

# **WATERS TO SWIM IN: ADELAIDE'S FIRST THREE PENTECOSTAL CONGREGATIONS — 1910-1935**

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by Barry Chant

*In many ways, the history of the early Pentecostal work in Adelaide, South Australia, offers a microcosm of the early movement across the country. In this article Barry Chant offers some insights into the nature and development of that work.*

Like Ezekiel, pioneers of Australian Pentecostalism ventured into flowing waters that initially seemed shallow and safe. Even when they were waist-deep, the stream appeared tranquil enough. But as they waded further, they soon found themselves confronted by 'waters to swim in' (Ezekiel 47:5). The result was some splashing and floundering, but at the same time, a sense of exultation, as they trusted themselves to the flow of 'the river of life.'

Three Pentecostal congregations in Adelaide, South Australia, provide interesting models of early Pentecostalism.

## **ORIGINS AND EMPHASES**

The origins of the Pentecostal movement in Adelaide are somewhat misty. Thomas James Ames (1858-1928) was the leader of the first Pentecostal assembly there.<sup>1</sup> His ABC Printing Works in Pirie Street were both an outlet for the biblical printed page and a venue for mid-week Bible studies.<sup>2</sup>

How Ames became a Pentecostal and how he became associated with Good News Hall remains a mystery, although it was apparently a process of 'some years.'<sup>3</sup> Certainly, from the early days, his name is associated with Pentecostal ministry.

Around 1909, he began to publish a 12-page periodical called *Pentecostal Times*.<sup>4</sup> This was basically a collection of articles from overseas Pentecostal magazines, with one or two testimonies from local people and a couple of pieces by Ames

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<sup>1</sup> *Good News* 17:5 May 1926, p.18.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Commercial and Trade Directory Adelaide*: Morris, Hayter and Barry, 1882, p.12; *Sands and McDougall Trade Directories Adelaide*: 1911-1929.

<sup>3</sup> *Pentecostal Times* Adelaide, n.d. #1, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Only two issues survive in the Mortlock Library, Adelaide, where they are dated '1907?' This date seems too early, as there is an extract in the first issue from the *Latter Rain Evangel*, a journal first published in Chicago, Ill, in October 1908 and in the second issue from *Confidence*, an English magazine which to my knowledge also began in 1908. There is also a testimony from the *Apostolic Faith*. This would suggest a date of 1909 at the earliest for *Pentecostal Times*.

himself. About the same time, meetings were held on Tuesday nights in the Willard Hall vestry in Wakefield Street, and on Saturdays in the Congregational Rooms at Hindmarsh Square. From around 1910 to 1926, there are published notices of him leading the Elim Assembly in Adelaide.<sup>5</sup>

Numbers were not large, but Ames was not dissatisfied—

We are glad to say that our little 'Elim Assembly' meetings continue to show marked concern for Apostolic blessings. There is manifested an earnest desire and fervency of spirit for the things of God, in His way. We are not concerned as to how the Lord carries on His work. But we have a right to expect that 'signs shall follow them that believe.'<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, they were trusting that their unity in the Spirit and their 'unwavering faith' would so glorify God that 'signs' and 'gifts' would occur. In fact, God's healing power was frequently being reported.

In 1924, Ames visited Tasmania and preached there. One who heard him reported, 'The Lord was with us in the power of the Spirit, and we were soon all bathed in its gentle, cooling streams.'<sup>7</sup>

Melbourne's Pentecostal patriarch Sarah Jane Lancaster visited the city and preached in the open air, near the Post Office and the Central Market, probably around 1910. A man whose name is given only as Robert H— also 'carried the news to Adelaide' of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> By the early 1920s, a number of lay people including Fanny Collie, A.W.Allen, Robert Davis and Annie Chamberlain were conducting Pentecostal meetings in homes or halls in the city or inner suburbs. Ultimately, in 1922, Sunday services were held in the Leavitt Hall, Wakefield St, Adelaide, where about 150 people attended.<sup>9</sup>

The distinctive feature was an emphasis on being baptised in the Holy Spirit with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues.<sup>10</sup> In order to receive this blessing, it was usually thought necessary to 'tarry' in prayer for extended periods.<sup>11</sup> So regular 'tarry meetings' were conducted in which people would cry out to God for hours at a time to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> The results were often, although not always, emotional. Gustav Jansen, a young man, who was later to become a faithful leader in Adelaide, was led to Christ by a Pentecostal friend. Warned against Pentecostal excesses by various ministers of religion, he was

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<sup>5</sup> eg PT #1 and #2, n.d., pp.8,12; GN 9:1 February 1823, p.23; 17:10 October 1926, p.19.

<sup>6</sup> PT, #2, p.8.

<sup>7</sup> GN 15:6 June 1924, p.9.

<sup>8</sup> GN 17:10 October 1926, p.11.

<sup>9</sup> L.Priest, interview, 17 September 1991; GN 14:10, November 1923, p.18.

<sup>10</sup> In the New Testament, speaking in tongues, otherwise known as glossolalia, is the ability to pray in a language or languages unknown to the speaker by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:4ff). Pentecostals believe the same ability is imparted to them.

<sup>11</sup> Because Jesus told His disciples to 'tarry' for the Spirit's power (Luke 24:49), it was still thought necessary to do the same. More recent Pentecostal thought clearly understands Jesus' injunction to be applicable only to the historic event of Pentecost.

<sup>12</sup> GN, February 1923, Vol 9, No 1, pp 21,23.

uncertain about becoming too involved. Then he read a copy of *Good News* from Good News Hall in Melbourne and decided to attend a convention there.

There came into my hands a paper ... and from it I ascertained that ... people ... would congregate there and wait upon the Lord to receive this baptism in the Holy Spirit ... Next day I decided to tarry with them, my heart longing for more of God. Well, dear reader, whilst praising God some power came over me, and I went down on the floor. I am of a rather reserved nature, often being nick-named 'sober-sides'. But here I was on the floor and a feeling of joy and merriment came over me, and I kicked my legs about in a state of ecstasy ... Here was I like a drunken man, glorifying and praising God ... and with that there broke forth from my lips unknown words to me ... and with it such a love came into my heart which I had never known before ... I said to my dear mother, 'Mother, I now know what it is to adore and praise our Saviour through all eternity and never tire of it.'<sup>13</sup>

Usually the experience was transforming. Another lass, who had formerly been an agnostic, recorded —

Here I can quote from my diary, July 24th, 1929: About 3 p.m. the most wonderful thing happened ... I spoke in tongues for about two hours. When you are baptised in the Holy Ghost GOD touches you, and ever after you know that God lives, and that He has touched you.<sup>14</sup>

Her brother, who also received the Spirit, testified to a similar transformation - 'When the Holy Spirit comes into one's life it is that person's desire to live day by day a life of testimony for Jesus Christ.'<sup>15</sup>

Immersion in the Spirit was exhilarating, but these were deep and hazardous waters. This new-found openness to the gifts of the Holy Spirit was not without its dangers. Not only was there a stress on speaking in tongues, but also on gifts such as prophesying, healing and deliverance from demon spirits. In 1923, one of the members somehow acquired from America some copies of a series of 'Yellow Books' and began to promote them in the assembly. These were distributed free by the publishers to anyone who wanted them. They were written in the first person as if spoken by the Lord Himself, and presented under the sub-heading 'The Angel Message.'

The Yellow Books were paperbacks with yellow covers, with the following text on the back cover: 'Tho ye have lien among the pots, YET SHALL YE BE AS the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with YELLOW GOLD' - Ps. 68-13.' The introduction reads, in part,

'You who would learn, hearken to the good word of your God in this book. In these messages that I have written Myself, you will find food for your souls ... Harden not your hearts against the teachings that are herein written, because they come from the hand of a Great Writer ... In these words from the holy Spirit, you will find much light ... Receive these things gladly, your hearts being knit together in Me, Who Am Jesus Christ ...'

The messages were reputedly dictated through prophetic utterances by a lady named Bethany, and recorded and published. At times there seems to be some

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<sup>13</sup> G.H.J (Gus Jansen) in *Apostolic News*, Vol 3, No 2, December 1st, 1931.

<sup>14</sup> M.N.F. (Marjorie Fabian) AN 3:2, December 1st, 1931.

<sup>15</sup> N.F. (Norm Fabian) in AN 3:3, March 1st, 1932.

confusion between who is actually speaking, as in the following sentence, 'A dear brother came to Me one day ... and this is the story he told Me ...'<sup>16</sup>. The overall emphasis is on the centrality and efficacy of the Cross of Christ. Freedom from condemnation and victory over the devil and all his works, including guilt, sin, sickness, disease and possibly even death are stressed over and again. Clearly, those who accepted the books also accepted the validity of the mode — namely that these were indeed messages from Christ.

Those who opposed them seem to have misunderstood what they were about. Robert Anderson, for example, claims the books promoted the concept of Ultimate Reconciliation and that they were based on messages in tongues which were interpreted.<sup>17</sup> Neither of these assertions is true. Others believed that they presented an extreme view of exorcism, teaching that demons could be vomited out or evicted through the afflicted person making animal-like noises.<sup>18</sup> There is no evidence of this belief in any of the books I have seen. Certainly, there was strong feeling about them. In at least one case, copies were burned.<sup>19</sup> Seventy years later, one lady who had copies in her possession, declined to make them available to me, apparently apprehensive that I would be critical of them.

On the other hand, several families were enthusiastic about what their adversaries called the 'Yellow Book heresy'. Those who accepted the books began to meet separately at Norwood, an eastern suburb, in the home of O.Chenoweth, a hairdresser and tobacconist.<sup>20</sup> Eventually, these meetings appear to have dwindled and closed.

About this time, Hines Retchford, a strong Calvinist, and J.E. ('Grandpa') Rieschick emerged as acknowledged leaders of the original congregation.<sup>21</sup> Within twelve months, Retchford's Calvinism<sup>22</sup> became too much for some of the

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<sup>16</sup> eg *In School With the Holy Ghost, The Angel Message*, Bethany Series No.5, Section III, Part III, Chicago, Ill: Bethany Publishing House, March 12, 1913, pp.80,187. For further comment see my *Prophecies in Print: The Yellow Books and Early Pentecostal Ministry*, an unpublished paper, 14 May 1993.

<sup>17</sup> R.Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, p.159.

<sup>18</sup> N.Priest, interview; L.Priest, interview, 17 September 1991; D.Reekie, interview, 14 August, 1991. N.Priest claimed that a 'Mrs Stephens' introduced the Yellow Books. I have found no record of this. However, hand-written names on copies of books in my possession do include a 'J.Stevenson'. Other such names are Jean Alexander, Florrie Alexander, May Hamlyn, W.J.Reeves and M.Wheaton.

<sup>19</sup> D.Reekie, interview, 14 August 1991.

<sup>20</sup> L.Priest, personal interview, 17 September 1991; D.Reekie, personal interview, 14 August, 1991.

<sup>21</sup> B.Chant, *Heart of Fire* Unley Park, S.A.: Tabor, 1984, p. 135. Unacknowledged information is from this source.

<sup>22</sup> Chant, 1984, 135; Joshua McCabe, personal interview, 18 September 1990. There was clearly an ongoing problem with this issue. Six years later, the assembly again found it necessary to take a stand on the issue. See AN 1:4, June 1st 1930 - 'Because of doctrinal differences, a general meeting was called when the following motion was carried: -- That the Apostolic Mission Assembly do not, as a body, accept the doctrine that man has no choice or will in resisting the Holy Spirit and that for the sake of the work such a doctrine must not be preached in any of its meetings.'

people and a meeting was held at the Chamberlain home on 20 August, 1924, to establish a new group. About ten people were present. It was resolved to begin separate meetings in the Builders' Hall in Waymouth Street, Adelaide, under the name Foursquare Gospel Mission. Norman Priest, who was to become, just over two years later, Annie Chamberlain's son-in-law, was appointed secretary and temporary chairman of the new church. Priest had originally been drawn to the Pentecostal movement when he had witnessed an open air service in the Botanical Gardens, where the Pentecostals added their voices to the many who mounted their soap boxes on Sunday afternoons.<sup>23</sup>

In 1925, the breakaway group made contact with the newly-formed Pentecostal Church of Australia, in Melbourne, and in the following year, a formal link was forged. J.M.Roberts of Melbourne became the new pastor; A.Marks, a retired Congregational minister<sup>24</sup>, and Norman Priest were chosen as elders and five deacons were appointed — R.Davis, H.Weber, A.Priest, H.Ridd and C.Warren. By 1929, the numbers had increased significantly, and Sunday services were transferred to the Rechabite Chambers in Victoria Square, Adelaide, where the Pentecostal Church continued for the next twenty years.

Meanwhile, the original congregation, now weakened by the departure of two groups of people, continued to meet at Leavitt Hall, using the name Apostolic Mission. Retchford's Calvinism continued to be a pressure point<sup>25</sup> but there was no further division. Within two years, up to 250 people were assembling together. Special public meetings were held in the Protestant Hall that Wigglesworth had used. Visits from South Africans Isaac Hugo and Frederick Van Eyk stimulated the work. The church continued in fellowship with Good News Hall, Melbourne.

An emphasis on prophecy was soon to emerge for a second time, and again, from overseas, now through the Apostolic Church. There was an accompanying re-emphasis of divine healing. The Apostolic Church's origins lie in Wales, where it arose indirectly from the Revival of 1904-1905.<sup>26</sup> In 1932, William Cathcart (1893-1988) of Scotland arrived in South Australia, and began Apostolic meetings. Interestingly, this was at the invitation of Hines Retchford and J.E.Rieschick, both apparently now dissatisfied with the existing church. Only ten people attended the first meeting, but numbers quickly grew.

Cathcart had spent a year in Perth, WA, and was supported from there initially until there was sufficient income in Adelaide. He was a tall man, with a military background. He had returned from the first World War in a shell-shocked condition and had been converted and healed in an Apostolic meeting in Glasgow.<sup>27</sup> He was recognised most for his thorough Bible teaching. The major emphasis of the Apostolic Church was on the importance and ministry of apostles and prophets.

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<sup>23</sup> N.Priest, interview; L.Priest, interview, 17 September 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Marks and his wife received the Spirit through Fanny Collie's meetings, D.Reekie interview, 14 August, 1991.

<sup>25</sup> AN 11:4, June 1st, 1930, p.2.

<sup>26</sup> T.N.Turnbull, *What God Hath Wrought*, Bradford: Puritan Press, 1959, p.20

<sup>27</sup> J.McCabe, interview, 18 September, 1990.

Soon people were flocking to hear this new teaching. A series of crowded Sunday night services was held in the Adelaide Town Hall and as a result a church was born. People from both the existing Pentecostal congregations joined the Apostolic church — including Hines Retchford, J.E.Rieschick, Norman Priest and Robert Davis. Naturally, this was not well received by these churches. In 1934, the Pentecostal Church issued leaflets entitled respectively, 'The Blasphemous Lie of the "Set Prophet"' and 'The Apostolic Church Error.'<sup>28</sup>

A garage in Pulteney Street, once used by the Bible Christians as a chapel, was purchased, renovated, renamed Zion Temple and opened on 30 October, 1932. It could accommodate about 200 people and was regularly filled.<sup>29</sup> Cathcart's teaching continued to attract people hungry for knowledge of the Word of God.

Soon Cathcart left Adelaide for Melbourne, Victoria, and leadership was placed in the hands of another Scotsman, Joshua McCabe (1903— ), who had been in Perth, WA, for the previous twelve months as a recognised prophet. McCabe was a warm-hearted man who was well-liked by the people. The church continued to do well under his leadership.

In 1933, John Hewitt (1900-1962), a huge Welshman, came to Adelaide. A member of the Apostolic Church in England, he had come to Australia several years previously and ministered in Baptist and Pentecostal churches before rejoining the Apostolic movement. Campaign rallies were held in the Adelaide Town Hall and Hewitt preached there to capacity crowds of 2,000 or so. There were some 500 conversions. Two baptismal services were held in the Town Hall. 39 people were immersed. There were also convincing cases of divine healing. According to the Apostolic Church magazine, cripples walked, the blind received their sight, the deaf heard, cancers disappeared and bedfast people got up well!<sup>30</sup> After the special meetings, growth continued with new people being added almost daily to the church.

In 1936, the Draper Memorial Church building in Gilbert Street, was purchased and named Zion Tabernacle. It became the home of Apostolics for over thirty years.<sup>31</sup> Overall, however, the numbers were still relatively small. Over 200 people attended the first Sunday morning worship service in the new Tabernacle. There were probably, at this time, about the same number at the Pentecostal Church and between 50 and 100 regular attenders at the Apostolic Mission.<sup>32</sup> There were also a handful of people in branch assemblies in the suburbs and the country areas.<sup>33</sup> By contrast, in the 1933 Census, 164,531 South Australians

<sup>28</sup> *Australian Evangel*, 7:3, June 1934, p.9.

<sup>29</sup> M.Hurst, interview, 14 August 1991; J.McCabe, interview, 18 September 1990; Philip Lovell, interview, 6 September 1991.

<sup>30</sup> *Revival Echoes*, 1:2, pp.24,30.

<sup>31</sup> *Apostolic Herald*, October 1936, p.88f. The Draper Memorial Church was named after the renowned Methodist pastor and evangelist Daniel Draper. See A.D.Hunt, *This Side of Heaven*, Adelaide: Lutheran, 1984, p.40.

<sup>32</sup> AE 18:3, July 1935, p.3. This report of a crowd at the Rechabite Chambers indicates a maximum attendance of about 300 at a special gathering, given the size of the building. See also the Apostolic Mission record book, Nov 1929 - July 1940; photo copy in my possession.

<sup>33</sup> eg Kadina, Hope Forest, Strathalbyn. See AE 8:2, May 1935, p.9; RE 2:11, April, 1935, p.210f.



called themselves Anglicans, 127, 978 claimed to be Methodists and there were 19,081 Baptists. Had the Pentecostals examined the Census figures, they might have been encouraged, however, to note that only 284 were recorded as Christian Brethren.<sup>34</sup>

There have been many attempts to explain glossolalia and prophesying in psychological or sociological terms<sup>35</sup> There is not scope in a paper of this length to pursue this discussion. What is important is the extent to which these Pentecostal pioneers themselves believed that their experience of spiritual gifts was genuine. On tongues, they were all agreed. When it came to prophecies and doctrines, however, they clearly felt the need to evaluate any message, no matter what authority it claimed. They did not always make the right judgement — but they did show a promising and healthy awareness of the need to attempt it. The waters were deep, but that was no excuse for drowning!

The fragmentation of Pentecostalism has often been noted.<sup>36</sup> The reasons for it may not be as irresponsible as they appear.

### **THE ROLE OF WOMEN**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was unusual for women to be pastors or ministers. In a memorial list of 297 ministers and probationers in Victorian Methodism published in 1935, there is not one woman.<sup>37</sup> There is no evidence that the situation was different in other denominations, with the exception of the Salvation Army, where women officers were active from its inception. Sabine Willis points out that in the nineteenth century, 'the Church, with its moral and social code, supported and promoted a strictly limited role for women.'<sup>38</sup>

In simple terms, ordination for women in both Catholic and Protestant churches, was basically unheard of.

Among Catholics, there were some opportunities for women to exercise highly effective and influential ministries — Mary MacKillop and Vincent Whitty being well-known examples. For Protestants, there were some non-clerical roles of distinction which women could fulfil, especially in parachurch or lay movements such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, where people like Mary Clement Leavitt and Frances Willard were internationally recognised.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Wray Vamplew (ed) *Australians: Historical Statistics* Sydney: Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987, p.424.

<sup>35</sup> eg see Anderson, 1979, pp.223ff. On the possibility that Pentecostals might actually have been speaking in foreign languages, Anderson dismisses the idea with the astonishing claim that such a thing is obviously impossible. Hence, there must be another explanation! (p.19). As C.S.Lewis has clearly pointed out in another context, such an argument is only valid if you can first demonstrate that xenolalia IS impossible; and this Anderson fails to do.

<sup>36</sup> eg Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects* London: World University Library, 1970, p.78; Anderson, 1979, p.153; W.Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988, p.29.

<sup>37</sup> C.I.Benson, *A Century of Victorian Methodism* Melbourne: Spectator, 1935, pp.505ff.

<sup>38</sup> Sabine Willis (ed), *Women, Faith and Fetes* Melbourne: Dove Communications, 1977, p.12.

<sup>39</sup> A.Hyslop, 'Christian and Social Reform' in S. Willis, 1977, p.43ff.

In the newer nineteenth century movements, women were openly accepted in leadership. Some were founded and led by women like Ellen White (Seventh Day Adventism — 1846), Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science — 1876) and Helena Blavatsky (Theosophy — 1875). And at the World Parliament for Religions in Chicago in 1893, there were five papers presented by women<sup>40</sup>

In the fledgling Pentecostal movement, too, as in its ante-Nicene precursor, Montanism, women openly expressed themselves as leaders. They played a prominent role in Adelaide's first two churches. This was, perhaps, a reflection of Good News Hall, Australia's earliest Pentecostal assembly, in Melbourne, which in 1908 was founded and pastored by a woman — Sarah Jane (better known as 'Jeannie' or 'Mother') Lancaster (1858-1934).<sup>41</sup>

As early as 1910, a woman was nominated as the first Pentecostal representative in South Australia. Readers of the first issue of the magazine the *Good News* who were interested in 'the Outpouring of the Latter Rain and desiring to investigate' were advised to contact a Miss Pight of Reynella, now an outer suburb, but then virtually a country town. It seems fairly certain that the first actual Pentecostal meetings in Adelaide were held in the home of Mrs Fanny L. Collie (1867-1930), who lived on Magill Rd, Kensington Park North, an eastern suburb.<sup>42</sup>

How Mrs Collie first encountered charismatic Christianity is not clear, but it was evidently through the influence of Janet Lancaster. One version has it that Lancaster visited Adelaide and preached on the steps of the G.P.O. Only one person stopped to listen — Fanny Collie. She invited Lancaster to her home and as a result was baptised in the Holy Spirit. Collie, who had been widowed in 1913, opened her home for informal meetings to pray and share about the work of the Holy Spirit. There she would lead Bible studies in which her favourite exhortation was, 'Hold on to God!'<sup>43</sup> This was probably in the late 1910s. As I have shown elsewhere, like many early Pentecostals,<sup>44</sup> Collie had a Wesleyan Methodist background, a body in which her father was 'much respected'.<sup>45</sup>

Mrs Annie Chamberlain served full-time as a captain in the Salvation Army for a decade or so. This work took her to the country areas of Renmark, Wallaroo and Moonta and to the suburb of Enfield. On her marriage, at the turn of the century, when she was 32 years old, she had of necessity to resign her captaincy and

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<sup>40</sup> J. Roe, *Beyond Belief: Theosophy in Australia 1897-1939* Kensington: NSW University Press, 1986, p.165. Roe points out that there were another fifty presented by men! But she also sees a limited, but rising, involvement of women in churches during the latter part of the nineteenth century (pp.162ff).

<sup>41</sup> Chant, 1984, p.34ff.

<sup>42</sup> Chant, 1984, p.135. Additional information on Mrs F. Collie is from V. Short and C. Coulthard-Clark, *A Genealogy of the Bonnet Family of Adelaide*, Canberra, 1983; Thea McKelliff, interview, November, 1992; Dorothy Reekie, interview, 14 August 1991; Elaine Hulm, unpublished essay, Tabor College, 14 December 90.

<sup>43</sup> D. Reekie, interview, 14 August 1991.

<sup>44</sup> See B. Chant, *The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Origins of the Australian Pentecostal Movement*, unpublished paper, Association of Pentecostal and Charismatic Bible Colleges of Australasia conference, May 1993.

<sup>45</sup> Short and Coulthard-Clark, 1983.



become an ensign. In 1918, four years after the death of her husband, in order to support her family, she went into business as proprietor of a produce store in O'Connell Street, North Adelaide. After about three years, she managed a boarding house for blind people for just over twelve months. In 1923, now in her mid-fifties, she moved to a large house in the inner middle class suburb of Hyde Park, where she was able to take in boarders - and where she was also able to conduct meetings.<sup>46</sup>

In March, 1922, through the agency of Good News Hall, Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947), a renowned Pentecostal evangelist from England, visited Adelaide. He conducted meetings in the Protestant Hall in Hindmarsh Square, which was crowded to capacity.<sup>47</sup>

Wigglesworth was a plumber by profession and poorly educated. At the age of 48 he was baptised in the Holy Spirit and commenced an evangelistic ministry that was to take him around the world<sup>48</sup>.

He was forthright in manner and utterly fearless in ministry. Divine healing was a prominent part of his approach. He regularly prayed for the sick in his services. It was also not unusual for him to punctuate his preaching with glossolalic utterances, which he himself would interpret before resuming his message.<sup>49</sup>

Chamberlain was so inspired by the Wigglesworth visit that she earnestly sought to be filled with the Holy Spirit. One day, while praying alone, she spoke in tongues. With her Salvation Army experience behind her, she began to organise others who were also enthused by Wigglesworth into a regular fellowship at her home. Weekly 'tarry meetings' were held for those seeking to be filled with the Spirit.

Similar gatherings were held in the Pillifeant home in Parkside, another inner suburb. Mrs Martha (Mattie) Pillifeant's mother had been baptised in the Spirit in Joseph Marshall's meetings near Portland, Victoria, in 1889.<sup>50</sup> In 1921, she was suffering severely with gastric ulcers and made a vow that if she recovered through Wigglesworth's ministry she would seek the Spirit for herself. Both aims were accomplished. She was healed at a Wigglesworth rally and she received the Spirit at a 'tarry meeting'. So the Pillifeant home was also opened for such meetings, until Sunday services were conducted in the Leavitt Hall.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> L.Priest, personal interview, 17 September 1991; Salvation Army records, Melbourne.

<sup>47</sup> Chant, 1984, p.70; D.Reekie, personal interview, 14 August 1991.

<sup>48</sup> See S.Frodsham, *Apostle of Faith*, Elim, 1949; A.Hibbert, *Smith Wigglesworth — the Secret of His Power*, Chichester: Sovereign World, 1982; J.Hywel-Davies, *Baptised by Fire — the Story of Smith Wigglesworth*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987.

<sup>49</sup> Some of these interpretations are included in Smith Wigglesworth's, *Ever Increasing Faith*, Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1924, which is a collection of sermons he preached while in Australia.

<sup>50</sup> D. Reekie, personal interview, 14 August, 1991; *The Christian Weekly and Methodist Journal*, 20 July 1883; GN, April 1, 1910, pp.3,5.

<sup>51</sup> It is interesting that the hall was named after Mary Leavitt, whose prominence in the WCTU has already been noted.

Although Annie Chamberlain had been responsible for the initial gatherings, family responsibilities did not allow her to exercise continued leadership and Retchford and Rieschick took over that role.<sup>52</sup>

In 1925, a year after the group was divided over the issue of Calvinism, Indian-born Pauline Heath (c.1884-1940) was converted to Christ, through the witness of Gus Jansen whose account of Spirit-baptism has already been noted.<sup>53</sup> On another occasion, he became seriously ill, and in need of surgery, but recovered instantaneously after hearing of divine healing. He shared his testimony of healing with Pauline Heath.

At the age of 23 she had declared herself an agnostic, but now, 18 years later, stirred by Jansen's story, she attended the Mission and soon was converted. Two months later, she, too, received the Spirit. By 1927, she was the acknowledged leader of the work and known affectionately by the members of the church as 'Sister Joy'. Regular, although small, newspaper advertisements presented her as 'Sister P.A.Heath, the Ex-agnostic Gospel Preacher',<sup>54</sup> with Hines Retchford as song leader.

The church did not grow significantly over the ensuing years. It is probable that most people found the Pentecostal Church a more attractive haven. But Joy Heath 'was not concerned over lack of numbers; she always counted a small dedicated group of people more valuable than a large group of indifferent ones.'<sup>55</sup> She spent a great deal of time in prayer — even to the point of wearing dark glasses to cover the redness in her eyes caused by weeping in intercession.<sup>56</sup>

However, as the infant churches became more established — and possibly more anxious to remove as many causes of criticism as they could from traditional churches — female leadership became less acceptable. In 1934, Mrs Heath stepped down as pastor and took the title of evangelist 'owing to the belief among our brethren in Christ that a woman is not permitted to be a pastor according to the Scriptures'.<sup>57</sup> However, according to the man who replaced her, 'we just carried on as usual'<sup>58</sup> The titles had changed, but the roles had not.

In 1940, a building was erected in Compton Street, Adelaide, for the Mission. Sadly, Sister Joy never saw the fruition of this project. She died of cancer before the building was completed and the key was first turned by her grand daughter.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> L.Priest, interview, 17 September 1991.

<sup>53</sup> AN 3:2, March 1, 1932, pp3ff.

<sup>54</sup> eg *The News*, 30 September, 1927.

<sup>55</sup> L.Hart, interview, n.d. but c. 1970. (The original transcript of this interview was destroyed in a fire in 1987.)

<sup>56</sup> L.Hart, interview; Norman Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>57</sup> AN 5:4, June 1934, p.1. It is interesting that Good News Hall, in Melbourne, with which the Apostolic Mission had loose connections, had also found it difficult to continue with a woman pastor. Chant, 1984, p.55, 105.

<sup>58</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>59</sup> In a printed testimony, Joy Heath recorded how she had accidentally taken an overdose of morphia but had suffered no ill effects, other than the excruciating pain which caused her to take the drug in the first place —AN 10:4, June 1939, p.4. For reports of the new building see Vol XI,

When the Apostolic Church came to Australia with a more tightly developed structure and there was no place for recognised women's leadership. According to Apostolic teaching women could pray, prophesy, evangelise or teach other women but they could not be pastors or apostles.<sup>60</sup>

Mixed bathing in the living waters was a feature of the movement at the beginning — but stricter regulations were now in force.

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS**

It has been common to explain the development of Pentecostal groups by various deprivation theories. Wilson, for example, argues that 'oppressive, frustrating and bewildering social circumstances' prompt people to join Pentecostal churches, that Pentecostalism 'thrives among dislocated populations' and that Pentecostals are 'relatively simple people with unsophisticated concepts of doctrine and church government'<sup>61</sup>. Anderson argues even more strongly that Pentecostals are basically to be found in 'the working poor from whose ranks the Pentecostal movement drew the overwhelming bulk of its recruits'<sup>62</sup> Malcolm Calley presents a similar case for the West Indian sects in Britain.<sup>63</sup>

Australian sociologist Alan Black questions this hypothesis and suggests there are also other possible considerations.<sup>64</sup> He points out, for instance, that contemporary Australian Pentecostalism attracts people from a wide cross-section of the population and that 'theories such as that Pentecostalism attracts predominantly the socially or economically deprived, do not appear to apply in either Australia or the United States at the present time.'<sup>65</sup> However, he also states categorically that 'in its early stages' the Pentecostal movement in both countries attracted 'mainly people from lower social strata.' This does not seem to have been true of the first Pentecostal congregations in Adelaide. In socio-economic terms, a deprivation theory of Pentecostal church development in this case is difficult to support.

The people who attended Pentecostal meetings represented a fairly wide spectrum of the community. Of 57 men and women from the three initial congregations, nine were engaged in professional employment, 14 practised skilled trades, 14 were in business, three were farmers (one retired), nine were in clerical jobs, four worked in manual occupations and five carried out home duties.<sup>66</sup>

To put this in percentages, the breakdown is as follows—

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no 3, March 1940, p.1; Vol XII, No 1, September 1940, p.1. See also N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>60</sup> J.McCabe, interview, 18 September 1990; P.Lovell, interview, 6 September, 1991.

<sup>61</sup> eg Wilson, 1970, pp.72,89,90.

<sup>62</sup> Anderson, 1979, p.225.

<sup>63</sup> M.J.Calley, *God's People* Oxford: OUP, 1965.

<sup>64</sup> Alan Black, 'Pentecostalism in Comparative Perspective' in A.Black (ed) *Religion in Australia* Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991, p.112ff.

<sup>65</sup> Black, 1991, p.113.

<sup>66</sup> These five were all single women. I have not included married women in these estimates unless they were in business or employed in the work force.

Professional — 15.5%

Skilled trade — 24.2%

Business — 24.2%

Farmer — 5.1%

Clerical — 15.5%

Manual — 6.9%

Home Duties — 8.6%

The socially and economically deprived were not strongly represented in these early congregations. These were the Depression and early post-Depression years, but there was little unemployment among the members. In one family, the father spent most of his time in the country seeking work, and so was not in formal membership.<sup>67</sup> And some of the younger, unmarried women carried out home duties. Otherwise, the majority were gainfully employed.

Given that nearly one third of the work force were unemployed in 1932,<sup>68</sup> it is clear that the membership of these churches was not typical of the community at large in this regard.

In fact, there was a significant amount of reaching out to the poor. The Bernhardt home at Ovingham, for example, was often open to the needy — whole families being accommodated at times.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the Apostolic Mission House at Mile End had a steady flow of homeless and needy people living there. There was a small fund at the Mission for the help of the poor.<sup>70</sup>

Some people walked to church, being unable to afford transport. The Fabians, brother and sister, purchased a new Ford motor car between them in order to carry those who had no transport of their own.<sup>71</sup>

A comparison with employment figures generally in 1933 in Australia shows a relatively higher percentage of professional and business people in these churches than in the community. The number in clerical occupations is about the same and those involved in manual or factory work was considerably less.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Dorothy McKenzie, interview, 25 September 1991. Of course, it was not unusual for men to travel the country in the 1930's seeking work. See S.Gray and P.Hempenstall, 'The Unemployed' in B.Gammage and P.Spearritt (eds), *Australians 1938*, Sydney: Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987, p.327ff.

<sup>68</sup> The unemployment rate during the height of the Great Depression was 28.99% in 1932 (Trade Union figures — Butlin estimates were 19.74%) and still almost ten per cent in 1939 (9.7% — Trade Union figures; 8.76% Butlin estimates). See G.Withers, A.Endres and L.Perry, 'Labour' in Vamplew (ed), 1987, p.152.

<sup>69</sup> D.McKenzie, interview, 25 September, 1991.

<sup>70</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991; D.McKenzie, interview, 25 September, 1991.

<sup>71</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August, 1991.

<sup>72</sup> Occupations of 35 men and 19 women taken from marriage records at Glad Tidings Tabernacle, a Brisbane Pentecostal church, from 1932-1950 show a slightly different pattern, with a higher percentage of workers in manual [20.4%] and clerical [18.5%] occupations and a lower percentage of professional [3.7%] and business [5.6%] people. However, as these figures are heavily weighted towards young people, most of whom had not yet developed their careers, they are

**COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS<sup>73</sup>**

	<b>Pentecostal</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>Professional</b>	15.5	5.7
Business	24.2	7.3
Clerical	15.5	14.5
Manual	6.9	20.7

It is interesting to note the professions and/or occupations of some of the early leaders of the churches.

Annie Chamberlain's son-in-law, Norman Priest, had a small business in Prospect, where he was also the local Postmaster, before he left Adelaide in 1926 to go to Melbourne, Victoria, to the fledgling Victorian Bible Institute for one year and then to enter full-time ministry for a time, before his return to Adelaide a few years later.

Pauline Heath, the leader of the Apostolic Mission, had been in business for nearly five years at the time of her conversion as proprietress of the Lone Hand Cafe in Rundle Street.<sup>74</sup>

Gustav Jansen, who introduced Pauline Heath to the Mission, was a school teacher of German descent who had spent about ten years teaching in country schools at remote Elliston and then at the Lower North towns of Terowie and Watervale. For a couple of years, he dabbled in land broking at Point Pass, then returned to his home town of Eudunda where he tried his hand at running a motor garage. He became a justice of the peace, and moved between Adelaide and Eudunda, spending most of his time in Adelaide. He took up a retail agency and eventually bought a house at Mile End that was devoted to the work of the Mission. It was called 'Bethcar' — house of pasture.<sup>75</sup>

Hines Retchford was a commercial traveller. In 1927, he 'relinquished his secular occupation to devote all his time to gospel work' with the South African evangelist F.B. Van Eyk.<sup>76</sup>

A.W. Allen had a painting and decorating business. H. Weber was an electrical engineer. L.B. Wheaton had a grocery store. Phil Lovell set up his own electrical business when he moved to Queensland, to pastor a small church there.<sup>77</sup> Norman Fabian, who became honorary pastor of the Apostolic Mission, worked as a clerk

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probably not representative of the congregation as a whole, they may not be helpful in forming an estimate of the overall picture. It is also noteworthy that none of the mothers of the brides were employed outside the home. Compare Black's comment on youth and employment status, 1991, 114.

<sup>73</sup> Australian figures are adapted from Withers, Endres and Perry, 'Labour' in Vamplew (ed), 1987, p.148.

<sup>74</sup> *The News*, 30 November, 1927.

<sup>75</sup> See the appropriate Trade Directories, 1912-1939. Also, N.Fabian, interview, 15 August, 1991; D.McKenzie, interview, 25 September, 1991; AN 1:1, September 1, 1929, p.1.

<sup>76</sup> *The News*, 5 October 1927.

<sup>77</sup> Phil Lovell, interview, 6 September 1991.

in the Treasury Department. In 1940, he resigned both his job and the church to join the Armed Forces.

Dr Ruby Davy, the first woman in South Australia to earn a doctorate of music, led the choir for a short time at the Apostolic Church.<sup>78</sup> And Dr Robert Duguid, medical practitioner, was for many years an elder at the same church.

Among the lay people in the Apostolic Church were young Laurie Wahlquist, who was later to be for many years a senior executive in the Motor Industry<sup>79</sup>; Ross McNeill who became a share broker, with his own company;<sup>80</sup> and Iris Bladon, who was a school head mistress.<sup>81</sup>

F.C.Payne of the Apostolic Mission was an engineer who was responsible for a number of inventions, including a new fuse box.<sup>82</sup> Later, he established a scenic garden in the northern foothills of the Mount Lofty Range. O.Chenoweth was a hairdresser and tobacconist at Norwood. Ernie Long owned Charming's Sports Depot, in the city's commercial centre. Francis Bernhardt was a blacksmith and moulder.<sup>83</sup>

Among those in clerical jobs were Ruby Broadbent, who worked as a clerk in the Adelaide Town Hall, Marj Fabian, a typiste and ledger machinist at Woodrooffe's soft drink factory and John Kirwan, a shop assistant.

Those in skilled trades were mainly dressmakers, in the case of the women, and mechanics, in the case of the men, including Perce Rogers, nick-named 'the screwdriver king' because of his ability to fix almost anything.<sup>84</sup>

The suburbs from which people came reflect a similar picture. While there were a couple from Bowden or Mile End, both inner suburbs in lower socio-economic areas, most members were scattered widely over a range of some 35 different suburbs. There were about ten from Prospect and half a dozen from Kensington-Norwood. Otherwise, no meaningful pattern of social origins emerges.

Similarly, the manner in which articles are written in the various journals indicates a clear grasp of language and a fluency and competency in expression.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> J.McCabe, interview, 18 September 1991; K.Kirwan, interview, 11 September, 1991. Dr Davy was awarded a Doctorate in Music from Adelaide University in 1918. According to the inscription on her tombstone in the West Terrace Cemetary, Adelaide, she was a descendant of the Earl of Litchfield. She wrote the music to a song in tribute to Apostolic leader William Cathcart entitled 'Welcome to Australia', but left the church before it could be performed (K.Kirwan).

<sup>79</sup> Laurie Wahlquist, interview, 19 November 1991; M.Hurst, interview, 14 August, 1991; Phil Lovell, interview, 6 September 1991.

<sup>80</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>81</sup> Alan Geoffrey (Dick) Bain, interview, 20 August 1990; M.Hurst, interview, 14 August 1991.

<sup>82</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>83</sup> D.McKenzie, interview, 25 September 1991; 1930 Sands and McDougall Trade Directory; AN 6:3, March 1, 1935, p.1.

<sup>84</sup> Interviews, A.Bain, 20 August 1990; M.Hurst, 14 August 1991; Frank Elton, 11 September 1991.

<sup>85</sup> This is in contrast, for example, to Azusa Street, Los Angeles, and other early Pentecostal works in the United States, where poor grammar and style are evident in the earliest publications. See



The overall picture that emerges of these early Pentecostals is of an enterprising group of people, able to take initiative and often possessing leadership qualities. They were the kind of people who were willing to take risks, to try new ideas and to explore new concepts. They were not afraid to plunge into the deep; they felt well-qualified to keep their heads above water.

### **PATTERNS OF WORSHIP**

Life was busy for members of the three Adelaide Pentecostal churches.

At the Apostolic Mission, the weekly program in 1929 was—

Sunday 3.15 pm Open Air Meeting at Botanic Park

Sunday 10-30 am Lord's Supper, 4 Hughes St, Mile End

Sunday 7 pm Public Service, Leavitt Hall, Wakefield St

Wednesday 7.30 pm Bible Study, 4 Hughes St, Mile End

Saturday 3 pm Prayer Meeting, 4 Hughes St, Mile End

Saturday 8 pm Open Air Meeting at Kingston Statue, Victoria Square<sup>86</sup>

In 1930, a Tuesday afternoon women's meeting was added to the program together with a Tuesday night Bible Study at Bowden. By 1935, Thursday night cottage meetings, mainly for fellowship, were included in the regular program, and there were also Sunday morning services.<sup>87</sup> It was not uncommon for people to go into the city on Sunday morning, well provided with food and drink, and stay all day, returning home only after the evening gathering.

As occasion required, 'tarry meetings' were arranged for those who were seeking to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. It was expected that time might be needed for the Lord to sanctify people's lives, focusing their attention on any areas that needed repentance or change, before the Spirit could come. So whole evenings would be devoted just to praying for the Spirit's fulness.

The Open Air meetings, where the believers sang gospel songs and where individuals gave pithy testimonies to any who cared to listen, had to be relocated from time to time — the 'new Glenelg electric tram' being responsible for a shift from King William Street to the less central Grote Street in early 1930.<sup>88</sup>

The regular Sunday services were simple in format. At the Breaking of Bread meeting, there was singing, prayer, reading of Scripture, teaching, fellowship and communion. As these services were held in the Mission house at Mile End, they were fairly informal with 'talks' being given rather than sermons being preached.<sup>89</sup>

One interesting feature which the members promoted even in their newspaper advertising was Pauline Heath's 'gift of interpretation', in other words, her ability

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the writings of William Seymour, in particular, in *The Apostolic Faith*, 1906-1908 and The Apostolic Faith Movement statement of faith.

<sup>86</sup> AN 1:1, September 1 1929, pp.1,20.

<sup>87</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>88</sup> AN 1:3, March 1 1930, p.1.

<sup>89</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991; D.McKenzie, interview, 25 September 1991.

to interpret and explain what was spoken aloud in tongues.<sup>90</sup> Some of these interpretations were recorded and printed. Generally, they repeated biblical themes and applied them with sensitivity and passion.

This mystery, the final plan of God, the final plan of God. The pitying heart of Jesus sees the tears, And (sic) sorrows of the world. His voice, says gently, tenderly, 'Weep not! Weep not!' His hand shall stay the moving bier of time. His Word commands the dead, 'Awake! Arise!' And lo! a race shall wake from clay. These to eternal shame and torment, those to life and light and endless joy supreme, young, deathless, free, the fetters torn away. Each one delivered to Him who gave him birth. What glorious heritage for the Sons of God. What endless shame and sorrow unto those who still reject this Jesus.<sup>91</sup>

Divine healing was also a regular part of the ministry. This was especially so at the evening rallies, to which the public were invited. People were encouraged to bring the sick for healing ministry.

Baptismal services were regularly conducted either at Brighton Beach or in the River Torrens, near the Zoo. Often hundreds of people witnessed these, as new believers were immersed in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>92</sup> The impact of the baptismal services was sometimes powerful. On more than one occasion, people were converted through attending such a gathering.<sup>93</sup>

The Apostolic Mission also undertook tent missions. In 1929, they purchased a small tent, with seating for about 50 people, which they erected from time to time for evangelism. Gus Jansen was the prime mover behind the organisation of these outreaches.<sup>94</sup> The first was at Drayton St, Bowden, a low-income area, in November 1929. There was moderate success here, with five converts being recorded, three of whom were baptised at Brighton beach a week later. A second series of tent meetings, this time at Southwark, resulted in six baptisms at Brighton. Back at Bowden in early 1930, they saw some 40 children attending and eight adults turning to the Lord.<sup>95</sup> Tent missions were also held in the city of Adelaide, in Flinders Street and on vacant land adjacent to the homes of one of the members in Prospect.<sup>96</sup>

One feature of the Apostolic Mission gatherings was that no offerings were taken. On one occasion, someone who wanted to give anonymously left a five pound note in a question box where it stayed, unguarded in the tent, for over 24 hours. The editor of the *Apostolic News* praised God that, as they had prayed, he had put a protective wall of fire around the tent.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *The News*, 30 November 1927.

<sup>91</sup> Apostolic Mission leaflet, 1927.

<sup>92</sup> AN 2:2, December 1, 1930, p.1; Vol 3, No 2, December 1, 1931, p.6.

<sup>93</sup> AN 3:2, December 1 1931, p.6.

<sup>94</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>95</sup> AN 1:4, June 1, 1930, p.2.

<sup>96</sup> AN 2:3, March 1, 1931, p.1; N.Fabian, interview, 15 August, 1991; D.McKenzie, interview, 25 September, 1991.

<sup>97</sup> AN 1:3, March 1 1930, p.1.

The programs at both the Pentecostal Church and the Apostolic Church were similar, except for the tent meetings. They, too, held communion and gospel services on Sundays, and open air meetings in and around Victoria Square.<sup>98</sup>

The Pentecostal Church frequently used visiting speakers. Often leaders like C.L.Greenwood (1892-1969) came from interstate. Occasionally, there were overseas visitors. For the Apostolic Mission this was rare. After Van Eyk's visit in 1926, few outside speakers came their way. Occasionally, the Apostolic Mission and the Pentecostal Church held combined gatherings or outreach meetings.<sup>99</sup>

The Apostolic Church weekly calendar was really full. Every day of the week was provided for—

Sunday 11 am Breaking of Bread  
Sunday 3 pm Divine Healing  
Sunday 7 pm Full Gospel Meeting  
First Monday of each month 7.45 pm Missionary Meeting  
Tuesday 7.45 pm United Meeting Apostolic Worship  
Wednesday 7.45 pm Apostolic Witnesses  
Thursday 3 pm Divine Healing  
Friday — Open Air Meeting  
Saturday 3 pm Tarrying  
Saturday 7.45 pm Gospel Rally<sup>100</sup>

One wonders how the people found time for anything else! But after the exciting launching of the church through the Cathcart and Hewitt campaigns, there was a tide of momentum that carried them along with it. 'There was a God-consciousness there,' recalled former pastor Phil Lovell.<sup>101</sup> The truth was, that little else interested them.

Like the others, the Apostolics also majored on prayer for the sick, as can be seen from their provision of special services for this purpose. They, too, had tarry meetings. But it was their teaching about and practice of appointing apostles and prophets that made them attractive. More than a few people were intrigued and enticed by what they saw and heard. 'To many it was a revelation of the way in which God is working in these last days,' wrote one newcomer, 'and we do esteem it a privilege to be in that place, where we can indeed know the Will of God.'<sup>102</sup>

The waters were both wide and deep and there was a lot of swimming to do.

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<sup>98</sup> Interviews, L.Priest, 17 September 1991; D.Reekie, 14 August 1991; Shirley Russell, 17 September 1991; P.Lovell, 6 September 1991; J.McCabe, 18 September 1990.

<sup>99</sup> AE 6:8-9, February-March 1932, p.8; Vol 8, No 1, February, 1935, p.8.

<sup>100</sup> From a photo of the notice board at Jubilee Temple, c.1934. See also S.Russell, interview, 17 September 1991.

<sup>101</sup> P.Lovell, interview, 6 September 1991.

<sup>102</sup> RE 1:2, 1 July 1933, p.57f.

## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Pentecostals are often charged with 'sheep-stealing'. It is clear that some who joined these new churches were already Christians, whose motivation was to draw closer to God and to experience more of His Spirit in their lives.

Norm Fabian, for example, was a regular attender at a Baptist church. When his sister was converted, his interest was attracted and he was soon attending the Apostolic Mission.<sup>103</sup> Marjorie Hurst and her mother were members at the Hindmarsh Place Christian Church. It was as they 'began to search the Scriptures' that they came in contact with the Allen family. Soon they were seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>104</sup>

William Ellis Batts was a Kangaroo Island farmer. In 1907, he and his wife migrated to Zion, Illinois, to join the followers of John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907).<sup>105</sup> He returned to Australia around 1930 as his wife was dying of cancer. Annie Chamberlain nursed her, but without success. In the meantime, Ellis Batts, continuing his search for spiritual reality, joined the Pentecostal church. In 1931, Batts and Chamberlain married.

A 'Pentecostal Methodist' told how she had become convinced of her need to consider baptism by immersion and had attended an Apostolic Mission baptismal service in 1931. Four months later, she was baptised at Brighton. She was also healed of an incurable throat affliction and then, in her own home, baptised in the holy Spirit.<sup>106</sup>

There were others, however, whose conversion was from outside the church altogether. Mention has already been made of the change in Pauline Heath's life as she turned from agnosticism to Christ. Marjorie Fabian had a similar experience. Convinced that evolutionary theories were true, she also became an agnostic, indeed, virtually an atheist. Ill health confirmed her in her belief that there was no God. However, in May, 1926, after four years of agnosticism, she began to question her position and decided to attend a baptismal service being conducted by the Apostolic Mission at the Torrens River. Eight people were baptised on a bitterly cold day.

She was convinced they were all mad, but the sincerity of the people, and, in particular, the devotion of the organist — Joy Heath — impressed her and she began to attend meetings at the Mission and in Botanic Park. The South African evangelist F.B. Van Eyk was visiting the church and he proved more than able to answer her agnostic objections. Finally, he visited the home and prayed with her. She was overcome by the sense of God's presence and fell to the floor, where she stayed for some time, praying. She became a believer.

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<sup>103</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>104</sup> M.Hurst, interview, 14 August 1991.

<sup>105</sup> L.Priest, interview, 17 September, 1991. For more on Dowie see G.Lindsay, *The Life of John Alexander Dowie*, Dallas: Voice of Healing, 1951; Chant, 1984, pp.11ff; B.Chant, *The Australian Career of John Alexander Dowie*, a paper presented to the Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 10 August 1992.

<sup>106</sup> AN 7:4, June 1, 1936, p.7.

There was considerable opposition from family and friends, but she persevered in her faith and on 24 July, 1929 'a most wonderful thing happened ... I spoke in other tongues for about two hours'. From that time on she was a dedicated member of the church.<sup>107</sup>

Bob Davis was another who was converted from a non-Christian life style. When his wife was baptised in the Spirit, he was interested, but apprehensive. Ultimately, through an early morning vision of Christ, being crucified, in which he heard the drip-drip-drip of His blood on the linoleum floor, he was converted and baptised in the Spirit.<sup>108</sup>

Ivy Bernhardt was suffering from consumption. She was encouraged to attend the Apostolic Mission's tent meetings at Bowden where they would pray for her to be healed. She responded by asking herself, 'Well, why can't I be healed here?' So she prayed, 'If there is a God you can heal me for my husband's sake and my children's sake.' Immediately, she felt relief. She was so delighted, she ran to her mother's home, 28 houses down the street! Then she went to the tent, not to seek healing, but to tell them about it.<sup>109</sup>

With the Apostolic Church, there were also many converts from the world. It was through an Open Air meeting that Shirley Russell was converted, for example. As she stopped to listen, she was so impressed by the preaching of one man, that she abandoned her plans for the evening and stayed to hear more. Later, she attended the church, was converted to Christ and is still a member.<sup>110</sup>

Frank Elton and a friend, at about the age of 16, rode their motor bikes past the Apostolic Church one night in 1934 and went in with no intention of staying. But Frank turned to the Lord.<sup>111</sup>

The first Australian President of the Apostolic Church, Phil Lovell, had been searching for God for twelve months. One day in 1932 his employer, a Seventh Day Adventist, told him how he had attended a 'strange sort of meeting' where a little deaf girl had been healed. He himself had tested her hearing. Lovell went to see for himself. It was a John Hewitt rally. He and his wife were baptised soon afterwards.<sup>112</sup>

There was also significant addition to the Apostolic Church from the two other Pentecostal assemblies. Their high standard of ministry, the obvious effectiveness of their confident approach to divine healing and their emphasis on both the role of apostles and prophets and on the Second Coming proved attractive. As noted above, some of the leaders themselves made the change.

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<sup>107</sup> AN 3:2, December 1, 1931, p.5ff.

<sup>108</sup> GN 9:1, February 1923, p.17f; R.Davis, interview, c. 1968 (the original notes were destroyed in a fire in 1987.)

<sup>109</sup> D,McKenzie, interview, 25 September, 1991. Dorothy McKenzie is Ivy Bernhardt's daughter.

<sup>110</sup> S.Russell, interview, 17 September 1991. Russell's conversion took place in 1948, which is technically outside of the period of discussion for this paper.

<sup>111</sup> F.Elton, interview, 11 September 1991.

<sup>112</sup> P.Lovell, interview, 6 September 1991.

Overall, a common factor in the recorded testimonies of people joining these Pentecostal churches is either the satisfaction of a sense of spiritual hunger or the meeting of a desperate personal need. That this may be a genuine factor in Pentecostal church growth is grudgingly admitted by Anderson, although he goes to great pains to find alternative explanations.<sup>113</sup> To deny the reality of spiritual need is, however, not adequate. Human experience bears strong testimony to its validity and no study of Pentecostalism can ignore this aspect.

It may be noted in passing that none of the churches had much time for the 'modernism' and worldliness they perceived in the mainline denominations.<sup>114</sup>

### **ATTITUDES TO SOCIETY**

There was little evidence of social awareness or of a desire to be involved in the affairs of the world. By and large, political and social issues were ignored. The emphasis was on personal relationship with Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. That Gus Jansen was a justice of the peace was evidently unusual. It was either not known by other members of the Apostolic Mission or ignored by them. There is no reference to it in any of the surviving records nor was it mentioned in any interview. Like their Montanist forbear Tertullian, Pentecostals believed Athens had little to do with Jerusalem.

Holiness was generally interpreted in terms of separation from worldly matters. Even attendance at a concert or reading a novel was frowned upon<sup>115</sup> let alone the grosser matters of drunkenness, immorality or theft<sup>116</sup>. Quoting great literary figures from the pulpit was seen as a sign of compromise. Smoking was frowned upon<sup>117</sup> as was the wearing of makeup. Shirley Russell was asked not to wear lipstick when she attended the Apostolic Church<sup>118</sup>, and Kath Kirwan was actually stopped at the door and asked not to come into the meeting because she had used cosmetics!<sup>119</sup>

Marjorie Fabian told how she had been involved in 'dances, bridge, shows, parties and finally, racing' before coming to Christ.<sup>120</sup> Her brother Norm recalls being rebuked by Jansen for spending threepence on a milk shake one hot Wednesday night after a Bible study. It was not right to indulge the flesh in this way.<sup>121</sup> Even at Sunday School picnics, there would be Bible studies!<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Anderson, 1979, 229.

<sup>114</sup> AE 11:11, October 1938, p.5; AN 1:2, December 1, 1929, p.8.

<sup>115</sup> AN 1:1, September 1, 1929, p.4f

<sup>116</sup> AN 4:3, March 1, 1933, p.12

<sup>117</sup> M.Hurst, interview, 14 August 1991. Note that not all Pentecostals would have frowned on literary allusions in preaching.

<sup>118</sup> S.Russell, interview, 17 July 1991.

<sup>119</sup> K.Kirwan, interview, 11 September 199.

<sup>120</sup> AN 3:2, December 1, 1831, p.6. Note that this testimony is signed simply M.M.F. That is was written by Marjorie Fabian was verified by her brother Norm, the pastor who succeeded Joy Heath. Interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>121</sup> Norm Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.

<sup>122</sup> N.Fabian, interview, 15 August 1991.



On the other hand, there was plenty of criticism and opposition from the world, too. Both Gus Jansen and Marj Fabian told how they had been strongly opposed when it was known they were attending Pentecostal meetings.<sup>123</sup>

Joy Heath's preaching constantly stressed intimacy with God. The quarterly publication the *Apostolic News* carried a series of devotional studies on the Song of Solomon that ran from December 1932 to March 1940, and still only covered the first two chapters! There is little or no reference to world affairs or social issues. In her testimony of her own conversion, Sister Joy spoke of the 'soft, sweet power' of God.<sup>124</sup> This phrase is actually an apt description of her own ministry.

The river where the South Australian Pentecostals swam was of pure water; there was danger of contamination if you swam elsewhere.

## ESCHATOLOGY

That millenarianism was dominant in primitive Pentecostalism has been widely documented. Indeed, both Anderson and Blumhofer see it as a primary root of the American movement.<sup>125</sup> Whatever the merits of this view of American Pentecostalism, it does not apply in Australia. It is true that early Pentecostals did have a vigorous belief in the Second Coming of Christ, but it was never the major *raison d'être*. The distinctive emphasis was always the need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit with the sign of glossolalia. Nevertheless, all the doctrinal statements included a clause on His return. The Apostolic Mission, for example, expressed their belief in 'The Pre-Millennial Second Coming of Jesus Christ.'<sup>126</sup> The Pentecostal Church of Australia also listed the 'Pre-millennial Coming of Christ' as an article of faith, with the explanatory note, 'It is our glorious hope and earnest expectation that our Lord will soon return for His Church, and having this hope we purify ourselves even as He is pure, so that we may be ready to meet him (sic) when He comes to gather His people unto Himself — John xiv. 1-3, James v. 7-8, Titus ii. 13, 1 Thess. iv. 15-17, 2 Thess. ii. 1.'<sup>127</sup>

The Apostolic Church Tenets amounted to just under 150 words altogether and included the brief item, 'His (ie Christ's) Second Coming and Millennial Reign upon earth.'<sup>128</sup> However, the return of Christ loomed large in the preaching and teaching of the Apostolics. It was Cathcart who was most renowned for his emphasis on the Second Coming. In Adelaide, on 23 September 1934, he preached on 'The Coming Age-end Climax' in which he asked the question, 'Will the imperialistic war cloud in the West and the democratic war cloud in the East meet over Palestine before 1936?' and in which he prophesied the hardening of Nazism and Fascism in the West and the awakening of China in the East.

<sup>123</sup> AN 3:2, December 1, 1931, pp.3,8.

<sup>124</sup> AN 3:2, December 1, 1931, p.11.

<sup>125</sup> Anderson, 1979, p.79ff; E.Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God* Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1989, p.22ff.

<sup>126</sup> AN 1:1, September 1, 1929, p.8.

<sup>127</sup> AE 8:3, July 1935, p.16.

<sup>128</sup> *The Tenets of the Apostolic Church*, leaflet, n.d.

He was concerned about the Jews and their grip on world finances, and believed the Anti-Christ might already be alive on the earth. He saw indications that 'so far as the signs of the times are concerned, the end of this age seems to be absolutely at the doors' but was careful to point out that God could extend the 'era of prosperity' and that He had 'veiled the exact moment.' However, he still thought the Second Coming was possible 'within the lifetime of most of us here.'<sup>129</sup>

Cathcart's Easter address in Melbourne in 1935, was published in the newly-released national magazine and widely read.<sup>130</sup> Its topic was the Resurrection, but its major thrust was the resurrection of the dead at the end of the age. In the same issue was a sermon by another Apostolic pastor entitled, 'The Time of the End.' In it he warns of 'great tribulation,' the emergence of the Anti-Christ, and the consternation of the wicked — but also declares the redemption of believers who will be 'taken' by Christ to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.<sup>131</sup>

A report on the opening of Zion Tabernacle in Adelaide, in August, 1936, states that 'two outstanding addresses ... on the Second Coming of the Lord' were delivered by Cathcart who was 'well known as an able exponent of this truth' and the church, which seated several hundred people, was 'packed on each occasion, all listening with rapt attention as the speaker showed from the Scriptures how European affairs were dovetailing into the prophecies of the Word of God.'<sup>132</sup>

Cathcart prepared a huge chart, said to be nearly twelve metres long, and 2.5 metres high, which outlined the destiny of mankind from Creation to Consummation.<sup>133</sup> 'To give a description of this chart,' continued the report, 'is out of the question, as to be appreciated, it must be seen.' In this chart, he suggested that the Return of Christ might happen about the year A.D. 2120, but he was not dogmatic about it.<sup>134</sup>

Cathcart's emphasis on the Second Coming was another reason why his meetings attracted people from the other Pentecostal churches. In the main, this was an area which was given less emphasis there. There is no doubt that all three groups strongly believed in the Lord's return, but they tended, in their preaching, to concentrate more on holiness, the power and gifts of the Spirit, our relationship with God and so on. In the *Australian Evangel*, for example, while there are periodic articles on the end of the age, they are usually reprints from overseas journals, rather than transcripts of sermons preached by Australian pastors.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>129</sup> RE 2:10, March 1935, pp.189, 192ff.

<sup>130</sup> 'The "I Am" of the Resurrection', RE 2:12, May 1935, pp.223ff.

<sup>131</sup> RE 2:12, May 1935, pp.233ff.

<sup>132</sup> 'The Opening of Zion Tabernacle, Adelaide,' AH 1:6, October, 1936, pp.89.

<sup>133</sup> F.Watson, interview, n.d. (the notes of this interview were lost in a fire in 1987); K.Kirwan, interview, 11 September 1991. I have a photocopy of a smaller hand-copied version of Cathcart's chart, prepared by the late John Kirwan, a member of the Adelaide congregation.

<sup>134</sup> This date is given on the chart with a question mark.

<sup>135</sup> AE 10:9, August, 1937, p.13; 11:6, May, 1938, p.11; 11:9, August, 1938, p.4, 10f. Occasionally, however, there were articles by Australian preachers eg T.Evans, 'As It Was In The Days Of Noah', 6:8-9, February-March, 1932, p.2 and C.Greenwood, 'The World and the Church When Jesus Comes,' p.4.

Nevertheless, a confident hope in Christ's return was always close to the surface. At the Hope Valley outreach from the Adelaide church, in 1938, there was a 'fervent exhortation' in prophecy and in tongues, 'to enable us to be ready for the day of our Lord's soon coming'<sup>136</sup> and when a young man was killed on his way home from a church Tea in August 1938, his pastor commented that although his death was a great shock, they were rejoicing that 'his last feast on earth was with the Saints of God' and that he had only gone before 'to await the greatest of all feasts, "the Marriage Supper of the Lamb"'.<sup>137</sup>

The Apostolic Mission shared similar convictions about the end of time, but there were rarely any messages on the subject. The focus was much more on devotion to God and living for Him now than in preparing for the next. Nevertheless, the longest of the nine clauses in the Doctrinal Basis was the one entitled 'The Lake of Fire' and serious attention was given to the need to escape it.<sup>138</sup>

It would not be necessary to swim forever; one day, by faith, you would experience the joy and celebration of reaching the other side!

## CONCLUSION

In these three congregations, we see groups of people who came together because of their common desire for a deep, personal experience of God. Occupationally, religiously and educationally they reflected a wide variety of backgrounds. The leaders were theologically untrained but innovative and progressive. They all had a common commitment to the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in a tangible, supernatural fashion and they all shared a tendency to withdraw from the world and its ways, with a living hope in the glory of the kingdom that is yet to come.

No doubt, they still felt out of their depth at times, but they were learning to swim more steadily and to trust in the Spirit Who searches the deep things of God. Moreover, they truly believed the river they swam in was a river of life.

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(8353 words)

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<sup>136</sup> AE 8:3, July, 1935, p.3.

<sup>137</sup> AE 11:11, October, 1938, p.10.

<sup>138</sup> AN 11:1, September 1, 1929, p.8.

## About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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