‘Carl Swartw.’

53. Ibid, 188. The other American group he discusses in this chapter is the United Pentecostal Church, which broke away from the other American Assemblies of God in 1916 after rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. See Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 32.

54. Interview with Bob and Janette Mattke, Orchard Park, New York, 7 July 2001. It is also possible of course that Roberts’ Americanism, and not merely his Pentecostalism, may have been behind such reactions. Billy Graham’s 1959 Australian Crusade also drew forth anti-American rhetoric from some church leaders. I Object...to Billy Graham was a pamphlet produced by Howard Guinness, rector of St. Michael’s Church of England in Vaucluse, NSW, as a defense of Graham, with cartoons drawn by Benier. One of the objections it sought to answer was ‘I object to my religion being imported from America’. Howard Guinness, *I Object...to Billy Graham*, n.d., c. 1959.

62. For example, no contemporary account would be likely to include the statement, 'John Wesley was a gay and manly youth...'. ‘An Account of the Life of John Wesley’, Church of God Evangel Oceana Region (May 2001) 15-16.
64. This ‘reverse missionary’ pattern, which saw immigrant groups evangelise the countries they entered, was a global pattern in the Church of the God as described in Conn, Like a Mighty Army, 503-4.
67. This school is now known as the Bible College of Victoria.