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Barry Chant

THE SPIRIT OF PENTECOST
Origins and Development of the Pentecostal movement in
Australia, 1870-1939

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Division of Humanities
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Biblical quotations are from the translation relevant to the context — either from the Authorised Version of the Bible (1611) or from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Note that in writing this thesis, I have drawn on some of the material in my book *Heart of Fire* (1984), but in every case the material has been reworked, revised and in some cases modified.

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GRACE

Thank *God* this now too tedious task is done
(although the making of this thesis has been fun).
Thanks, too, to those who cheered me as I ran
or offered (in due time) a helping hand —

Vanessa, for her constant, loyal trust
that this project would not perish in the dust;
my family who, patiently resigned
to my obsession, were unceasing kind;

directors and associates who smiled
when other pressing work was slyly filed;
Professor Roe who never jeopardised
my academic goals by compromise;

my many faithful friends for their concern
and *Stuart* who encouraged and discerned.
But chiefly to those early *pioneers*
who freely shared their laughter, love and tears.

Their trailblazing lives in word and deed
are captured here in print for Time to read.
In them the Spirit burned with holy flame.
Their world — and ours — will never be the same.

INVOCATION

And now, adorable Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, descend upon all the Churches, renew the Pentecost in this our age, and baptize Thy people generally — O, baptize them yet again with tongues of fire! Crown this nineteenth century with a revival of ‘pure and undefiled religion’ greater than that of the last century, greater than that of the first, greater than any ‘demonstration of the Spirit’ ever yet vouchsafed to men!

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

(The final paragraph from William Arthur’s, *The Tongue of Fire*, 1859, together with the biblical record of Pentecost from Acts chapter two.)

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SUMMARY

In this thesis I hope to show that Australian Pentecostalism exhibits distinctive elements which do not fit accepted historical and sociological theories. Neither the deprivation theories of the 1970's and 80's nor more recent sociological and psychological explanations are adequate to explain its development.

I will also argue that the movement's major contribution to Australian Christianity lies in its rekindling of an openness to experiential religion, specifically through the baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues, and that this has been both a strength and a weakness. Then it will be seen that the movement grew from three major nineteenth century tributaries. These were the Wesleyan movement with its emphasis on entire sanctification; the ministry of John Alexander Dowie with its focus on divine healing and separation from the world; and the Evangelical movement, with its fervent and growing desire for revival.

The early development will then be examined. This was mainly attributable to Sarah Jane Lancaster who was the outstanding pioneer of Australian Pentecostalism. She was responsible for the establishing of many local churches, she engaged in extensive welfare work during the Depression and there was a strong emphasis on experiencing the presence and power of God, especially through 'Tarry meetings.' Although certain unorthodox beliefs marginalised her from the Evangelical mainstream, her life and ministry were highly influential in the early development of the movement.

This study will then trace the origins and development of three extant Pentecostal denominations — the Assemblies of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and the Apostolic Church. It will be seen that while local leadership was indigenous, there was a strong multicultural element in these groups. Disputes over doctrine reflected the dilemma which arose when experience-based approaches to Scripture proved to be in conflict.

Dedicated and determined efforts to take the gospel to the Aborigines will be considered. In spite of limited resources and the fragile state of the early movement, there was ongoing mission among the indigenous people.

Three aspects of the dynamics of the movement will then be discussed. First, the role of women. The Spirit was seen to be bestowed on both men and women equally and so, in the initial three decades, women had a unique freedom to preach, administer the sacraments and lead churches. Over half of the first thirty Pentecostal congregations were founded by women.

Secondly, for all its emphasis on the spontaneous work of the Spirit, Pentecostal preaching was not confined to this. An analysis of extant sermons reveals a range of topics and a primary focus on the Second Coming, Christian living and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, it was their experience of God through the Holy Spirit that motivated the early Pentecostals. Historically, it will be seen that the movement's distinctiveness has rested in its enshrining of the practice of glossolalia in an experiential encounter with God.

Note: The phrase 'spirit of Pentecost' is used in this thesis both in reference to the Holy Spirit and to the ethos and spirit of the movement. The context will usually indicate the intended meaning.

DEFINITIONS

It is necessary to define the terms used in this thesis. While there are plainly differing understandings of some of these expressions, in this thesis I shall use them with the meanings given below, that is, in the way Pentecostals use them, without necessarily either endorsing, questioning or rejecting their validity.

Reference to this list should clarify the relevant meanings as they occur.¹

Anointing with oil: The practice of applying a small quantity of olive oil to a sick person (usually by rubbing a moistened finger on the forehead) as an accompaniment to prayer for healing. The oil is seen as symbolic of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. See James 5:14-15.²

Apostle: In the New Testament, a missionary who exercised leadership over a group of churches, usually which he himself had established, and whose ministry was often accompanied by ‘signs, wonders and miracles’ (2 Corinthians 12:12, NIV). While Pentecostals at large have usually been reluctant to give anyone the *title* of ‘apostle,’ the existence of contemporary apostles is widely accepted. The Apostolic Church is one group which does formally recognise them.

¹ Most of the definitions are my own, based on some 40 years of professional and pastoral ministry in Pentecostal churches and Bible Colleges. For further details see my *Spiritual Gifts: a Reappraisal*, Miranda: Tabor, 1993. Useful Pentecostal sources for expanded definitions include S.Burgess, G.McGee, and P.Alexander, (eds), *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* Grand Rapids: Regency, 1988; Pentecostal classics such as C.Brumbach, *What Meaneth This?* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1947; Donald Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.; Donald Gee, *Spiritual Gifts in the Work of the Ministry Today* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1963; H.Horton, *The Gifts of the Spirit* Springfield: *Gospel Publishing House, (1934), 1975*; Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1937. For comparative studies, the following non-Pentecostal works will be found useful — W.A.Elwell (ed), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984; E.Harrison, G.Bromiley and C.Henry (eds), *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985; G.Hawthorne, R.Martin and D.Reid(eds) *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

² James 5:14-15 — Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven (NIV).

Assembly: Although this term is sometimes used for a large gathering such as a denominational conference, it commonly refers to a local congregation of Christian believers.

Baptism: In Pentecostal churches, an act of Christian initiation in which a new Christian believer is immersed in water by another Christian believer (usually, but not necessarily, a pastor). Baptismal services may take place in a natural location such as a river or a stream or a beach, but are usually conducted in baptismal tanks in buildings. Normally, the believer is asked prior to baptism to make a confession of faith of Christ. The ‘candidate’ is then leaned backwards until completely immersed and then lifted up out of the water. Sometimes, the ‘candidate’ may kneel in the water and the minister will gently push the head under the water.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit: An experience separate from conversion in which a Christian believer prays to God to be overwhelmed by or filled with the Spirit of God and consequently speaks in tongues. Sometimes, this is the result of hands being laid on the person’s head or shoulders by another believer, but this is not essential. Normally, the persons concerned kneel or sit and spend some time in earnest prayer, usually aloud, asking God for the Spirit to come. This may be an emotional experience, but it is not necessarily so. See Acts 2:4; 19:6.³

Church: Either a local congregation of Christian believers or the Church universal. Some Pentecostals use it of the denomination (eg Apostolic Church) but others avoid this (eg Assemblies of God).

Deliverance: In its broadest sense, freedom from any work of sin or of Satan; in a more narrow sense, being set free from demons, usually by having them cast out through exorcism. In Pentecostal churches, this is done by speaking to the demons and ordering them to depart in the name of Jesus. While it is hoped this will happen speedily, sometimes the process may take several hours.

³ Acts 2:4 — ‘All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them’ (NIV); Acts 19:6 — ‘When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied’ (NIV).

Demonisation: The negative or debilitating effect on a person's life caused by one or more evil spirits. In Pentecostal understanding, this need not mean total demon possession nor is it necessarily to be equated with mental disturbance. The effects may be spiritual (antagonism to the gospel), emotional (bizarre behaviour), mental (psychoses) or physical (unusual bodily manifestations or bodily sickness).⁴

Denomination: A name by which a recognised branch of the Christian Church is 'denominated' or recognised, and hence, the branch itself.

Divine Healing: Healing from mental, emotional or physical infirmities by a direct answer to prayer, usually administered by laying on of hands, and less often, by anointing with oil.⁵

Evangelist: One whose primary work is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to seek converts for Christianity and indirectly, for the church or denomination to which the evangelist belongs. Some people are formally recognised as evangelists, but such recognition is not essential.

Glossolalia: Speaking in tongues (Greek: γλῶσσολαλία = 'tongue'; ἑγώ λαλοῦμαι = 'I speak'), which is the ability to pray in a language which has never been learned. This language is seen as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, tongue-speech is understood as xenolalia, that is, the ability to speak actual foreign languages. More commonly, it is seen as a non-rational expression of worship, framed in words which originate in the human spirit, rather than the human mind (1 Corinthians 14:14f).⁶ Although commonly thought to be ecstatic

⁴ See the four Gospels and Acts for numerous examples of demonisation eg Matthew 8:16; 8:28ff; 12:22ff; Mark 9:14ff; Luke 10:18; Acts 16:16ff; 19:11.

⁵ See James 5:14-16 — 'Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed' (NIV); Mark 16:17-18 — 'And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well' (NIV).

⁶ 1 Cor 14:14-15 — 'For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind' (NIV).

utterance, it is usually not so. Glossolalia is more often similar in style to ordinary speech.

Interpretation of tongues: A statement in the known language of the people concerned explaining the meaning of what has been spoken in tongues. It is not necessarily a direct translation. Neither the tongue-speaker nor the interpreter has any natural understanding or knowledge of the language concerned. They both speak in faith, trusting the Holy Spirit for the right words. Like a prophecy, an interpretation is normally encouraging and motivational, but may sound a word of rebuke.⁷

Pastor: One whose primary task is to care for and shepherd a local congregation of Christian believers, through leadership, preaching, teaching, counselling and general pastoral care.

Pentecostalism: Originally a Christian sect, but now a recognised group of Christian denominations whose major identifying mark is the practice of glossolalia..

Premillennialism: The belief that Christ will return to the earth in power and glory to execute judgement on the ungodly, to glorify believers and to usher in a golden age of one thousand years of peace and prosperity (the millennium).

Pre-tribulationism: The belief that the Christian age will end with a time of intense tribulation, usually thought to be of seven years' duration, during which the wrath of God will be poured out on the earth, followed by the return of Christ. Prior to the Tribulation, true Christian believers will be taken up from the earth to meet Christ in order to return with Him at His coming. This is known as the Rapture.

Prophecy: A spontaneous utterance, usually unpremeditated, given through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to encourage, build up, motivate and direct the

⁷ Compare 1 Cor 14:27-28 — 'If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God' (NIV).

people of God. Prophecies do not necessarily foretell the future, although there may be elements of prediction or warning.⁸

Prophet: One who regularly exercises gifts of prophecy. In some cases, prophets are recognised formally, but this is not common.

Rapture: The taking up of God's people into the air to meet Christ some time, usually 3½ or seven years, prior to the Second Coming.

Revival: A heightening of Christian experience, a reawakening of Christian commitment, an increased intensity of faith, a rise in enthusiasm, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a growing awareness of sin and the need for repentance. Revivals also include significant additions to local churches through conversion and are often marked by emotional extravagance.

Second Coming: The return of Christ to the earth at the end of the Age in great power and glory to establish His everlasting kingdom.

Sect: A voluntary religious group adhering to a particular form of religious faith. A sect generally rejects traditional expressions of orthodoxy and claims to be the true expression of the faith, with a disposition to exclusivity, a sense of elitism and beliefs and behaviours that challenge the norms of society.⁹

Tarry meeting: A meeting called for the specific purpose of spending extended times in praying to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Such a meeting might last for several hours or even days.

Tithing: The practice of giving one tenth of one's income to God, usually through the weekly Sunday offerings in a local congregation.

Tribulation: A period of intense trouble, usually thought to be of seven years' duration, commonly believed to precede the Second Coming.

⁸ See 1 Cor 14:1-3 — 'Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort' (NIV); 1 Cor 14:24-25 — 'But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"' (NIV).

⁹ C.Rosado, 'Lessons from Waco,' *Ministry* July 1993, p.6; Wilson, *Religious Sects* London: World University Library, 1970, pp.22ff.

Trinity: The Christian God Who is One Person in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, ‘one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance’ (‘The Creed of St Athanasius’).

Vision: A mental picture inspired by God and containing a divine message, usually seen as resulting from the fullness of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

¹⁰ See Joel 2:28 — ‘And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions’ (NIV).

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA = Australian Aborigines' Advocate	NIV = New International Version of the Bible
ADB = Australian Dictionary of Biography	PT = Pentecostal Times
ADEB = Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography	RE = Revival Echoes
AE = Australian Evangel	RTS = Richmond Temple Souvenir
AFM = Apostolic Faith Mission	SC = Southern Cross
AH = Apostolic Herald	SE = Southern Evangel
AN = Apostolic News	SMH = Sydney Morning Herald
AO = Alpine Observer	TLS = Times Literary Supplement
APS = Australasian Pentecostal Studies	WC = Wesleyan Chronicle
AV = Authorised Version of the Bible	
BCM = South Australian Bible Christian Magazine	
BSC = Bible Standard Call	
CE = Cessnock Eagle	
CM = Courier Mail	
'Cooee' = Canvas Cathedral Cooee	
CP = Cairns Post	
EG = Echoes of Grace	
FGE = Elim Foursquare Gospel Express	
GC = Gathering Call	
GN = Good News	
HG = Herald of Grace	
JPT = Journal of Pentecostal Theology	
JRH = Journal of Religious History	
KQ = Keswick Quarterly	
LH = Leaves of Healing	
MC = Maryborough Chronicle	
ND = New Day	